

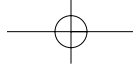
WEST COAST LINE

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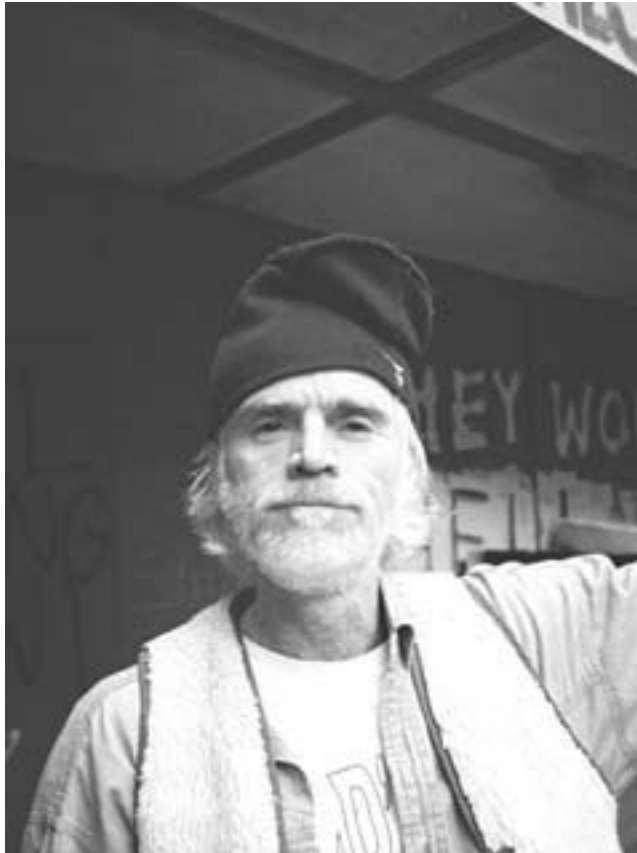


number 41 · 37/2-3 · fall/winter 2003/04

No Wieners No Schnitzel
No Sharing No Pot Seed
No Personal Issues
No Bars No Jobs
No Diagnosis No College of Physicians or Surgeons
No Waste of Time No Crime No Home As
No ID No Entrance No Rights No Pepperspray
No Zapstraps No Tazers No Carbines No Surrender
No Life Not Now No Visitors After Eight
No Cmas No Death No Costs No Food No Heat
No Yelling Fuck Off No Roomzzzz
No Dogs Off Leash
* * On the Beach No Wading No Swimming
No Throwing Rocks at the Waves / Beach
No Fires No Walking Into Traffic No Caution
No Pay No Yellows Are Not Reds No Reds Are Not Whites
No Whites Are Not Blues
No Illumination No Thought Not One
No Not Scot Sewer Rock
No Buying or Selling No Code Names
No Seditious Treason No Lies No Love No Crying
No Comfort No Levity No Interrogatives No Controlzzzz
No Questions
No Shit No Bunk No Posting Bills No Gasoline
No Cans on the Ferry No Inflating Devices
No Ball Playing No Golf
No Married Men
No Shortages



IN MEMORIAM



TAUM DANBERGER
(1953-2003)

“Every time win ‘em over one by one, always live, always live.”

WEST COAST LINE 37/2-3

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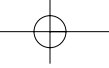


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COLUMBIA
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Supported by the Province of British Columbia

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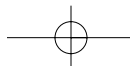
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INTRO & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is too early to explain the long incubation, birth, life, death & afterlife of the Woodward's Squat. These events are still in process and contested. Several volumes could be filled with what has been omitted here: statements by people who could not appear for legal reasons, were too afraid to speak out, or were not in a position to provide consent to their own words or images; statements by people that have not yet been transcribed or even recorded; statements by people who have left the city or been forced into prison, hospital or SRO holding units; statements by people who have passed on. The contributions I was able to secure follow a loose chronological order through the occupation known as The Woodward's Squat, or Woodsquat, which unfolded between 14 September and 14 December 2002 in Vancouver. Although the squat was used tactically by activists and politicians to win a civic election, the action is rightly seen as autonomous. It was a self-managed poor people's site of reclamation that deserves to be studied and tried again wherever there is an unused building and people who need to make dignified housing for themselves. I hope that this small collection will add to our understanding of both the positive spirit of mutual aid and dissent as well as the ugly contradictions of those 92 days and nights. This book won't please all, myself included. If you have comments please drop me a line through Community Squatting Information Services in Vancouver (604-682-3269 extension 7567; or free-housing@squatworld.net).

My gratitude and assorted shout-outs to Bruce, Dayl, Taum, Violetta, Glad, Dorothy, Greg, Shane, Kathy, Wayne, Margot, Maxine, Nathan, Sponge, Ricky, Toecutter, Jewel, Kasper, Craig, Zeus, Jumbo Shrimp, Chrystal, Uncivil-D, Jane, Roach, Travis G, Heat Score Dave, Chip, Lacey, Joey, Mr. S, Ann, Chris, Claude, Tony, Hidden in Dark Well, Ángel, Theresa, Dead Man, Mel, Tiny, Pollo Loco, Karina & Reg, Susan, Mr. Hancock, Lydia, Sky, Megan, Mad Dog, Irwin, Shawn, Karl, A Native



Man, DKr, Ace, Jessica, The W54, Jack, Scott, Nicole, Stan, Karen O, Wes, Glenda, L & M, Mildred, Frieda, Jiivan, Rita, Frank Ermineskin, James D, Beverley, Bob, Illara, Lyn, Sunder, Taz, Jill, Mitz, Rabbit, Cadillac, Mole, Paul, Beth, T3, Vicky, Crazyhorse Junior, The Abbott Eight, Jim, Hazel, Irene, Emerald City, Chris & Travis L, NYC Transients, Lashen, John Dodge, Darryl, Doris Louis, Mavis, Shoosh, Claire, Andrea, Shane D, The Reverend Davin, Ytzhak, Ivan, Shannon, Dan the Man, Mike Krebs, Reid, Joy, Elisha, Ken, IMC, JRC, Gary, Adam & Spike, IWW, Skyy, VSA, APC, DERA, Charlotte, CA Smith, HAC, MWAL, IACST, The Woodward's Squat Native Caucus, PIVOT, James M, Noah, Deb, WARS, WAHRS, Brody, Bev, Scott, Sparta, Janet, Viktor, The Triple Agents, HRC, HRW, Peyman, John & Jane Doe, Sid, PGSC, Dean, Major Fame, Unnameable Punks, Ernest, APOV, MWAL, Coleen, HEU, CCI, OCAP, BCCLA, COPB, Sister Elizabeth, Kara, Inter-Mission, Leon, Head, Matthew, IAS, Flea, The Victory Squat featuring the Thornton-Creekside & Crab-Strathcona Tendencies, CFRO, Jughead & Moose, Trevor M, Carol, The YVR 3, Austin & Betty, Nick, Johanna, Minh, Working TV, Josh, The 327 Night Shift, Simm, Olaf, White Man, Anita, Imtiaz, Leo, Jagdeep, Cat, Kevin, Cameron W, Smiles, Derrick, Kirk, Mr. T, QUAK, The Children of God, David M, Chunk, Will, Patrick, Kirk, Steven, Kitty, Mother Hastings, The Watchmen, Lawrence of Abbotsford, Justice Bennett, Anonymous, Delayne, Brendon, The Jib Harm Reduction Project, Debbie, Rosa, The Squeegie Council, Max, Calvin, Murray, Lisa, Marwan, Tim L & Ellen W, Lily, Sasquatch, Antwon, Sabrina, Coco, Marker, Cameron L, Mark M, Darwin & Kevin, The VANDU Alley Patrol, Ron, Tony, NYM, KSW, BRU, PALLS, Keeping Time & many more who cannot be named. You know who you are. Run quickly, comrade, the old world is behind you!

I give thanks to my parents, Josephine & William Vidaver, for their critical support over this past year despite the occasional harassment from the folks who urged me to cease & desist. I couldn't have made it through without them. Likewise Roger Farr, who sprung the very idea on me then managed it into print, as follows.

Aaron Vidaver

30 November 2003



Détournement of the "W" Tower (09/14) – Photograph by Marginalized Workers' Action League

CANADA IS ALL NATIVE LAND: NON-NATIVES ARE ALL SQUATTERS: THE DEVIL+CANADA ARE ONE

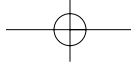
Theresa D. Gray

After 1492 there were lots of illegal aliens...
Genocide of the Peoples of the western hemisphere
was the start of capitalism / wealth called LAND

The BC Treaty Process is the canadian govt's colonialist land grab instead of an international peace treaty ending the undeclared war on Aborigines of "Kanata" on OUR HOME + NATIVE LAND for thousands of years. Decolonization is the solution. It did marvels for China + India... Where is the international solidarity against the international terrorists called the Americas—vs. the Indigenous Peoples of the Western Hemisphere? What are you doing canaduh destroying our home + NATIVE LAND? A crime of killing the planet is inexcusable—for profit in the name of the prophet Jesus... Remember residential schools jesus / indian?

The Devil called Canada is hell on EARTH... Goddamn canada...
Are you "canadians" thinking of peace in this land + for the world while having an undeclared war on the NATIVES of this land? A lie called colonization built this white racist country in 1867 after 10,000 years of Indigenous Peoples existing with harmony not her money—the queen is killing O canada—OUR NATIVES HOME + NATIVE LAND—for profits instead of saving the Earth for her Prophet just the same as the R. Church.

...hell is here + now...
there is no heaven / haven just the sun
+ the Universe in the heavens...



THIS IS NOT A POEM

Maxine Gadd

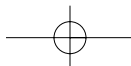
For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.

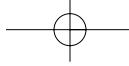
– Jeremiah 5:26-28 King James Bible, Compton version

THIS IS NOT A POEM ABOUT THE REDEMPTION OF GORDIE CANNIBAL

and Mikie Cannibal and Christie Cannibal and Garry Cannibal and Willy Cannibal and Murray Cannibal and all the big and all the little cannibals: Georgie, Val 1, Billie B1, Pat, Billie B2, Billie B3, Tony, Harry, Shirley, Jeff, Elayne, Susan, Graham, Gulzar, Ida, Tom, Dave, Walt, Rich 1, Gary, Michael, Kevin, Stan, Greg, Arnie, Colin, Gordon 2, Roger, Brendan, Randy, Sindi, Dave, Mike, Daniel, Ken, Brian, Kevin, Richard 1, Blair, John, Brenda, Harold, Dennis, Karnin, Reni, Lorne, Wendy, Joyce, Ted, Paul 1, Richard 2, Rob, John 1, Sheila, Barry, Geoff, Judith, Linda, Claude, Val 2, Patty, Armando Sandy, Lynn, Ken, Richard, Blair, Ralph, Rick, Gillian, John 2 van DONGEN, Rod, John 3, Katherine, John 4, PATRICK! predator entrepreneurs, stock brokers, real estate rip-off con artists, white collar thieves, every collar colour gangster/ vampires, civil servants, ancient straight citizens, sucking away at the blood of the poor.

oh no, they're just five-year-olds with blow torches
instructed by some tired monster to go find their suppers somewhere





yr all so negative
stand and cheer or I'll chill yu

You five-year-olds with blowtorches are having so much fun,
running around, doing the public business, burning down the house
our fathers and mothers built for our security and
our health.

you terrorize us: you are terrorist creeps
happier n a pig in shit

Oh, no, Letitia, they're poor lost Picked-on boys and girls
seeking the father of the Holy Psalms

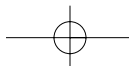
*a father of fatherless boys and a judge of widows
is God in his holy dwelling*

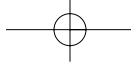
*God is causing the solitary ones to dwell in a house;
He is bringing forth prisoners to full prosperity.*

– Psalms 68:5 1961 New World Translation of the The Holy Scriptures

I won't ask you who you serve.
With our current translation complexes we have no way of asking this question.

I fear to tell you the fate decreed to poor Gordo by a woman I met in a Downtown Eastside pub. Her teeth, what was left of them, were rotten. She said, "How can I ever get a job looking like this?" I said, "Well, your hair looks right." And she sez, "if you only knew me better I would tell you..." I guess she was wearing a wig. She had been denied dental service by social services. She sed, "I can't get a job looking like this." When I asked her what should be done about these cuts to our economies she sed: "I'd like to tie him up and slash his penis raw with a razor and lay him down





face first in battery acid and leave him there.”
I was just one small square table and two beers away from her
so I didn’t ask if she solved all her political disagreements that way.

Possibly she’d been to one of Willie Pickton’s Parties.
Little Willy Picked-on Cannibal, our little brother, Gordie.

Do you think maybe little Willie Cannibal has a job for her, Gordie?

All our Cannibalites have jobs for the socially marginalized
that they would
do
so lovingly
so willingly
so obediently

in your new Household, The New Era Economy, unfettered capitalism,
chaining people like pit bulls

and Gordie

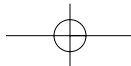
in that situation you are not protectable, though I feel guilty, because Gordie,
Yu used to remind me of my little brother when he was five.

but Gordie, you have a wife who is vice-principal of a school that has to function in
an economy that you chose to be administered by an air-flight instructor who can say
with a bald face, “Most people will do well in this economy.

Only the Disadvantaged will have to pay.”

A great way to learn to fly. Kama Kazi, suicide bombing.

It’s done by signing a paper you read and sign that sez you may not live on more



than 518 dollars a month and if you try to do so you will have 100% Income Tax to pay on any earnings. That is, everything you have above 518 dollars a month you have to give back to the provincial government to give back as tax refunds to millionaires. Talk about motivation and if you don't sign you will have none of the necessities of life, housing, healthcare, good water, proper food and clothing. Yu will become an outlaw, run down to death or run into crime and be processed through a highly paid and privileged justice system

Or yu will raise animals for slaughter
Like our daughters
An action perfectly "legal" in Contract law.
Legislated Poverty perfectly Good in Law
which probably could prove to be, like slave law, not good-in-law and unconstitutional in this country if this country had a constitution ensuring us with safety and mobility

if a lawyer could put her mind to it
but she can't
she has a living to earn
a reputation to consider
i sympathize with her, gordie

because we all have her problems, even the marginalized, those beneath consideration, hookers and slackers, drifters, thieves, frauds, liars, story-tellers, priests, poets, pimps, bums thieves wankers insolvents, consolidators, consultants, garment workers, body workers, food service workers, truck drivers, manufacturers of screws and nails and bomb makers, yes bombs and mines assembled by the cheap labour that Gordie and the Cannabilites need to expand for their factories

over on the North Shore of some California sort of place
a great and complicated city, thousands of years after Enoch, the one built by
farmer, Cain and his unnamed wife in Genesis

Yes, that Cain, who killed his brother, Abel, out of jealousy over God's love.
Cain who was the first one to really answer God, to talk to him, to plead with him,
to beg for his love. To change His mind. God became human and the plot got thick.

but yu know
no matter Who Yu are, yu try to keep busy,
like yu politicians and biker gangs, yu
pig eaters, and all the little Hitler vegetarians and rainmakers of every ilk,
like yu and Michael Cannibal, Gordie
and ideologists yu have supported

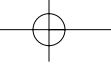
Hannah Arendt speaks about "the banality of evil"
such an interesting word, "banality" once meant the duties you owed to your feudal
chief coming to mean the boring, the usual, the everyday

and though you are cruel, blind and unhearing gordy, yu are not unique.
In 1995 even the NO DAMN PITY party did the same same things yu are doing to
the disadvantaged, cutting welfare and any supplementary earnings the
disadvantaged could earn and all the while fostering the lofty contempt of the
second and third generation union worker

so ignorant of the history
of the foundation
of his high daily wages
his privilege,

public welfare,
a guaranteed annual income
a negative income tax
some form
of decent
life protection
for our citizens

Yu Cannibalites, yu legislative assembly, are all
educated
privileged
smart
as whips,
yu know
yu know
yu can devour all the resources of the poor.
you know when times get tough the tough get time.
let them eat cake at the Sisters of Atonement.
stop traffic at Terminal and Main
and polish yur windows.
scare you so bad yu have to put them in jail and
forget about them.
when they cry out in loneliness and starvation and pain
gas them and sell them for parts
or chop them up as meat,
cook them for soup
can it,
and sell it as Campbell's and
enhance the now much-dwindled Public's coffers,



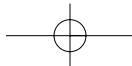
its glorious
bottom
line

Who would question you and your cousins and sons and wives
free enterprisers all
so
honest
and
self
sufficient
and frightfully
decent

hey, gordie
if yu get rid of us all
you'll finally have a surplus—

you alone with all the real estate
and Gordie
even for a Cannibal that
would be
TOO MUCH

Yor Ever Lovin Big Sister
Maxi Cannibal
July 10, 2002 (9:07pm)



SQUATTING AS AN ORGANIZING TOOL

Lisa Wulwik

Our present system of housing creates homelessness and high rents because it is a system based on profits and not people. This means that empty buildings are boarded up while people sleep on the streets. Housing is a right. No one should have to live on the streets because rents are too high or a landlord has left a building to sit and rot while waiting for its market value to rise. Here in Vancouver, finding affordable housing on the private market is nearly impossible. We are constantly seeing condos being built while a freeze is in place on the construction of social housing.

Premier Gordon Campbell recently announced that only 697 units of the 1700 non-profit and cooperative housing units frozen in October 2001 will be established. This leaves 1000 units of social housing still frozen. This announcement comes at a time when BC Housing's waiting list has grown to nearly 10,000 households in the previous year and when over 25 per cent of renters in BC are paying more than half of their income on rent.

One response to this crisis is squatting. Squatting is living illegally by occupying empty buildings and houses. People squat for various reasons: to live free of huge rent prices and overbearing slum lords, to live in occupant-controlled housing, to open community spaces and social centres, to publicize the need for social housing and to call attention to the number of vacant homes and buildings.

Vancouver has a lengthy history of squatting. One famous squat in Vancouver was the Frances Street Squats in 1990. Four houses on Frances Street were squatted after being slated for demolition. Fences separating their backyards were torn down, a free store was set up in the garage, and community jamborees and potlucks were held. A women-only squat was also established. Soon after that a fifth and then a sixth house on the street were squatted.

Squatters put up barricades and set small fires in the street on November 25th to defend their homes from being evicted. Over the next two days more and more barricades were built. On November 27th 1990, 80 cops and 30 SWAT team members evicted the squats. In response, activists squatted Mayor Gordon Campbell's office.

Lately there have been quite a few squats happening in order to call attention to the housing crisis that exists across Canada. During the G8 in Ottawa an abandoned house was squatted. The squat on Gilmour Street was called the Seven Year Squat. It took place to call attention to the housing crisis in Ottawa. Currently, 15,000 families in Ottawa are on a seven year waiting list for social housing. After a week the squatters were brutally evicted by the police.

The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty will also be opening up a squat on July 25th 2002. This squat will be called the Pope Squat and will coincide with the Pope's visit to Toronto. It is in response to the serious housing crisis that exists in Toronto. Currently, 63,000 people in Toronto are on the waiting list for housing and 2000 more are evicted monthly from their homes. OCAP is demanding: an end to economic evictions, the creation of effective rent controls, 2000 units of social housing to be built yearly in Toronto and to turn the building they are squatting into a self-managed housing project. OCAP has been very successful in using squatting as a political tool to demand social housing. Two notable OCAP successes are the two buildings at 88-90 Carlton Street in Toronto that they squatted which are now social housing projects.

With the Campbell government viciously attacking the poor it is crucial that we stand up for the rights of people to be housed. Squatting is one way that we can engage in this fight.

July 2002

BEYOND THE COLLAR OF BLIGHT

Jeff Sommers

Until the preeminence of the Coalition of Progressive Electors in the November 2002 civic elections, the received wisdom for most of Vancouver's political establishment was that the root of the Downtown Eastside's woes was a supposed concentration of social housing in the neighbourhood. The logic runs like this: social housing is for poor people; if you build it, they will come and, in the Downtown Eastside, they have arrived. A similar line of reasoning has been followed with regard to a perceived concentration of services in the area, which also "attract" poor people. In both cases, the poor are seen as a burden, a source of inconvenient problems like drug use and prostitution that they inflict on the rest of us if they are present in too great a number. The problems of the Downtown Eastside would be fixed, according to this argument, if its low income residents were dispersed, possibly by locating social housing and services in other parts of the city (the humane solution) or, if worst comes to worst, by wholesale redevelopment, i.e., gentrification (the practical solution).

The public proponents of this view included not only *The Vancouver Sun's* sometime urban design critic, Trevor Boddy (who advocated it while waxing eloquently over the beauty of a recent social housing project on Cordova Street)¹, but two people who should know better, former Vancouver Mayors Mike Harcourt and Art Philips. Both had been involved with the area more than thirty years ago, long before it was a significant site for social housing. But neither chose to remember that even then the neighbourhood was the poorest in the city. Nor did they choose to remember that the rapid increase in social housing in the Downtown Eastside can be traced to two particular sources with which both should be familiar.²

First, the market housing stock that dominated the Downtown Eastside for decades—single room occupancy (SRO) hotels—was probably the worst in the city and, by the late 1960s, had become a central object of housing reformers. Second, local advocacy groups and their allies across the city demanded that social housing be

constructed in the neighbourhood for the people who lived there. Contrary to the claims of deliberate “ghettoization” of the marginalized that have been advanced by people from various parts of the political spectrum, the vast bulk of social housing in the Downtown Eastside was not placed there by government fiat, but as a result of local activism and organization.

Any controversy over the placement of social housing is of recent origin and is related to the gentrification of the area that began in the late 1980s. As the move-in rate of incoming middle class property owners accelerated in the early 1990s, the area became a site of conflict between this new group, often allied with local business organizations, and those representing the low income population. As is now well-known, the conflict, which simmered for most the decade, erupted into open and direct confrontation in 1998, as the gentrifiers and businesses sought to pressure the City to apply police force to deal with the drug situation. Yet this was only a tactical move. For the better part of the 1990s the conflict had centred, not around drugs, but around issues of housing, services and development. Because of the panic that ensued when health authorities declared that an HIV/AIDS epidemic was in progress among intravenous drug users, the drug issue provided a key vector for stigmatizing social housing and services for the poor by forging an near-indelible connection between poverty, drug use and disease (Sommers & Blomley 2003).

It is not clear whether this link will indeed be permanent, given the defeat of the Downtown Eastside gentrifier and business groups, intimately tied to the Non-Partisan Association (NPA), in the civic election.³ But, whatever the outcome, such a development is something of an irony given the tortuous history of social housing in the Downtown Eastside, a story that begins with the proposed urban renewal in Strathcona more than fifty years ago.

In the late 1940s, the City commissioned Leonard Marsh, the founder of the UBC School of Social Work and influential member of the League for Social Reconstruction—which played a key role in the formation of the Canadian welfare state—to detail a vision for its plan to clear the “collar of blight” that surrounded the

downtown peninsula. His proposal for the urban renewal of Vancouver's East End district was published in the wake of a housing crisis in the city. Only two years before, returning veterans and their families had moved into newly built houses on Renfrew Heights from the old Hotel Vancouver building at Georgia and Granville, which they had occupied in 1946, demanding adequate housing (Wade 1994).

Marsh proffered an image of a modern, high-rise neighbourhood that would rise on the literal ruins of the old wooden buildings that were then seen as defective slum premises. Yet, when he wrote his report, entitled *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood*, in 1950 Marsh certainly wasn't thinking that, half a century later, the houses in the neighbourhood that he had dubbed Strathcona would be selling for close to half a million dollars or that the area that he had envisioned as a paragon of progressive, modernist planning is one of Vancouver's trendiest neighbourhoods. The still-standing houses that would have been leveled and replaced with concrete, brick, glass, and pavement are now among the most desired in the city and are fetching a fortune. The streets that surround them are green and leafy, lined with SUVs and beamers. The neighbourhood is considered to be a vital centre of Vancouver's burgeoning arts scene. One Strathcona block was the city's inaugural "most beautiful block."

This "renaissance" was only made possible by the revolt against urban renewal that began in the late 1960s as Strathcona residents, most of whom were Chinese-Canadian, were joined by academics, students, community organizers and westside heritage supporters to derail the City's plans to level the neighbourhood and push a freeway through it (Ley 1994). Yet, by the very same token, it was this same combination of forces that promoted the vision of social housing and services for the poor (Sommers 2001).

The neighbourhood that is now called the Downtown Eastside, but was then widely known as the city's skid road district, was also slated for demolition. By the mid-1960s, civic authorities saw urban renewal as a means of dispersing the skid road population, a move that was resisted by the mostly church-based agencies then offering services to residents.⁴ It was not until the area became a site for community

organizing and countercultural activities, as well as an object of a burgeoning heritage preservation movement, that a serious challenge was mounted to the City's plans.

But it was not only urban renewal that was at issue. Students and community organizers swarmed through the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona (as well as all the other inner city neighbourhoods)⁵, helping residents set up public housing tenants associations, studying health issues, organizing legal clinics, daycares, and a range of other activities. In 1972 the newly-formed Vancouver Community Legal Assistance Society delivered a report to City Council detailing its investigation into conditions in the SRO hotels that housed the bulk of the district's population.⁶ The primary reason these accommodations were so abysmal, the report claimed, was that City bylaws were not stringent enough and City building inspectors did not use the bylaws that were there. The City retorted that there was no point in either enforcing or strengthening its bylaws because the people who lived in the hotels were the real problem: if a landlord did repair a building, it would soon be wrecked by the carelessness and neglect of its tenants.

Such a challenge did not go unanswered and by the time the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA) was officially formed the following year, the condition of housing was perhaps the key organizing issue in the community. DERA made its name, and changed the public recognition of the neighbourhood, through vociferous activism aimed at slum landlords, shoddy business operators and neglectful politicians and bureaucrats. When landlords let their buildings slide, DERA picketed the premises and drew media attention to the situation.

This local activism combined with the election of a moderate reform council at the city level in 1973, and a left-wing provincial government, elected the previous year, to put housing on the public agenda. The City began to work with the Central Mortgage and Housing Agency (now CMHC), the Federal government housing group, and BC Housing, to initiate a series of projects for senior citizens in the mixed residential-industrial area northeast of Main and Hastings. Changes to the National Housing Act had enabled non-profit organizations to receive Federal funding for

housing and by the early 1980s several groups, including DERA and the First United Church, were either already operating or planning housing projects for the area.

The involvement of non-profits in direct housing provision and management would have a number of implications for the community, not all of them positive. First, local management of housing meant that project operators were more responsive to the needs and interventions of the community itself. As social housing has proliferated in the community over the 1980s and 1990s, SRO tenants have had increasing access to a better quality, low-rent alternative. Second, it began to stabilize the housing situation by taking land off the property market and vesting it in public ownership. However, because most social and cooperative housing in the area sits on land that was either already owned or acquired by the City for housing construction, the community has gained no equity from this process. Third, as landlords, housing organizations are placed in the position of exercising authority over their tenants. Groups that once sought to represent and advocate on behalf of the community to the outside power structure were gradually resituated in the minds of many residents as the local face of that structure. Finally, the requirements of housing provision are such that organizations become more and more preoccupied with project management, effectively diverting their energy and resources from advocacy.

The emergence of community-based housing organizations thus marked a shift in community institutions, away from activist interventions and toward increasing cooperation and mediation with the local state (Ley and Hassan). This took place at precisely the same time that the entire City, but especially the Downtown peninsula and the inner city neighbourhoods that surround it, underwent a profound transformation that was the product, in part, of increasing investment in property development, spurred on by zoning changes.

Since 1970, the inner neighbourhoods of the city had been bleeding their once substantial stock of cheap single rooms. Once estimated at more than 20,000 in 1970, the stock now numbers less than 6,000 rooms (City of Vancouver Housing Centre 1995). The sweep of gentrification that began in the late 1970s in Kitsilano and

moved eastward through Fairview Slopes and up to Main Street, in the decade following, decimated much of the stock outside the Central Business District. Meanwhile, fires and bylaw closures in the Downtown and West End during the 1970s and 1980s were soon accompanied by intensifying redevelopment pressure that began shortly before the Expo '86 world's fair. As redevelopment proceeded apace through the 1990s, property values skyrocketed, and as home-buyers began looking east for cheaper property, gentrification took root in neighbourhoods like Strathcona and Grandview, where there had once been a plentiful supply of single and housekeeping rooms.

While it's true, as civic leaders continue to point out, that since the late 1980s the construction of social housing in the Downtown and Downtown Eastside has kept pace with the loss of SROs in those areas, it is also true that the situation is more complicated than a simple one-to-one swap. For one thing, there has never been a complete overlap between the tenants of each kind of housing. Some of the city's early projects were designed for the so-called hard-to-house population—the same people that bylaw inspectors had once blamed for the deterioration of the hotels. However, for the most part, social housing has been constructed for the most stable elements of the low income population—not only in the Downtown Eastside but all over the city.

In the Downtown Eastside, much of the older, longer term population moved out of the hotels into the new social housing projects. A recent survey of the SRO population found that hotel residents were both younger and more unhealthy than had been the case ten years earlier (Main and Hastings 2001). Many of the people who now live in the hotels require the kind of social and health support that is only provided in places like the New Portland Hotel and a few other projects.

This situation is made even more complex by three other intertwined elements. One, already noted, is the virtual redevelopment of much of the Downtown peninsula and the inflow of some 25,000 new residents, together with the mostly upscale services they demand. As in Strathcona and the Downtown Eastside, middle income homeowners and renters dwelling in shiny new high-rises and townhouses rub

shoulders with the poor, many of whom now sleep in parking lots and doorways because the cheap rooms that once housed such people are no longer plentiful.

The second, related, element in this equation is the reorientation of the Downtown economy away from its old industrial base on the Burrard Inlet and False Creek waterfronts. This shift, which actually began post-World War II, was consolidated by the removal of the last vestiges of industrial activity from the north shore of False Creek in preparation for Expo '86. It has been replaced, as in virtually every other North American city, by an economy based on producer and consumer services as well as tourism and niche sectors like design and software development. While there has been little research on the social effects of this service-based economy in Vancouver, some writers have argued that one of the key characteristics of service-based globalizing cities is a tendency toward labour market polarization between high wage professional, technical and managerial sectors and lower wage workers (Sassen 2000 & 2001). Certainly there is evidence at the national level of increasing income inequality in Canada (Zyblock & Zhengxi 1997; Picot 1998).

The final element affecting housing in the Downtown Eastside is state restructuring at both Federal and Provincial levels. The withdrawal of the Federal government from new housing provision was mitigated for much of the 1990s by the continuing Provincial commitment. However, the provincial Liberal Party has also now abandoned new social housing construction. This is compounded by the draconian income assistance regime (initiated under the same New Democratic Party government that kept building social housing, and intensified by the Liberals) that not only cuts rates while making it more difficult to obtain, but has now set time limits that will shortly (as of March 31, 2004) disconnect thousands of people from the social safety net. This has all taken place in the much broader context of the continuing high unemployment that resulted from the abandonment of full employment policies in the wake of the opening of national markets to international competition.

The results of the pressures exerted by all these forces, from gentrification, redevelopment and the declining stock of SROS, to wider economic changes and

welfare state retrenchment, have been visible on the street, not only in the Downtown Eastside, but all over the inner and core neighbourhoods of the city. Marginality is visibly on the increase, as the presence of homeless people, panhandlers and an open drug market attests. Under such conditions, conflicts over housing and the presence of marginalized groups on the streets, which have become more familiar over the past decade, will likely continue and perhaps intensify.

Leonard Marsh, the visionary of Strathcona urban renewal, would probably be surprised not only that the neighbourhood is still full of wooden houses but that only a short walk from this fashionable, renovated district are two encampments of homeless people at Strathcona and Creekside parks. Meanwhile, the proponents of the concentration thesis have been conspicuously silent about the Provincial departure from social housing provision. Of course, since there will no longer be any new social housing built, they don't have to argue that it should be built outside the Downtown Eastside. Fifty years after the first attempt to address it, the housing question in this part of the city still escapes any resolution.

NOTES

1 (Boddy 2003). The Lore Krill Co-op is located half a block from the Woodward's building and was constructed with funds that were originally intended for social housing there. When the building's then-owner, Fama Holdings, reneged on its deal with the Province, the funding was re-allocated to two housing co-ops in the area.

2 The Downtown Eastside has 23% of Vancouver's social and cooperative housing stock but only 3.2% of its population (City of Vancouver Planning Department 2001).

3 Business and home-owner groups in Strathcona and the Gastown tourist district have developed close associations with the NPA. For example, a prominent, long-time member of the Gastown Business Improvement Association, J.P. Shason, was intimately involved with financing the party's civic election campaigns while another, Grant Longhurst, a communications consultant, ran the campaigns. When the NPA lost the 2002 election, a member of the Strathcona BIA sat on its Board of Directors, together with well-known Gastown homeowner and gentrification advocate, Lynn Bryson.

4 These groups were organized into the Downtown Clergy Committee, which was composed of groups like St. James Social Services, First United Church, the Salvation Army and Catholic Charities.

5 Vancouver's inner city neighbourhoods include the districts surrounding False Creek starting with Kitsilano, on the west, Fairview, Mount Pleasant, Strathcona, and Grandview. The Downtown peninsula includes the Central Business District, Downtown Eastside, and the West End.

6 (VCLAS 1971). For the response of City staff see (VSPD 1971), known informally as "The Skid Road Report."

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*R*ally to Resist the cuts

RALLY AND MARCH
Saturday September 14th
12:00 High Noon
Victory Square
(Hastings St. & Cambie)
Vancouver.



Join other community members at a rally to begin a week of actions against the Liberal/Corporate Agenda cuts. Many efforts have been made to get the Provincial governments' attention, but all have failed.

It's time to try a new approach.

COME PREPARED FOR DIRECT ACTION

This rally is key to the success of the weeks' events. At the rally we will be addressing welfare cuts, treaty rights, homelessness, the sale of government services to the private sector, and the mean-spirited and illogical cuts to health care services. We need your participation.

For Information call 604-682-3269 ext. 8883 leave message for Jim

COMMUNITY ACTIONS (09/06)

Jim Leyden

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Members of the People's Opposition pulled together a collective of key activists to organize a mid-September action against the Liberal/Corporate coalition. Starting on Saturday, September 14th and ending on Saturday, September 21st there will be daily rallies drawing attention to the Liberal/Corporate cuts and inhumane agenda. We will be running a "pirate" radio station as well as transmitting live through internet links so we can tell the real uncensored truth about the rallies. We hope this week of rallies and non-violent direct action coupled with calls for strategic direct action across the province will move the resistance to the Liberal Corporate agenda into a new level of activism. We hope to put a spotlight on the fiscal ineptness of the cuts and privatization. We feel it is important that this event occur before the next sitting of the legislature and the concurrent rally. Our request of you is that you ask your people to come out to support our events and further consider sending some financial support to our campaign. The setup of an internet station and the feeding of the community during this week will not be without financial costs. If you believe as we do that action against the Campbell attacks must effectively increase then we welcome your support and acts of solidarity.

Yours in Cause,
Jim Leyden
Steering Committee member

BUSTIN' INTO WOODWARDS

Shawn Millar

In the second week of September I heard that Gordzilla and his band of slimy cut-throats were quietly selling off the Woodward's building. Jim Leyden had been talking about occupying Woodward's for weeks before but the idea had seemed somewhat daunting to me. The urgency of the news—that the shadows were moving—dissolved any trepidation I had.

Saturday Morning (the 14th) three of us and one dog met on the Abbott side of the building with pack-sacks full of camping gear, banners, a megaphone and two



extension ladders. We heard guard dogs inside so I crowbarred through the boarded up second story window with pepper-spray at the ready. Thankfully the dogs didn't come up from the main floor, so we quickly hauled all our stuff (and our dog) in through the window. Then we hurriedly hung banners in the southeast corner windows in preparation

for the rally marching down Hastings Street from Victory Square.

The rally wasn't large but it was loud and enthusiastic, chanting "Campbell's cuts are class war!" Emboldened by the passion of the people, I grabbed the megaphone: "The provincial government is planning to sell off this building that has for a decade been slated for social housing to a private developer. This is a theft from our

community and so we are opening Woodward's today and inviting anyone who wants to come up and visit our new social housing!" I was hardly electrifying, but people began climbing the ladders and entering the gutted place.

Woodward's is huge and primed for development. After a brief meeting of folks determined to occupy (roughly 10 men and women), I grabbed an armful of banners and a sturdy looking fellow to climb the big red "W". The air was a bit still that day and after a thrilling climb to the top, three long banners hung from the "W" saying "Campbell's Olympic Shame." This refers to the evil one's willingness to spend billions and billions of dollars on the chance of



hosting a two-week long sporting event eight years down the road, while our own citizens suffer more and more from deprivation of the basic necessities of life.

Since the "government" began this current swindle of Woodward's from the Downtown Eastside community and BC society, what began as a modest political statement has taken on a life of its own. It has grown into a huge squat of homeless people, complete with despicable police brutality, media contortions, huge public support and visceral commitment from people holding the politicians to their responsibilities. The current slogan the folks are chanting the loudest is "we shall win!"

WE SHALL WIN!

CALL FOR SUPPORT DEMONSTRATION (09/15)

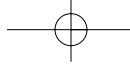
Anti-Poverty Committee

Sunday, September 15th 2002

6:30pm at the old Woodward's building

101 West Hastings (Hastings and Abbott)

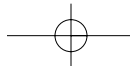
This demonstration has been called to support the Woodward's squatters in the battle for more social housing. The building was taken Saturday afternoon to protest the epidemic of homelessness in Vancouver. The problem of affordable housing in BC is very serious, and it became much worse under the BC Liberals with the freezing of all funding for new social housing projects. Woodward's was one of the many social housing projects that the Liberals cancelled, and the struggle for this building has been going on for almost a decade. It is an outrage that people are forced to live on the streets while huge buildings like Woodward's sit empty. It is even more of an outrage to see high-end condos shooting up everywhere downtown, pushing land rents up and pushing poor people out of the area. Our living situations must not be left up to the whims of the real estate market: housing is a basic human right that we are all entitled to, and we must fight for it. At this point, the police are trying to isolate the squatters, cutting off access in and out from the building at night. It is likely that without this measure, the building would quickly fill up with people, as there is plenty of space inside it and plenty of homeless people in need of shelter. We need to show our support by coming to the building Sunday night and ensuring that access to the building is not cut off again. People can come down to the site to show support, and are encouraged to join the squatters if possible. Aside from that, the squatters need material support. The Woodward's squatters need: food, blankets, mattresses...



WE WILL NOT SUBMIT TO CORPORATE DOMINATION

Nathan

We will not submit to corporate domination. We will not let someone else's money and greed rule our lives. This movement is a positive rebellion. The acts of destruction waged upon the poor must be met with equal force. We have tried these tactics of peaceful demonstration. We have tried the participatory act of voting and asking for change. We have tried all idealistic forms of resistance but to no avail. This monster of capitalist imperialism must be stopped now. Gordon Campbell is your local representative of a system that wants you dead if it means a little more dollar in his pocket. We need to show Gordon and all his aging white male bosses that British Columbia will not be dominated for foreign profit. We must act directly in equal proportion to the acts of domination and degradation to our bodies and environment. We need to put our bodies on the line as the most useful tool we have in defense of what is right. When the earth is attacked you are attacked. When someone attacks you, you have the right to defend yourself. The best defense against a system that attacks from behind a wall is an offense of breaking down their wall and reclaiming the power over our lives that is rightfully ours. We must act before all forms of resistance are restricted even more. The police that oppress us do not do so out of honest belief that what they are representing and defending is right. They oppress us because they are paid to. They are not the enemy, rather victims of the same system we are fighting against. Paid thugs make the choice to put on their uniforms out of misguided fear. Fear that one day amidst the imminent fall of capitalism they too might become poor. We are being pushed down so someone else can rise up. We are being drowned in the poverty they create. So we fight to keep our heads above water but we need to fight the hand that keeps us down. We must fight the battle in the streets for real justice and eventual peace.



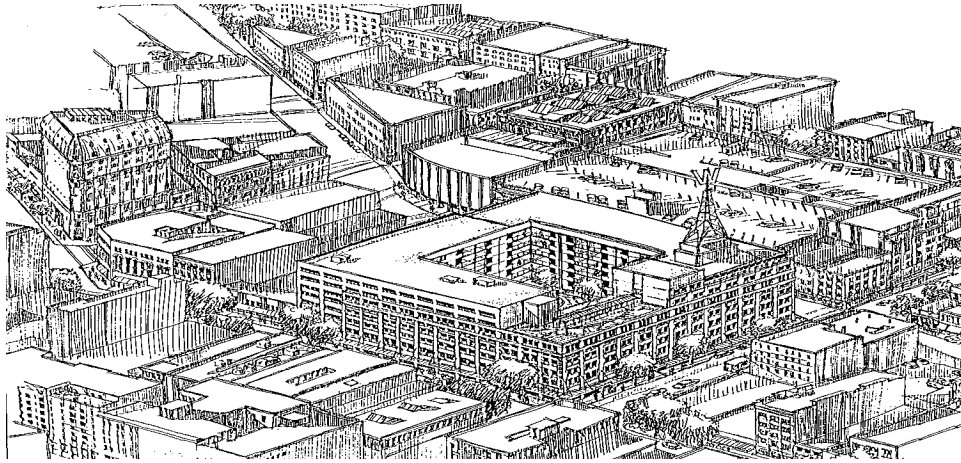
FOUR UPDATES (09/16)*Azad & Marwan*

Update - 2002.09.16 - 14:16 - Azad (cell) & Marwan (computer) 5:25pm Mon Sep 16 '02. At 14:16 today (2002.09.16) three police cars are at the back of the building. Police car numbers: * C8143 * B8182 * C8063. There are 7 (seven) cops, 1 (one) guy in suit, 2 (two) security guards and 1 (one) plain-clothes going in. The cops claim to have a court order but they won't say what the court order is for. When the support people told the cops that there is no such court order, the cops then changed their story to "we just want to talk, it's the Canadian way!" Our people think the cops are going in to serve a notice from the landlord to evacuate the building due to health concerns.

Update - 2002.09.16 - 14:30 - Azad (cell) & Marwan (computer) 5:39pm Mon Sep 16 '02. We have heard that the court order does not allow the police to move in against the squatters. But the courts have advised that the squatters evict the building for their own safety. The judge has instructed that only one cop and one security guard to deliver the notice from the landlord. So far 5 (five) of the cops have gone in, with 3 (three) security guards, 1 (one) suit and 1 (one) lawyer went in. The 2 (two) other cops are waiting by the cop cars at back. There is one cop car (# D8002) with 1 (one) cop in it around the corner at the back of building. Several other police cars are circling the building, about a two block radius. There is also a ghost cop car around, plate number RAK021. A lawyer for the squatters has also gone into the building. More info will be posted as we receive it.

Update - 2002.09.16 - 15:14 - Azad (cell) & Marwan (computer) 6:56pm Mon Sep 16 '02. The person in the suit is a BC Housing representative. All individuals that went into the squatted building have now come out, except for the two security guards that have always been on the first floor of the building. The notice that was served is a court order from the owners to clear the building in 48 (forty eight) hours, citing safety concerns. There are three owners of the building, they are: * Vancouver City * BC

Housing * Geoffrey Hughes. The police informed some of the support crew outside that since the notice has been served, the owners can file for an immediate removal notice which would allow the police to go in with full force to remove the squatters.



Detail from Fama Holdings redevelopment design found inside the Woodward's Squat.

Update - 2002.09.16 - 15:33 - Azad (cell) & Marwan (computer) 7:12pm Mon Sep 16 '02. Lots of politics will be involved in keeping this squat alive. There is big big big money in the background. SFU, Gastown and another company are involved in the Woodward's building and surrounding area. They are planning on building offices, "nice" condos, another SFU campus and expanding Gastown. So there won't be room for poor or homeless people in their plans. This might make it very hard for the squatters to hold the building, as big money will be guiding the police's action. If anyone has any contact or influence with any of the abovementioned groups, then please put some weight on them. We are in the process of getting some of the groups at SFU involved. If you can help spread the word please do so. Everyone is encouraged to come down and help support the squatters with equipment, tools, food, money or just a smile and a few words of encouragement.

CALL FOR SECOND SUPPORT DEMONSTRATION (09/19) *Coalition of Woodward's Squatters and Supporters*

*Support the Woodward's Squat!!! / Demonstration for Social Housing
Thursday Sept 19, 5pm / At the Woodward's Squat: Corner of Abbott and Hastings*

The Woodward's building was opened for free housing on Saturday September 14th by a group of housing activists and squatters from all around Vancouver. On Monday September 16th the squatters were issued a court injunction that was followed on Tuesday with an enforcement order. Police Inspector Ken Frail asked the squatters to come up with a plan that would result in a swift and peaceful resolution. The squatters developed the idea of a meeting with crucial decision making parties and five accompanying demands. They are refusing to leave until their demands are met. We demand a meeting at 5pm on Thursday September 19th between BC Housing; City Council; Geoffrey Hughes, the private partner interested in buying the building; Housing Minister George Abbott; Premier Gordon Campbell; and all of the squatters. The squatters feel that a meeting with all of these crucial groups is the only way to resolve this problem peacefully. If the squatters are forcibly removed without resolution they have promised that they will return and continue the fight for social housing. Further to the demands, the squatters require binding agreements that would guarantee that promises for social housing in Woodward's are not backed out on for the fourth time in ten years. With police pressure mounting and the political effect of the squat on the Liberals mounting, it is absolutely essential that we show the demands and the struggle have massive and diverse support throughout the city. It is important that when the officials come to the meeting at the squat on Thursday at five, they are greeted with a huge crowd that will not settle for any more stalls or excuses in the development of Woodward's into social housing. If the political and business representatives do not show up, it is equally important that a large rally exists to embarrass them.

IN THE COURTS OR IN THE STREETS

Kaspar Learn

The freezing of the social housing budget is only one example of the sweeping cuts to public infrastructure implemented by the BC Liberal government. With the coming winter, the struggle for social housing, in particular, has become a life or death struggle. Behind the rhetoric of a balanced budget, the war of state and capital against the poor and working class has been escalated. Evictions of senior citizens from long-term care have taken place. Long welfare waits have been imposed. Health care and education have suffered. With the creation of these neo-liberal policies, the brutal nature of capitalist economics has been laid bare, and a movement of opposition has begun. The fight for social housing is also a fight for social justice. The squat in the Woodward's building is only one example of actions that will be taken to ensure and restore the integrity of public services like social housing **BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY**. Nor should it be thought that we intend only to oppose the excesses of capitalism while leaving its daily, grinding brutality intact. With the state's threat to end our non-violent occupation of an abandoned building, we are forced to examine the police and what consequences have resulted from the violent control of our communities. It would seem that they, too, have a role to play in the social forces that have led to this occupation. The struggle against police brutality, harassment and racism has also become central to the conflict between the powerful and the powerless. With the threat of police force, it is apparent that to demand social housing and to begin to take back our communities are one and the same. In closing, I would like to state that we are tired of begging for token concessions. The daily rule of capital over our lives must end. We will continue to fight the BC Liberal regime with whatever tools make themselves available, be it in the courts or in the streets. We will continue to do so until basic human rights have been established for all, until the spectres of exposure, scarcity and police brutality no longer haunt our streets. We are fighting to win. Thank you all for your time and support.



The Second Support Demonstration (09/19) – Photograph by Marwan



The Second Support Demonstration (09/19) – Photograph by Marwan

DEMANDS

Mike Krebs

With actions like the Woodward's Squat it is always important to have demands. This is how we make clear why we do what we are doing. It is a way to answer the simple question that people ask us when we take a stand: "What do you people want? Why are you doing this?" Demands also provide focus to the action. All the work in an action or campaign can be structured around its demands, providing a guide to always refer to before deciding on what course of action is the best. In the case of the Woodward's Squat, demands were drafted to define the movement for housing that is unfolding against the Campbell Government. Generally, there are two types of demands that we put together: demands that can be easily won in the short-term and demands that will build more involvement in an action, which may not be winnable in the short term but are appealing enough to draw more people in and make bigger gains in the long-run.

Clearly we want to improve our lives through our actions, so in some cases we definitely need immediate gains to put ourselves in a better position for self-defense. But we have to always remember that there is a reason for our poverty and suffering. There are people who benefit from the housing crisis in Vancouver: landlords, for example. By leaving buildings empty, landlords create a false shortage in housing, forcing people to compete for limited (and low-quality) housing. This pushes up rents, since people have less choice about where they can live, and have no choice but to accept high rents. People are also forced to accept substandard housing since the landlord saves money by not maintaining and repairing the property. It is relationships like this, the relationship between landlords and renters, which not only maintain poverty, but also make it worse.

Short-term gains, like more homeless shelters, might make things less painful for the few people who are fortunate enough to find space in one. But they do not change the situation that creates homelessness: many buildings will remain empty, landlords

will still squeeze profits out of the lucky ones that find housing and we are forced to live in substandard housing, or no housing at all. That's what makes these demands easier to win, because for those in positions of power that are ripping us off, nothing really changes. To give in to these demands is no big deal to them. Is this what we want? Do we really want all of our hard work and struggle to end with little results and no long-term change? Temporary shelters are not a solution. If we want real solutions to the housing crisis we need demands that will actually challenge the current relationship between us and the landlords. To do this we need to increase the number of people involved in the movement for decent housing. It is the strength of our numbers, as poor people, that will put enough pressure on those in control to give in.

If we want to build our movement and expand we need demands that will move people. If the demands are not appealing enough, people will not waste their time: "Do I really want to get involved in this mess for little or no gains?" We need to get people inspired. We need other poor people to realize that they deserve much, much more than what they have right now. People will get involved if they see that it is worth their while, that their lives will be improved in a meaningful way if they fight for it. It is with this approach that many of the Woodward's Squat demands were designed.

THE SIX DEMANDS OF THE COALITION OF WOODWARD'S SQUATTERS & SUPPORTERS

1. Develop Woodward's as social housing immediately. (There must be an allotment of housing in the building for aboriginal people equal to or greater than the percentage of aboriginal people in the Downtown Eastside.)
2. Reverse the cuts to social housing and all social services.
3. Draft a civic anti-vacancy by-law to seize & convert empty, abandoned buildings into social housing.
4. Full disclosure of all information regarding the proposed sale and development of the building.

5. The Federal government must fund and support the development of aboriginal business in the proposed commercial storefronts on the ground floor of Woodward's. These storefronts must also include an urban native self-governing office with drop-in / support services and culturally sensitive native liaison workers from the community.
6. Decent and dignified immediate shelter for all homeless squatters forced from Woodward's and asked to leave the sidewalk in front of the building.

The process of putting together demands for the squat began during the first week, while people were still inside the building. Over several meetings, the squatters discussed and debated demands. The demands were then brought to coalition meetings for further discussion. This was a way to make sure that the voice of the squatters was at the forefront and also allowed those outside supporters to have a say. Initially, there were four demands. Most of these demands showed the political nature of the squat: people wanted to fight for social housing, wanted to fight against the cuts to social programs brought in by the Liberal government and wanted the city to deal with the hypocrisy where so many buildings are left empty and dilapidated while people are forced to live outside. These demands showed that people did not want quick-fix concessions: people were demanding solutions to the housing crisis.

After the first set of demands was put forth, people involved with the squat raised concerns that certain issues were being left out. First Nations people brought up the fact that the demands did not address First Nations issues. This was a problem from the beginning where First Nations concerns were ignored or swept under the rug.

First Nations people always had a key role in the Woodward's Squat, and with good reason. Aboriginal people are among the poorest people in Canada. First Nations people make up 40% of the Downtown Eastside population, and 70% of Vancouver's Native population lives there. Vancouver is located on unceded territory, meaning that, legally, the land belongs to the Coast Salish. Aboriginal homelessness is an

especially disgusting crime of the Canadian government, where First Nations people are reduced to beggars on their own land. Eventually the First Nations people were able to get the group to discuss new demands that would address their needs. During these discussions, both types of demands mentioned earlier were presented: on the one hand, there were demands that space be allocated for Aboriginal business, drop-in centres, etc. Other First Nations people wanted demands that directly addressed sovereignty and the land question: how can the police clear people off the street/out of the building if they don't have any legal right to the land? The demand for Aboriginal business and centres was accepted in the end. Unfortunately, the non-Natives involved in the squat were not willing to support demands that addressed the land question. This is the standard approach: especially in an area like the DTES, the service-agency approach is the preferred "solution" to address the issues of poor people. For the most part, however, these programs do little to actually deal with our situation. Aboriginal businesses can only help a few people at the most. They do not address the poverty of First Nations people as a whole. The same is true for service agencies: they might make it a little bit easier for people to get through the day but they don't actually work to end poverty, and they certainly don't empower people to gain more control over their lives.

If we want to make gains in the Woodward's Squat battle, or in any other campaign, we need meaningful demands that can actually create change. We already have homeless shelters: they don't provide a real home and they don't provide stability for poor people. We already have services for aboriginal people: they don't address the theft of Native land that led to poverty for First Nations people in the first place. We need to ask for what we deserve. We need demands that will expand the movement for decent housing. If we don't have jobs or welfare rates that provide us with the money to afford decent housing then we must demand that the government provide subsidized housing. We need long-term solutions and *we have to struggle for them*.

SQUAT THE WORLD

Skyy

After Vince & me took the Skytrain into Vancouver we got off at Commercial and Broadway to try and find Pudge. We roamed around a tad but we were tired so we crashed behind this building. The next day we bought a map of Vancouver and Vince went to some resource place to get information on soup kitchens and youth drop-ins. Ahah. At this point I needed a shower sooo bad. I had my hair in chaos spikes. But since in Vancouver the rain made the knox fuck up and they fell over. So it looked like I had short clumpy dreads. We managed to mark out on the map all the areas in which the soup kitchens and drop-ins were located and we walked. The first place we went to was called the Union Gospel Mission. You had to sit through a church service to get a meal. I thought that was funny as hell.

Later that night we searched out Dusk Till Dawn, a drop-in for teenz open from 8pm to 6am. It was a loooong walk from where we were. Walking down near Main & Hastings for the first time was quite interesting. Prostitutes flocked the street on the right and to the left was the Carnegie Centre. People were laying all over the ground and some were shooting up right there in the open. I never seen that before. Maybe a little in Montréal but usually I'd see the person go off by themselves or one other person and do it in a hidden place. Not just right out in the open everywhere.

Farther down the line I saw a bunch of flyers and stuff on a building with tons of people around. Big sheetz that had sayings like "Empty buildings: people on the street?" and a picture of a building. Some that said "shame," "this is our home," "social housing now." Hmmm. I was curious. But I kept walking cause we needed to find Dusk Till Dawn.

That night I got so sick. We slept on a beach by the water. And when I woke up I could not hardly breathe, my throat was so swollen and I just felt like extreme shit. All day long we roamed around like that. Squeegeed for a while to buy some juice and

throat drops. Met up with some of our Québec friends. Then that night I could barely walk. I needed to rest or I would just make myself worse. At the soup kitchen that night I asked if they could help me find a shelter to stay in. I HATE SHELTERS. But that was how bad I was. Now I'm a girl that even in the dead of winter if avoidable I would not sleep in a shelter. I HATE them, so ya know I really was sick. But of course every single shelter in Vancouver was FULL. FULLLLLLL. And still not only I but thousands of people were stuck out on the street. I got taken to a health clinic and a nurse said that I was pretty bad and I needed to get to a hospital to be taken care of properly. Ahhhhh what's my biggest fear besides shelters? Hospitals ahaha ...

The people at the health clinic mentioned, "hey there is a squat that just opened up to us, maybe you should go check it out." The squat they were talking about is the thing I seen the night before with all the banners and people. Me and Vince went down there and looked around, signed their petition and talked to a few nice people at the table on the corner. A cute guy came over and started talking to us. His name was Nathan. Told us the story of what was going on there. Then two punk kids came over. Kasper and Tom. They were kool. Ahaha. Then a kid with dreads and a hippie drum looked over. I was like OH MY GOD! TRAVIS!!! and he came over gave me a big hug. I had met him in Ottawa the previous winter. He introduced me to the friend he was with. Sky. Another Sky... hehe it was cute. And that's how I got into the squat. Went up the latter ahh oh man it was high.

Automatically in there it was amazing. HUGE. People were really friendly and helped me with my pack sack, gave me a blanket and a chair, they were watching the news on a small black and white TV. Donations of food were coming up the ladder and someone brought up bags of tobacco and handed them out with rolling papers. Sweet. Shortly after a while of meeting people I went upstairs to the 3rd floor and had a peaceful warm sleep.

After going in and meeting everyone I quickly felt at home. I stayed in the squat for days before I gained courage to go back down the ladder again. By this time I was feeling much better and had made a lot of friends inside.

One of the jobs I had picked up on the inside was cooking and cleaning in the kitchen. Every single person was making themselves useful. It was an awesome feeling for me to be needed and that sense of being in a family was there. And that is how everybody felt! People with drug addictions (including myself) stopped using as frequently or even altogether just so we could have our minds clear and to be of better use. See we had meetings every night to discuss what needed to be done in order of us getting things accomplished with this squat. And people said that everyone should work at least two hours a day so its fair. It happened. Some people did not want the use of any drugs (excluding marijuana) in the squat. It happened.

Five days in, around 11pm, there is a warning from the media saying the cops announced they were busting the place the next morning. No one panic! Well we pulled together, and said if you are not prepared to get arrested for this cause itz best you leave now. Some supporters who weren't even a part of living there before came up and stayed the night. Before it had helped to have a number of people. The cops wouldn't bother.

Me and my friend Supertones were asked to put up barricades for the cops. Kind of a mere warning for us to get ready when we heard them trying to get in. Okay—fuck I'm getting angry at my writing skills and my memory here. Things were so traumatizing there you just don't understand... 6am: Woke up to people screaming from the bottom floor "THE COPS ARE COMING IN WAKE UP!" Now I tried to grab everything I owned cause I knew if I didn't get it now I would never see it again. All I remember is everyone trying to make sense of things, running. We all sat down and joined into a locked arm circle. Meanwhile all you can hear is the cracking of the barricades and smashing echoes. Riot cops storm in banging their shields with their club things looking like HUGE gorillaz. Their faces so cold and intimidating. I look to the right seeing my buddy Tom and his girlfriend trying to make it to the window to escape. They were underage but they also were homeless and needed a place to sleep. They didn't make it. The cops got them. Two cops hauled up the ladders and smashed them to the ground. Our circle of squatters and protesters was encircled by

riot cops. I had never seen something so evil-looking in my life. The first thing said from us: "WE ARE PEACEFUL, DO NOT HARM US, WE ARE PEACEFUL."

Sitting in a circle, the riot cops picked whoever they thought was a leader out first. When they came for Anton I was strangled and smothered. Cops whispering in my ear, "let go of your friend or you're gonna die." I was of course scared shitless. Pissed on the riot cop's shoe. Ahahahah.

I was arrested along with 52 others and 6 under age. I guess that's the W58. We were taken to a city lock up and we were refused the right to speak to our lawyer. We did not see our lawyer until we entered a court room and were in front of a judge. All of us had to sign a contract to get out. Every single one of us did except for a few that said, "hey...we don't have a place to go anyways." They were treated horribly.

After that all of us united once again in front of the squat with the rest of the supporters and onlookers. That night everyone was on edge. Not much sleep, most people slept at the APC office that night. I slept in front of the squat under a table. Cold I was.

The next day donations of food, blankets and everything else we could possibly think came in like crazy. Mattresses. Oh man it was nice to have a huge mattress. And it was kind of funny as well hahah. We set up our mattresses together and relaxed for a bit. Someone gifted me with some money so I bought a camera and some batteries, took lots of pictures with the camera, and put the batteries in my stereo and blasted some good tunes. I thought everything was going to be okay for a while.

That night I was sitting on the ground listening to a meeting going on. And then all of a sudden it was quiet and two police paddywagons went down the street and stopped at the bottom. Seconds later I was surrounded by cops. They swarmed in out of nowhere it seemed, everything was going so fast. I ran to my stuff and I could hear people screaming "SKYY STAY WITH THE GROUP" but I was like I am not losing my belongings. I grabbed my stuff and my friend's stuff that had just been arrested. Holy shit. The cops were kicking people, yelling at them. Some people weren't allowed time to grab their own blankets. Maybe most people wouldn't understand this but on the street sometimes the only thing a person has is maybe a pair of shoes and

some simple clothing. Sometimes if no one else stole it from them they have a bag with some stuff in it. And the cops whose job was to serve and protect were taking this away from us.

Every single mattress that was donated gone into a dumpster truck that was crushin everything on the inside. Every single blanket. Every single bag. Chairs, shoes, lives. I'm surprised they just didn't shove all the homeless in there to be crushed. Why not? That would end their so-called problem.

I was escorted through the crowd. I stayed calm until I reached that so-called safe spot and seen my friend's head bounce off the cement ground by a cop throwing her down. It was so sick. I snapped. I think I told off every single cop there. I was so angry I think I said everything I could imagine. Sure some shit was stupid but god after what I had just seen happen. I mean I didn't even write half of it and I can't possibly tell a person with words how bad it was that night.

We all grouped down at the jail to see when the 10-15 people were going to be released. I stuck around a bit but I was getting too pissed off. I left by myself. While walking down the road, one cop car pulled over, then another, and one across the street. I was like oh fuck man RUN. But I stood there thinking I can't get in trouble I didn't do anything wrong. They harassed me a minute. They were cops from the squat and they knew who I was. I got an 86 dollar ticket for walking on the sidewalk. I didn't complain for fear of being arrested again. So I kept on and ignored their comments.

I sat in front of the empty squat grounds just looking around talking to people that were wondering what happened. Cops drove by just staring me down. It was so heartbreaking though. Before this point in time it hadn't really hit me that cops were evil. I always said in my mind that they were only doing their job. Fuck that bullshit. These cops have no hearts. They would rather attack homeless people than bust a drug dealer. No justice, no peace! The next day everything got started back up at the squat though people were scared. People were crying. Some lost their only possessions as I said. But the donations came in like crazy: clothing, sleeping bags, and food.



Megan Oleson (W54) VPD Arrest Video Still, 7:08am 21 September 2002.



James Toews (W54) VPD Arrest Video Still 7:05am 21 September 2002

THE FIRST TWO EVICTIONS OF THE WOODWARDS SQUAT

Ivan Drury

The morning we got evicted Ken and Toecutter were in charge of security for the Woodward's Squat and they were positioned on the second floor at the hole ripped through the centre of the building. The hole was jagged with rebar and shattered concrete and rose from basement to roof where it was covered with sheets of poly and blue tarps that collected rain water. It was cut through the building as the beginning of a courtyard for a social housing project that got paralysed. We had hung a fluorescent light at the rim of the hole to cast beams of light down to the first floor where cops would be coming in through the loading doors at the back of the building. We didn't know about the tunnel that passes under Cordova Street to the city-owned parkade. We didn't know that there had been police cars and wagons in that parkade all night. At 6am Toecutter and Ken spotted reflective jackets circling on the dark windowless first floor and gave the first warning that the cops were coming in.

Over a hundred squatters were spread throughout the second and third floors of the building. Some made breakfast for the people who had been awake all night building barricades. Others sat around the radio talking about anything but the squat and listening distractedly for any news about the police threat we'd heard the night before. Most people were asleep beneath the wide department store windows and the entire third floor was silent but for the frantic steps of the squat security patrol on the antique slatted wooden boards and the sounds of a hundred troubled sleepers. We got a tip from the media that the police were coming in and the people who were awake scattered with pens and paper to quietly wake the ones sleeping, to give out lawyers' numbers and to take down names.

When the first battering ram hit the steel double doors on the third floor it sent a pulse through the building that shook every single person from their trance. The moment we had waited for, expected, dreaded and nervously hoped for had arrived and everyone froze, not quite believing it. The squat had really become home and the

fluid collection of people had really become a family, imperfect and conflicting and ever changing but standing together to fight and to live. We ran through the cavernous building with the police battering rams sounding like our heartbeats pounding in our heads. Someone had the megaphone siren going and we could hear the wail moving through the building on the legs of the person carrying it screaming, "Six up! Six up! The pigs are coming in! Get up! Get up!" And people got up groggy, dazed. Some scooped up their blankets and bags with a scoop of their arm and ran downstairs. Others sat up and looked around slowly, lazy and indifferent, forever accustomed to being "moved along," just another morning in a forever string of waking up with a cop's jack boot in the ribs. Sometimes removed from an alley, sometimes a park or a shelter and now a squat. Some of these people walked calmly, without defeat, downstairs and climbed out the window and down the ladder to Abbott Street and away to find a doorway to finish the night's sleep. Most of these unbreakable people moved with that same ease to the circle of squatters on the second floor. They put their blankets between their legs and, with ironic smiles, linked arms with the nervous activists and proud hopeful homeless fighters around them.

The battering rams continued to drum the doors without any notion of the barricades giving way. We had driven wedges into the cracks around the elevator doors, filled the stairways above and below us with scrap steel and broken wood, nailed the swinging doors shut, tied them with rope and cable and built walls five feet deep before them. It took ten minutes for the police to break our borders. When the battering rams fell silent we held our breaths and waited. Someone started chanting "Social Housing Now!" and everyone joined in. There were two TV cameras standing outside the circle with spotlights attached above the lens. These lights passed over the circle and then spun and found the police swarming in from the sprung doors across the room. The cops were dressed in body armour that was too small for their uniformly huge bodies so they bulged out of their uniforms with stupid helmets on their heads and six foot poles, bean bag guns and assault rifles in their hands. They kicked over tables, threw a bicycle across the room and smashed whatever they came

across. They stopped when they reached the circle of squatters sitting cross-legged and stared at us. A look of wonder and disappointment passed over their faces as we screamed together, “we are not afraid!” and glared defiantly at them. They arrested the media and took them away, pulled the ladder up from the window, threw it against the floor, and encircled us. There were fifty-four of us and over a hundred of them but they were confused, paralysed and beaten.



They stood above us shuffling their feet and mumbling to each other for five eternal minutes and then started picking us off one at a time. They took a man yelling “I’m handicapped!” first and then a pregnant woman and then set in on the ones who yelled the loudest who they recognized and had decided were the “leaders.” There were no leaders, only police targets: people they tried to isolate from the rest of the group to try to steal the group’s power away, people who the cops knew from the street, people who did not walk away with them quietly. The police set in on individuals in packs of five, pulled us backwards from the circle by the neck or with pressure point holds, gloved fingers up our noses and in our mouths, in the soft spot beneath our ears. The clubs were driven into our ribs and if we refused to walk they plied them under our handcuffed arms and dragged us away. We stood before a camera and they read us our rights and then led us across the floor and down the stairs, through the tunnel to the parkade where the wagons waited. They threatened people who refused to walk, telling one man who they loaded onto a stretcher,

“sometimes accidents happen in dark stairwells,” and stomped on another man’s ankles when he let his feet drag. Our voices echoed back to each other through the stairwells from the tunnel. As the police separated and dragged us from the empty building we had made home we chanted “WE WILL WIN” and even if no one heard us, we knew it was true.

George Abbott, the Minister in charge of Housing, and the rest of the Liberal



Government sent the cops in after us because we challenged their stronghold on the political situation in British Columbia. It no longer mattered that there were only two “opposition” seats in the Victoria Legislature. The opposition to the Liberal Government was in Woodwards. Even more important to Campbell, the opposition was rising in the streets, the city and the province around the Woodwards Squat. Unable to break the squat with threats and unwilling to meet to negotiate because they underestimated the power of the people in the squat, the Liberals had no choice but to attack the squatters with force. They tried to scare people away from the budding movement for social housing, tried to alienate the squatters from the people in the rest of the province, but they failed.

In the wagons we slipped out of our plastic cuffs and shared cigarettes. In the Supreme Court holding cells that morning we sang songs and talked about the racist cops confiscating the shoes of every First Nations man arrested. We were led into the Supreme Court to a full house of supporters and our throats filled with pride when

they rose for us instead of the judge and held their fists high in the air. We were charged with civil contempt of court and given release conditions to not enter the Woodward's building or encourage or counsel anyone to enter the Woodward's building. One man refused to sign the conditions. He said, "I'd rather go to jail than back to the streets." He signed the conditions two days later out of sickness and pain because the jail refused him his methadone.

We were released to the streets in the early afternoon and marched together through the glass and silver fish steel financial district back to the building. We set up the tent city beneath the awning along Abbott Street and put out calls for mattresses and blankets to replace the ones trapped inside the boarded up building that we were forbidden to enter. The government stationed two cops in the dark stairwells twenty-four hours a day to protect their empty building from the homeless.

Sunday morning the first meeting of what would become The Coalition of Woodward's Squatters and Supporters took place in the Carnegie Centre auditorium. The squat had been cleared out but it was not dead, the squatters were not going away and the movement was growing. At noon a community picnic took place at the corner of Abbott and Hastings. We ate off of paper plates, talked in hushed voices about what we had to do and listened to musicians sing protest songs in the late summer sun. At 10pm we held a meeting on the sidewalk to talk about the eviction and to plan. Everyone knew we had been attacked by the Government because we were doing the right thing. Right from the beginning of the meeting we talked about the fight ahead but before we could make any decisions we were attacked again.

Two wagons sped down Abbott Street and swung sideways to block the Cordova end. Cruisers stopped on either side of the meeting circle. Hastings was blocked by wagons and cruisers. Within thirty seconds a team of cops on foot approached the circle behind the facilitator of the meeting and said, "You have to get off the sidewalk." The facilitator didn't stand up, just looked around the circle and said, "We're not going anywhere." Two cops grabbed him by the wrist and yanked him to his feet from behind, wrenching his arm from its socket. A battalion of cops descended on the

meeting, throwing us into the street. The headlights of cop cars illuminated the cops punching us in our faces, stomping on our heads, driving their knees into our backs, grinding our cheeks into the cement, picking us up by our handcuffs and throwing us back down to the ground. Everyone was screaming. The cops went along the line of people asleep against the wall of the building and kicked people in the head to wake them up. The same “disabled man” to be the first arrested inside the squat was kicked awake and was shaking so badly with fear that two people had to help him across the street. The bars cleared out with people appalled by the ferocious police action and the cops pushed them back inside and threatened them with pepper spray.

The cops arrested ten people including the one guy with a camera but they let him go once they got the film away from him. They drove the wagons to jail and brought in the garbage trucks. With lines of police keeping people from their belongings, city workers loaded people’s things into the garbage trucks and crushed everything. From Cordova to Hastings, they took everything people owned and destroyed it. The sound of crushing everything we owned filled the street and we were too shocked to do anything. The police stood and watched us watching, clubs and pepper spray in hand.

We were released from jail at 9:30am, just in time for the rally called for 10am at Victory Square. At the rally everyone was anxious and nervous, angry and still recovering from the beating we took the night before. Four people spoke from the Victory Square war monument about the war against the government that we were in the centre of. The swirling crowd came suddenly together. Chanting “WE WILL WIN” we marched down Hastings Street to the Woodward building on the same route the original march had used just nine days before. In those nine days something had taken shape with so much power and so much need that no cop could tear it apart. We had come together around the Woodward building to fight and to survive and that day, after two evictions and sixty-four arrests in two days, we went back there and set the home back up. By noon the walls had a fresh coat of spray paint, the kitchen was serving coffee on the corner, and the people who had lost two homes in as many days were back with more determination and support than ever before.

THE WOODWARDS 54: SUMMARY REPORT (09/21)

Friends of the Woodward's Squat

The 54 residents of the Woodward's Squat arrested this morning were brought before a judge in twelve groups of three, four and five, between 11:15am and 1:50pm. The exceptions to this procedure were the four people treated as minors. These four appeared individually after 1:50pm. The conditions for their release were negotiated in closed chambers with a representative from Social Services. The prisoners were not permitted to speak with legal counsel prior to their appearance in the courtroom and were prohibited from speaking with counsel as a group. Several of the native leaders had their shoes confiscated while being held in cells, then forced to appear in the courtroom without them. Given the choice between remaining in captivity until November 7th, the date of their hearing, and agreeing to four conditions of release, 53 of the 54 adult residents chose the latter. These include four "promises." "I promise that I will strictly comply with the terms of the attached order and will otherwise keep the peace." "I promise that I will not enter onto the Lands ... or any structure or building on the Lands, or encourage or counsel others to enter onto the Lands, without the express authorization of the Plaintiff." "I promise that I will not obstruct or interfere with the operations of the Plaintiff, or its agents or employees, on the Lands or in any structure or building on the Lands." "I promise that I will not obstruct or interfere with the access to, or egress from, the Lands or any building or structure on the Lands, by the Plaintiff or its agents or employees." The one resident who declined these conditions was taken to the North Fraser Remand Centre and will appear in court again on Monday morning. In reply to demands for the return of clothing, medication, blankets, and other personal objects, the Vancouver Police offered to prepare an inventory to be ready next week. Many of these items, however, are required immediately. Detailed accounts and documentation of police actions during their violent eviction are in preparation. Supporters are invited to attend a community picnic on Sunday September 22nd between 1 & 3pm. Bring food, instruments, clothing, blankets, water and an appetite for social housing!

TRANSCRIPTS OF 16 STATEMENTS BY WITNESSES
TO THE SECOND EVICTION (09/22)

Compiled by The Woodward's Legal Defense Committee

So what was happening was we were sitting, we were all sitting, in a peaceful area, on this corner, waving our signs, waving to people that were honking at us. Some of us walked down to the half-block here. We were just talking. We were surrounded. We looked up. Two minutes later we were surrounded. Hastings was completely blocked off, with police, with police and their paddy wagons and sanitation trucks. Cordova blocked right off. Same thing. Police on motorcycles. They came up to us and they shined their flashlights in our faces. "You have five minutes to leave. If you do not leave in five minutes, you're arrested." Direct quote. I have a very good memory for what police do to me. They said we had five minutes to gather what we can and leave. Otherwise we're arrested. This place was packed with food, with people's homes, their sleeping bags, their tents, their clothing. They were intimidated. They were bullied. And they just left. And the people that didn't leave, they were thrown into the car, into the paddy wagons. People were kicked. The police kicked some of the people that were here because they did not move quick enough. The people did not move quick enough for anything. And the police, within seconds of putting us off the street, they allowed the sanitation cars to come up and they just threw everything—they took everything. They rammed all of the mattresses that were donated. They rammed all of the blankets. All of the belongings of the camp, of the street people. Everything. All the food. Everything that couldn't have helped the police at all. This was their livelihood. This was their own personal property. Within 20 minutes this place was just empty and it was washed down by the police. They would not let us come back and help pack any of this up. We asked if we could come back and they said, "if you stay here you're arrested." So they did not give us that chance to even clean up and yet the

representative for the police told CBC Radio that “these people that were in the squat have been removed.” We were not in the squat. We were on the street where it was clean. It was clean. We kept it clean. We swept it. We washed it down. And they brutalized us. They intimidated us. They bullied us. It was too much. We did not deserve that. We were so peaceful. And we’re peaceful now. [WS2002-09/22-19]

The cops arrived? Yeah and they said, “I’m giving anybody and everybody an opportunity to leave. Who wants to leave to leave now. Grab your personal belongings and leave. And you will not be arrested.” And then they said anybody that was staying would be arrested under some municipal bylaw, I think, for blocking the sidewalk. How long after that did it take for them to start arresting people? Almost immediately. How did they go about it? Violently they were grabbed and handcuffed. Ivan and Antwon and a third guy and that woman, what’s her name? Yeah they were throwing everybody down. So they took them and they put them in the paddy wagons right away? Yeah. And then they took off? No. They were continuing to arrest and I myself decided to leave the scene because I wasn’t going to be arrested violently. [WS2002-09/22-03]

We were all sitting around in a group meeting and just discussing how we were going to go about living, right? And we saw squad cars and paddy wagons and everything coming up and we all joined in a group. The Vancouver Police came up to us and they said, “get your stuff and leave,” as they were pulling down tents. It started with 8, 10, 15 cars and three or four paddy wagons and everything. They told us to leave right now. There’s about 48 of us gone. We went and got our stuff and we moved back to a circle area. And a bunch of us sat down. And then we were still screaming and yelling and like, “no peace, no justice,” like we did inside. And they started picking us off again one by one. We couldn’t get out of our beds fast enough. We could not get up. Those that were still in bed would get arrested. Those that couldn’t move out of their beds would get arrested. They were kicked. They were punched. They were slapped. Bénérice, myself and a bunch of us were standing across the street. Bénérice had my

cell and she was making phone calls and she was talking to a cop. And she said to the cop, she goes, "where is your heart?" The cop grabbed her and threw her against the floor and three of them just kept throwing her against the ground. Her head bounced off the ground. And they're just standing there. They're looking at us. And we're going, "where are we going to sleep tonight?" And they go, "that's your problem." And they laughed and snickered. And like I mean they were mean. Again they were brutal. They were cold. And they didn't give us a chance. They didn't even give us a chance to move. Anton and Ivan went again. We know that Bénérice went. They arrested our lawyer for crossing the street. He crossed the street to see if everybody was okay and they arrested him, put him in cuffs, and threw him in the back of a paddy wagon. What are they doing? We asked why and they say because we were blocking the sidewalks. You saw it: there was no way we were blocking the sidewalks. None. *So then they left?* No. They got the garbage trucks. And the garbage trucks picked up all the mats and anything that was left behind they threw it into garbage trucks. Everything that was left behind. Anything. Everything. Personal property that was not picked up and moved they threw into the garbage trucks. Like City garbage trucks. They didn't even give us a chance. Some of us didn't even get our chance to get our stuff. It's just not worth it. This is just pathetic. What did we do? We have a community picnic tomorrow at Victory Square at 10am. We want everybody there. Anybody and everybody. We need support right now. We need people to be there for us because right now we have no other place to go. [WS2002-09/22-04]

First thing I noticed: a cop car and then paddy wagon, paddy wagon, paddy wagon. Cops. I turned my head and cops. Cops everywhere. The next thing I know they're walking up the street towards us and everybody's getting up and getting antsy and everything. I'm just sitting there on the ground. Everybody is trying to gather themselves together and keep calm and stuff. As they walk up they start kicking one person's bed and they said, "get up, get up, move along, get your stuff and move along. Keep moving. Keep moving. You can't be here on the sidewalk." Then everybody

started gathering together in a group. Some of the activist group gathered together in a lineup and locked their arms together and started chanting. At that point I decided I didn't want to get arrested tonight because I wanted to be here to support the ones who didn't get arrested. So I went for a walk. I went up towards where the kitchen was and the cops started saying, "go east." And then I just went east. I stopped and looked back and he said, "keep goin east, keep goin east." So I went up to Carnegie Centre by the Youth Centre and got Jim and went down with cameras and took pictures of the garbage trucks and all the cops all over the place. They all had smiles on their faces and they were just asses. Just being a bunch of asses. [WS2002-09/22-06]

Those of us that were gathered in a meeting were sitting peacefully and talking and there were other people lying in their beds. I looked up and there was a wall of cops moving down the sidewalk. Well, first of all I noticed three paddy wagons pulled up. And I saw cops just walking up the sidewalk kicking people's beds and saying, "okay, this is the only warning you're getting: gather your belongings and leave." That's more or less what I did and those people that didn't were arrested immediately. *How much time elapsed between the warning and when they started the arrests?* Less than five minutes. I was told to leave. I walked down the sidewalk with a cop walking right behind me pushing me the whole way. Every time I slowed down he pushed me in the back. And then I stopped to unlock my bicycle and he shoved me really hard and I tripped and fell on the ground. I guess he didn't realize I was unlocking my bike or whatever. When I put my hand down to push myself back up he put his foot on my hand and said, "okay that's fuckin it." And I went, "what?" He said, "you're under arrest." And I said I was just getting my bike. So I stood up. He let me unlock my bike and then he said, "okay now get the fuck outta here." And that's when I left. But I was given thirty seconds pretty much from the time he approached me. After they initially put people in the paddy wagon there was so few of us and so many of them they were able to actually concentrate on one cop per person almost, to clear people out. It was very deliberate on their part, very concentrated. Concentrated attention. It wasn't like

one cop to four people. It was almost one cop per person, for, you know, a peaceful protest. They knew through their sources that we were planning. We were planning what we were going to do next and they don't want us to be able to do that. And they'll arrest our leaders. They'll arrest us. They'll arrest anyone. I mean they arrested our lawyer. It's just fucked. [WS2002-09/22-07]

I was sleeping and the cop cars went in at either end of the street. They blocked off the street. I saw two officers grab Sid who was takin pictures, throw him to the ground, and four more cops jumped on top. And they were trying to put him in handcuffs. Three cops came up to me, surrounded me and said if I didn't leave I was going to be arrested. So I got on my bike and I rode to the end of the street where I was told to move again by another cop. By this time the cops were just indiscriminately grabbing people and arresting them for nothing, for just being on the street, for just standing there. It's a very sad, sad day when you just get arrested for standing there. It was cop brutality. There was at least 100 cops there and maybe 30 of us. *Did you see any more specific things that happened to people?* Yeah. I saw them throw Bénérice to the ground. This little girl they threw like face-first onto the ground. Three cops. And she wasn't doing nothing. She was just kinda talking to them. A lot of police brutality. A lot of sticks. It was really scary. *What were they doing with the sticks?* I saw them hitting one guy who was like trying to get away from them. So they had him by the arm and he was trying like to pull away and they were hitting him with the billy club. [WS2002-09/22-10]

When the police arrived I noticed that they were telling everybody to "move on, move on." I sat there for awhile and then I started moving on. But I was taking pictures. And I took one picture and I backed up and moved a couple of steps. And I took another picture, backed up and took another step. And by the time I took the third picture I was jumped. I mean literally jumped. I was on the ground. And my camera went flying from me. Thankfully the police gave me the camera back. I think the film was

okay. So I have those shots. And then when I was in the vehicle I was handcuffed. I was put in the vehicle and I just sat there for I don't know how long, five, ten minutes. Then they opened the door and they asked, they said, "Here's the deal. We'll let you out and you can go if you promise to leave the site." And I said, "well, I'd like to know why I'm in the wagon." And they didn't answer. They closed the door. And they came back again. This is when Anton and I started singing and everything. They opened the door again and they said, "Here's the deal. We'll let you go if you promise to leave." And I said, "First I want to know why I'm in this wagon." And they said, "Because you were breaching the peace." And I said, "well, that's impossible because I was walking away from the scene when it was going. I admit I was taking pictures but I didn't think that was unlawful. And by the time I got my third picture taken I was jumped. And from then on I was in the paddy wagon." So they came the third time. They opened the door and they said "Here's the deal. We're gonna let you go if you promise to leave the site." And I said, "But why am I in the wagon?" He says, "You're in the wagon for breach of peace." And I said, "Well, thank you Officer 1956. You will be hearing from my lawyer tomorrow." And that was the end of it. [WS2002-09/22-11]

They first started tearing down all the posters and stuff they were hanging and then pushing people around. They were screaming and they started picking on guys that weren't resisting or nothing, and just slamming them around. And then they formed the one line and kind of stormed it to get the people out to the sidewalks. And then the dump trucks came in, trash trucks, and people started spreading out and about, and the single males that were alone, I saw two cops grab one, one male that was just yelling at em and they were forcing him and pushing him. He just wanted to get his stuff, his blankets and stuff, and they started slamming him around. And then the other one, he got further away from one officer and then another one grabbed him and body slammed him and then pushed him over to the edge. And then some more unmarked cars come up with another paddy wagon. Also I went to an officer and said that I had to get my—I've got a brand new sleeping bag and stuff, my stuff was set up

down there. I set it up this morning. And they wouldn't let me go. They started pushing me away. I don't have nothing to keep warm or anything. *So they took all your stuff?* Yeah, threw it in the trash trucks. And I asked them, I said it is only like five feet, right, let me get my stuff. One officer was really nice, she gave me blankets. She said help yourself to what is left here, cause they are going to throw it away. They cleared it out. And, so I got at least a box full of blankets, right? The one officer lady was cool. But there was some really, really nasty ones. I saw some males grabbing chairs and throwing them and smashing them and ripping the posters, and pushing the guys down, and everything. It was uncalled for. [WS2002-09/22-12]

I was sleeping in the tent, not doing nothing, and they dragged me out and they said they woke me up five times, which, I don't think so. And they grabbed me, they threw me down. That's why my pants is all dirty. They handcuffed me. My elbow's kind of bruised, I got this from them, from throwing me down and that, they just... *And your finger, is there something wrong? They did something to your finger?* Yeah. Just a little cut. My elbow is just totally sore now. Yeah, it's kind of big, whatever, from throwing me down. *So they put you in the handcuffs—then what did they do?* Then they dug inside my pockets, took out everything. And I had a leather jacket inside the tent still. And I went back, thought the tent would have been there, but everything's gone. So, that's it. *So you just took off after that?* Yeah. They released me, said not to come back again. But I went around, then after that all those bed things, the tents, everything's gone. *Did you see the police doing anything to anybody else?* Yeah. They were throwing people in the paddy wagons and arresting people. I don't know how much they arrested but that's the only thing I saw. [WS2002-09/22-13]

What was happening when the police arrived? Well, we just had the meeting, you know, the organizing meeting, what we're going to do next, and suddenly the cops appeared from nowhere. Lots of them surrounded us. And well, the rest, it's the history that we're making. Well, it was interesting. They just came and told us to leave or we may

be arrested. We started to, you know, hold on together, and chant, and shout, "Social housing now, social housing now. We have the right to be here." And, well, they just came and picked up one by one, you know, strapped us, and thrown us into those vans to go to jail, with lots of brutality. Like I was really probably mugged by about five, six officers. They just took me up in the air, threw me to the ground, jumped on me with their knees and almost broke all my bones. And then picked me up again, throw me, you know, being strapped with my hands behind my back, being lifted up and thrown face down on the pavement. That was quite an interesting experience. Well, then they took us to jail, put us in those three feet by six feet little bunkers and kept us til about seven o'clock, and then they released us. *At what point did the police tell you what you were being charged with?* Just before the release. They just opened the door, said that I am being charged with breach of peace and now I am being released. *At any time did they read you your rights or say that you could see a lawyer?* No. No. [WS2002-09/22-14]

We were all sitting around having a meeting and, you know, we were talking about some stuff, thinking that maybe there was cops around listening to what we were doing. And after we pretty much said that, all the cops started moving in. It was kind of creepy. *What did they say when they first came in?* "Anybody who doesn't want to get arrested get outta here." And if you didn't fuckin jump when they said jump then they fuckin grabbed you. *How long did it take, approximately, before they started arresting people?* It was pretty much instant. Once Ivan sat down and said it's our right to be here, they were on him like fuckin flies on shit. *Did you see anybody getting pushed around by the police and that sort of thing?* Oh yeah. They were really rough with the guys they were trying to take down, three guys on one fuckin little skinny guy, just fuckin twistin him up pretzel-like. They were just way too aggressive. Way too many of them. If they had all the surveillance that a big city like this should have, they'd know exactly what was going on every second. And I'm sure they did. You know what I'm saying? It was just a shock that they all moved in like that. [WS2002-09/22-16]

I was right in the meeting when the police arrived. I noticed these squad cars coming up the street, of Abbott, and two squad cars blocking off Abbott at Hastings and then two more pulling up at Abbott and Cordova blocking fuckin Abbott Street. These squad cars pulled up and these cops fuckin jumped out, walked over towards us. They cited the bylaw infraction we were committing, that we were obstructing the sidewalk and that we had to leave immediately or get arrested. So some of us refused, like Ivan and Kerry and some other people, and the cops fuckin tackled them. And then some people started gathering up their fuckin belongings, and some cop pounced on them and grabbed them and put the handcuffs on them and dragged them off to the paddy wagons. So me and Bénérice started backing off cause I couldn't risk being arrested as I still have family across the border. Anyways, we went across Abbott Street towards Hastings and we were asking the police like why are they doing this? Why are they picking on the homeless and poor? Why are they throwing all their belongings into garbage cans? Don't they have a heart? And the police was verbally shouting at them. That's when three husky police officers jumped her, grabbed her by the scruff of her neck and threw her down and dragged her to the fuckin paddy wagon. I fuckin lost my throat. I couldn't yell anymore. As you can hear I'm fuckin hoarse. I've been at the squat since day one and I always thought it would come to a peaceful end. But after what I saw tonight I know that the fuckin fight is just starting. [WS2002-09/22-01]

I saw everybody's stuff including mattresses, clothing, food, the whole kitchen, basically everything that was there, tents—whole fuckin tents—thrown into the back of a garbage truck and smushed. They gave us no warning. It was just everybody move right now and they threw everything into the garbage. Everybody was having a meeting in a circle and they came in. I heard lots of yelling and chanting. We walked around the block cause we were told to move and I didn't feel like getting arrested again right away. And when we came to the other side of the block everybody was in paddy wagons and they were throwing everything into the back of garbage trucks and smushing it. It's been half an hour. Everything's cleaned up. Everything's been

cleaned up for 10 minutes. They did it very quick. I recognized a lot of the cops from the other bust. It was a lot of the same cops if not all the same cops. Somehow they got the garbage trucks to come down there. I saw two garbage trucks—there might have been more—to haul everything away. And they were all down there right away, no problem. They were obviously on stand, waiting. [WS2002-09/22-02]



We were having a meeting and all of a sudden light-to-light the whole street was just police cars and paddy wagons and the cops just started—they just walked up on the sidewalk and started yelling, “get your stuff, get out, or you’re goin to jail.” And I saw them grab Ivan first. They were really, really rough with him and I was scared. Like I was terrified cause they were so aggressive. They were so angry

you could feel it in the air. It was thick like smog. Just the aggression and I was terrified right away. I was so scared. I just grabbed my blanket and cooler and tried to make my way out of the crowd. Like I was so scared. They were so violent with Ivan. The three people I saw them take down, it was like three-on-one and four-on-one, chokeholds and neckgrabs, and they were just really, really violent and really aggressive. And it was really, really scary. And I went and I stood across the street and the next thing I saw they’ve got their big, huge garbage trucks throwing away our beds and our bedding and our belongings. They threw all our houses in the garbage. *What sort of possessions did you have?* I didn’t have very much. I had a couple of blankets. I managed to get one blanket and a jacket and a pair of jeans that got taken away. I managed to grab my cooler bag (that was a good score—I found it in the alley). My cooler bag and my blanket and the clothes I had on. I don’t think Travis lost anything off our bed. But I know a woman two beds down: all her clothes, her brand new

running shoes somebody had given her, her socks, her clean shirts. Everything went cause they wouldn't even let her grab that. She managed to get up and they were shoving her like, "out, get out, get out." So tents went missing. I know that for sure. And they just threw everything out. *So what's your situation now?* I have a friend that I can stay with if I need to but we're gonna get more beds and more blankets and I'm bunking up against my building. So I'm stayin here. So long as they don't come and get angry with me I'm fine. I'm pregnant. It's scary. But yeah I'm staying here. I'm staying here you know as soon as we get more mattresses. Like more beds, more bedding and that sort of thing. Yeah, I'm staying here. This is a good place to be. [WS2002-09/22-17]

I was the first one to see them come. I was on the corner of the street here so I realized there was no more traffic. So I looked down both ways and I didn't see no movement and I see cops blocking the street. So I just advised, I said they are coming for us, and as soon as I say it they just move right in. And like I just got time to grab my luggage and stop and cross the street. They come to us and said, "You guys are immediately going to move or we are going to arrest you guys." So we decided to move on because I didn't feel like to get arrested. So we just decided to move on. But I watched the whole thing and like a good 45 minutes when they were doin their operation. And what I see they were like arresting people, and threw them on the ground and all that stuff, eh. So we didn't want to get involved into that so we just decided to move on. So that's what I see. *So how many people did you see being thrown around?* Oh at least a good 20 people for sure. Yeah. Like they also let some go, like they threw them down and they just let them go after but they brutalized like lots of people. *And then they brought the garbage trucks in?* Yes, the garbage truck was also here, and they put everything, like mattresses, people's belongings, tents, everything they were putting in the garbage. And like the people were not here they lose everything they own. Like the little bit they had left, they lost it. [WS2002-09/22-18]

We were having a meeting just after 10:30 and there was like, I don't know, more than 35 people there. And we just started to talk about what we were going to do for the next action and discussing that when after 10 minutes we were surrounded by cop cars. They blocked off Hastings, and on Cordova, and the alleyway. They came in with a few paddy wagons and police cruisers. And then they blocked off the road to the war monument on Cambie. And over to Carrall they had the road blocked off. They didn't say anything. They just came in and started to surround everybody there. So people were gathering together and linking arms and some people were trying to get their things together to go. And then they announced that the people that wanted to go and not be arrested could go. And so a bunch of people did. Then they started to arrest people and put them in the paddy wagons. They were violent with some of the people, like they knocked down a woman and dragged her. You could tell that they were using unnecessary force. And then they told us to leave on Hastings Street. They brought in more paddy wagons and cruisers right behind us. So the people that were standing over here near that "Jesus is Lord" building [Abbott Mansions], but on the other side. We all had to go, they were yelling at us, telling us we had to go. So we left because they brought in more cops. And then we went to the Anti-Poverty office. And then we returned here and they were still arresting people. When we got here they were almost done. Then they started to take the people that were on Hastings Street who were sleeping there and they told them to go too. That was one of the last things they did. And then they took all the belongings and they tossed them in big trucks. They scooped everything. A lot of people left everything they had there, their belongings they had there, you know, all their things that they needed for everyday life. And they [the police] liked it. They thought it was like fun for them. You could tell. Some of them were laughing, you know, talking, while they were brutalizing the people. It's evil. This is military occupation. [WS2002-09/22-20]

PRELIMINARY LIST OF OBJECTS DESTROYED BY THE VPD AND
CITY OF VANCOUVER AT THE WOODWARDS SQUAT (09/22)

Compiled by The Woodward's Legal Defense Committee

Two (2) aluminum 30'-40' ladders.

Red first aid kit, five (5) large tarps and two (2) bullhorns.

Four (4) large banners ("Social Housing or Nothing"; "Woodwards is Not For Sale";
"Our Home and Native Land"; "Sovereign Territory").

Seven (7) canvas folding chairs.

Eight (8) air mattresses.

Swiss-army knife with 8 tools.

Two (2) rolls of 400 ISO film with undeveloped photographs of inside the squat.

Carrying bag with documents.

Two (2) tents.

Cell phone with charger; battery for video camera.

Formal clothes for court (pants and shirt).

Miter saw (Delta), table saw (Craftsman) and framing nailer (Tech).

Portable compressor and hose.

Two (2) foldable construction tables.

Skill saw (Shill).

Tool bucket with hammers, screwdrivers, pliers, small hand tools.

Two (2) extension cords (50' yellow & red).

Boxes of screws & nails.

Coffee maker, 8-cup.

California King mattress, beige.

Two (2) battery drills (9.6v Dewalt) with charger & extra battery.

Fido phone, black & grey, with holder, #771-1408; pager, Telus, #645-7050.

BCID card and BC Health card.

Sleeping bag, black & blue, waterproof, mummy-style.

Quilt blanket, medium dark blue solid colour.
Four (4) pairs of jeans and six (6) shirts; big bag, clear.
Sports socks, grey and white, numerous pairs.
Sleeping bag, black nylon, arctic style.
Mattress, multicoloured; Green dark blanket, large, terry-type cloth.
Blanket, soft texture XL; fall/winter jacket, woman's.
Cotton blend brown designer jacket, thigh length, with hood & wooden buttons.
Stereo system.
Minutes of squat meetings, volunteer lists, miscellaneous documents.
Two (2) Strathcrome sketch pads, green, 16"x24" & 8"x11".
Pastel set and air brush; badger.
Five (5) pairs white sport socks.
Green mattress, hospital-type, with handles.
Coleman summer-type range without hood.
Coat, black, parka-type, nylon with zipper waist length.
Wool grey hat, long type.
Large mattress with light blue solid colour.
Red, tan and black coloured pack with black Converse shoes tied to it.
Backpack, silver and black, with band names written on it.
Skateboard; sleeping bag.
Mattress with white, blue and yellow flowers.
Sleeping bag with green pillow; four (4) blankets.
Purse with wallet containing business cards & appointment book, \$5 in change,
phone book, Guns & Roses patch, System of a Down patch.
BC Care Card and Social Insurance Card.
Five (5) markers.
Black pants; plastic bag with pair of wide large jeans and black shirt.
Mattress, black & blue, full sized.
Two (2) wool blankets, large, grey with sewn borders.

Down comforter, white.
Vial of patchouli oil.
Ring, claw-type, silver, size 11.
Two (2) glass-blown pipes.
Hammock, natural hemp.
Blanket, cream blue & yellow with borders.
Wool cloth and cotton blanket.
Ukrainian print, pink blue & dusty rose.
Queen-sized cream-coloured mattress.
Wedding band, male, 18k gold size 10 1/2.
Burgundy plaid blanket and cotton comforter.
Pastel green-pink-tan-white cotton comforter.
Two (2) brown blankets; fleece cloth.
Two (2) pillows, one feather, one poly with matching cases.
Large mag-light flashlight.
Stereo with two speakers (from kitchen).
White teddy bear.
Double-yellow blue & flowered mattress.
Pair of blue denim jeans size 36 waist / 32 leg, women's Wranglers.
Skateboard, stickers on bottom, tan-yellow wheels, red & silver trucks.
Address book and personal diary.
Four (4) brand-new CC batteries.
Two-person tent, brown nylon.
Blanket; camping mattress & foam.
Sleeping bag, bright red with hood, cotton blend.
Red comforter, embroidered & solid on one side, nylon & cotton blend.
Two (2) pairs of men's Levis jeans 34/32 & three (3) T-shirts.
Battery-operated alarm clock.
BCID, birth certificate, status card, SIN card, bank card and Care Card.

Green & black sleeping bag, nylon, waterproof, felt inside hood.
Two (2) blankets, black; blue pillow.
Nailbar, framing hammer, multi-screwdriver and hammer.
Black backpack, Mountain Equipment Co-op.
Journal; metal sieve; cell phone; pants and shirts.
Miscellaneous tools; black headphones.
Propane stove, Thunder Range.
Black windproof jacket, pockets containing dried sage, documents, ID, sunglasses.
New Arctic HoloFil sleeping bag.
Various tools: allen keys, screwdriver, nailbar.
Coleman propane lantern.
Green & black sleeping bag.
Black & blue gortex waist jacket, Mountain Equipment Co-op.
Blue & green cordless drill.
Grey waterproof work coat.
Hilfiger underwear.
Wallet; jeans and t-shirt.
Blue down-filled sleeping bag.
Brown soft leather jacket.
Drum.
Small mattress.
New shop-vac.
Personal documents and journal.
Garabaldi hiking shoes.
Storm Fighter reflector pants, orange with yellow strips.
Blue Optimus camp stove.
Blue flashlight, rubber exterior.
Electronic alarm clock.
Office desk.

NIGHTTIME WOODWARDS SIDEWALK CLEANUP (NO DATE)

J.W. McLewin, Manager of Sanitation Branch, City of Vancouver

BACKGROUND

Callout No 1. Initially at 8:08am on Saturday, Sept. 21 Sanitation Supt. Bob Rolland received a telephone call from Waterworks Control Centre saying that the Police Dispatch (PD) want him to call them. He called the PD who advised that the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) wish to remove homeless persons from the Woodward's site and in conjunction with that, the Police want the sidewalks at the Woodward's site cleaned up. Bob was given the name of Police Officer Rolf Fuhrmann, his tel no and incident no. A few minutes later Officer Fuhrmann called Supt. Rolland. The Officer stated that only items on the sidewalk were to be removed. He went on to say that the area would be sealed off and anyone that did not leave would be arrested. Officer Fuhrmann also said the City Council endorsed this planned clean up action. Supt. Rolland immediately set up with supervisor Mark Vass (working at the Vancouver South Transfer Station) to supply crew of three employees and a garbage packer to meet the VPD at 11:00am and remove the items requested by the VPD. Supt. Bob Rolland was driving to Vancouver about 10:00am to assist in this planned clean up when he received another call from Officer Fuhrmann who said another demonstration has occurred requiring Police personnel so postpone the Woodward's clean up planned 11:00am using Sanitation employees. Bob accordingly cancelled the clean up.

Callout No 2. About 3:45pm on Saturday, Sept. 21 Supt. Rolland received a telephone call from Police Inspector John McKay. The latter stated he wanted to do the clean up now at 8:00pm. So Supt. Rolland set it up with the skeleton crews available. Later the Police postponed this scheduled clean up because we were told there were too many members of the general public in Gastown and Chinatown. He also thought his Police staffing would be stretched too thin. So Supt. Rolland re-cancelled the crew arrangements.

Callout No 3. About 3:30pm on Sunday, Sept. 22, 2002 Supt. Rolland of the Sanitation Branch (Eng. Services Dept.) was again contacted on his cell phone by Vancouver Police Inspector John K. McKay. The latter said the VPD had re-scheduled the date and time for the removal of the temporary shelters and items from homeless persons. They were located on the City sidewalk adjacent to the old Woodward's building. The clean up operation was scheduled to take place beginning at 11:00pm on Sunday, Sept. 22, 2002. Insp. McKay requested that personnel from the City's Sanitation Branch carry out the site clean up under Police protection and direction per the schedule above. Bob Rolland stated the clean up would be set up accordingly. He left a message at work (Manitoba Works Yard) for Acting Foreman John Reeves on Sept. 22 alerting him about this special project and the need to mobilize his nightshift personnel accordingly. They spoke to one another at 8:30pm Sunday night. John Reeves was instructed that the Police was [sic] to protect him and his employees when they went into the area to be cleaned. Supt. Rolland also advised John Reeves to remove his crews immediately from this clean up area if the Police had to withdraw its [sic] protection unexpectedly.

THE CLEANUP

By the start of shift at 10:30pm on Sunday, Sept. 22, supervisor John Reeves had it planned so that the following resources could be used for this clean up: 1. 3 garbage paker trucks; 2. 1 mechanical sweeper; 3. 1 flusher; 4. 8 laborers. The clean up crew mobilized at 10:30pm and travelled from Manitoba Yards to the prearranged corner of Pender and Abbott Streets where they met Police Officers at about 11:00pm. At this time the Police had already commenced the special operation at the Woodward's site by cordoning off the site and allowing interested homeless persons to remove what they wished. At approximately 11:15pm the Sanitation Branch crews were allowed to move in and commence cleaning up. The VPD instructed that all remaining items on the City sidewalk be removed so that is what the City crews did. Concurrently the homeless persons were permitted to continue removing valuables

until about 11:30pm when they all were directed by VPD officers to leave this City sidewalk site. Engineering Supervisor John Reeves dealt with Police Inspector John McKay at the Woodward's site. The City's Sanitation Branch personnel worked steadily removing all items on the City sidewalk (as instructed by the VPD). The Sanitation crews tossed the items into the three waiting garbage packers where the items were compacted and ultimately dumped in the pit at the Vancouver South Transfer Station. Items removed for disposal included:

- mattresses
- sleeping bags
- wooden pallets
- blankets
- chairs
- tents
- radios

In the opinion of John Reeves, the Sanitation supervisor, nothing appeared of value which was removed by his crews and discarded into one of the three garbage packers. In the course of conducting the clean up a considerable number of injection needles were encountered by the City's Sanitation crews. These needles were also tossed into the three garbage packers. During the clean up City workers were not generally interfered with by the homeless persons who were kept outside the clean up working area by a number of Vancouver Police officers. However in the course of the clean up, there was some shouting by possible homeless persons at the Sanitation crews. About 15 homeless persons had stayed on the cordon periphery while the clean up took place. At approximately 1:15am on Monday, Sept. 23, 2002 the clean up was concluded and the Sanitation crews departed under no threats from bystanders. While the City crews cleaned the nearby area in the Downtown Eastside between 1:15 and 6:00am they were not bothered by bystanders in the Downtown Eastside area.

VICTORY SQUARE ADDRESSES (09/23)

Jim Leyden, Bev Meslo, Ivan Drury & Chris Livingstone

JIM LEYDEN

We condemn in the strongest voice possible the violence and lies which surround the Vancouver Police handling of the Woodward's Squat. We believe that this has the fingerprints of Gordon Campbell all over it. We call for the immediate resignation of the new police chief and expect all city councilors to state their opinion on this action that took place last night. We hold that these tactics are not appropriate in any civilized western society. We call on BC Housing Corporation to apologize for any role they have in this abuse of the homeless and ask that they agree to immediately open a significant part of the first floor of the Woodward's Centre for a homeless shelter. We will negotiate with them around this. We expect to meet with the Premier and we expect to meet with him quickly or there will be direct action in offices all over this province. We have had enough. This was too much. This is absolutely abysmal. That they come in with what can only be classed as jackboots and kick people in poverty, and kick homeless people, out onto the streets and into the alleys, away from places that we were holding as secure. What we were doing there was not a political action. It was a humanitarian action. We were supported by the community. We were supported by churches. We were supported by union movements. We were supported by women's movements. We were supported by individuals. A farmer came here and brought us food to support the fact that we were taking care of the homeless. And the response to that by the new Police chief, by the City and by the Province, is to come in and terrorize homeless people. That is not acceptable in western society.

BEV MESLO

It is disgusting that this province would allow the most disenfranchised, the most devastated, the most insecure population in the whole province, to lead the battle

against the Liberal cuts. Here they are the weakest in our society standing up for the rest of us. When are we going to start acting in defense of them? Having said that, what is happening here is against the covenant that was signed by Canada with consensus of all ten provinces in 1987. It states that all human people have the human right to security of their person and their home. Because the Woodward's building has been fought for as social housing, because the Woodward's building was bought by Canadian people's funds to be social housing, it is therefore a regressive act on the part of the Liberal government to now change it. That regressive act is a regressive act through to the United Nations. That regressive act can reach the Supreme Court of Canada and change the Charter of Rights within our country. Because that is a public building designated for social housing that they have taken away from us. So we will take this to the Supreme Court of Canada.

IVAN DRURY

They're trying to scare us! They're trying to scare us because we're fighting in exactly the ways we have to fight. Last night we were sitting in a peaceful meeting on the sidewalk with the people who are homeless. With the people who had been removed from Woodward's. People who had been living in Woodward's who had taken up shelter in the only place that was left to them. Who had taken up shelter illegally in an empty building that is left empty by this government. They were removed with force by the police in service of the government who are interested in keeping this building empty. They are interested in keeping this building empty because they are attacking poor people. This was made painfully clear to the people who sat outside the Woodward's building out of lack of choice of place to go. People who banded together and slept outside the Woodward's building because they had no place to go. Because the government has made it so they have no place to go. Because the government cares about profit not about people. People were sitting outside of the Woodward's building with the people who had no place to go talking about how we can make it so that people have a safe place to go. How we can fight

so that people have a decent standard of living. Very basic things. Guaranteed fundamental human rights. And while we're sitting and talking about guaranteeing our own fundamental basic human rights the police blocked off Abbott Street to the north and the south. They blocked it off with paddy wagons and cop cars and they sent patrols from both sides and ordered people to go away. They ordered people to leave and sleep in dangerous parks and dangerous alleys and dangerous shelters. They ordered people to disband from the community they have collected. When people said "we will not go" they arrested us. They dislocated my shoulder. They dragged us across the street and they threw us in jail. They did this without any legal justification. They performed an illegal arrest upon us who are a totally legal and peaceful assembly. The police did this because they are in service of the government. The government did this because they are in service of the business community. Because they are the business community. They do not represent the people down here. They do not represent the people in this province. And they do not represent us. They have made a terrible mistake because we are not afraid. And we will win. And we will continue to fight. And we will win.

CHRIS LIVINGSTONE

We request that all aboriginal governments and services come down here. Just because the government and the police turn their backs on their people we as native peoples can make sure that we're protected. We have a disproportionate amount of native peoples down here. We are poor. We do have issues. We need support here. We need people here. I want to invite the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Aboriginal Business Canada, and Aboriginal House to the table. It's got to be done. Just because every other government agency will turn their back on these people doesn't mean that we have to. It's not our way.



Ivan Drury, Victory Square (09/23) – Photograph by Illara V. Sunsum



Betty Williams & Mavis Brass, Woodward's Squat Front Desk (09/23) – Photograph by Illara V. Sunsum

CALL FOR THIRD SUPPORT DEMONSTRATION (09/24)

Anti-Poverty Committee

Squatters and supporters are calling for a large rally and demonstration Tuesday, September 24 at 6 PM at the Woodward's building (Abbott & Hastings).

Over the past week thousands of people across Vancouver have rallied around the Woodward's building and for the immediate need for social housing. The BC Liberal government has cancelled all new social housing projects. Shelters throughout the lower mainland are full, and people have been forced to create their own housing.

This community response has been met by police brutality and ignored by politicians responsible for Vancouver's housing crisis. The most recent attack came Sunday night when dozens of Vancouver police physically attacked people outside of the Woodward's building without warning and threw beds, blankets, food and personal items into city dump trucks.

The Anti-Poverty Committee denounces the brutality that is currently being unleashed by the Liberal government and police. These attacks are in response to the successful mobilization that has occurred over the past week. It's clear that the people of Vancouver and BC want social housing and the BC Liberal government and Vancouver police want to attack the homeless and their supporters. We call on all groups opposed to the BC Liberal government, and to the police who enforce their policies, to meet at Woodward's tomorrow at 6pm. We must face these brutal attacks head on, and once again mobilize massive numbers to challenge and ultimately defeat this government. Groups and individuals are encouraged to bring down building supplies, food donations as well as banners and flags showing their organization's support.



Ricky Lavallie Speaking & Singing at Third Support Demo (09/24) – Photo by Vancouver IMC

CRIME SURVEILLANCE OBSERVATIONS (09/28)

PC Richard Chalke (1845) & PC Lowell Dick (1697), VPD Crime Surveillance Unit

0900 – 23 people visible, no active demonstrators.

1000 – Approx 30 people, eating and drinking, no active demonstrating.

1030 – Porto potty delivered and set up in the north lane unit West Hastings...

1115 – Approx 20 people on the sidewalk, cameraman and female reporter on site talking to the people. No active sign waving.

1200 – Approx 20-30 people hanging around. Two more large tarps put up in the 300 Abbott to cover the sidewalk. No one actively demonstrating. Tape changed in the Abbott/Hastings camera. Tape 3 out and tape 4 in. Tape changed by 1016.

1300 – 25 people, no active flag waving.

1330 – 35 people, no active flag waving, Drury in the crowd.

1404 – Surveillance tape mid block Abbott St changed tape 3 out tape 4 in.

1406 – Surveillance tape north (Abbott/Cordova) changed tape 3 out ... tape 4 in.

1430 – Large meeting occurring on west side of 300 Abbott. Approx 50-75 people in attendance including: Butyniec, [REDACTED] Lots of infighting in regards to missing donations. Several complaining about the need for better accounting (appears to be approx \$4000 in donations missing). People complaining about quality of food that is being served.

1500 – No change.

1530 – Meeting still going on. 1 female standing on corner with 2 signs.

1533 – Vehicle dropping off what appears to be boxes of food.

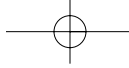
Vehicle BCL# [REDACTED] red Toyota Tercel R/O [REDACTED]

1600 – Meeting appears to be over, 30-40 people hanging around, 1 n/k female on scene taking photos, 1 n/k news cameraman on scene talking to people, no one actively protesting.

1650 – Approx 60 people hanging around, 1 person active holding 2 signs.

1720 – Approx 30 people, 2 people actively demonstrating.

1755 – No change.



THE STEP BY STEP PROCESS OF MEETINGS & COMMON TERMS

Debbie Krull

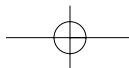
FACILITATOR: (aka: Chair) The person who “runs” the meeting. This person is given power by the rest of the group to direct discussion and try to bring about resolution. When it is necessary, the facilitator will cut off discussion by “capping the speakers list” (not taking any more speakers on the subject, to call a vote and end the agenda item. Happens often when people are all saying the same things or there are two different opinions that will not ever agree). Anyone can be the facilitator. Usually the facilitator is chosen at the beginning of the meeting, sometimes at the meeting before.

SPEAKERS LIST: Like a talking stick. If you want to speak, you put up your hand and the person taking the speakers list will write your name down to speak when your turn comes. When it is time for you to speak you will be recognized by the person taking the speakers list. First time speakers, homeless squatters and people the facilitator considers to be from “marginalized” communities will be put immediately to the top of the list above people more familiar with meeting process. The reason for this is to encourage involvement from people for who meetings are difficult and unfamiliar.

POINT OF INTEREST: If someone before you speaks the same point that you were going to make, one then just says PASS when your name comes up, unless you have an additional point that will strengthen the idea.

MINUTES: One person is elected at the beginning of the meeting to record agenda points and decisions made at the meeting so there is a record of these things being discussed and the decisions made will be held to and enforced by the organization.

AGENDA: List of discussion points. Facilitator will read proposed agenda and ask if anyone has any additions. **Agenda Additions:** Done in the beginning of the meeting by going around the circle. People state their names and any additional agenda points. **Report Backs:** 2 min update of what was discussed in the committee meetings or other events that took place since the last meeting through delegations responsible to the group. One representative from the committees and delegations gives a report on



what happened and presents the proposals generated by the smaller groups to be decided upon (“ratified”) by the larger group / coalition. Eg. Finance Committee, Security Committee...

TABLING ITEMS: When more discussion needs to be done then the item gets tabled (put off) to the next general meeting unless there is an decision that needs to be made in that moment in time that will influence the day’s actions.

PROPOSALS: A plan of action that is offered to the group to either accept or decline thru the voting process. If the proposal is really strong other members can second it and call to vote. If a person likes the proposal but thinks it’s missing a detail then the person needs to again raise their hand and offer the detail. This is called an amendment. There are two sorts of amendments. “Friendly Amendment”: a change to the proposal that is only slightly different, a small adjustment that the original proposal-maker is fine with. This sort of amendment does not require a separate vote, it just changes the original proposal. If you want to make a friendly amendment, say so before you suggest it and then the facilitator will ask the original proposal maker if they consider it friendly. Regular Amendments are big(ish) changes to the original proposal and must be discussed and voted on before the proposal is voted on so we can decide whether or not to change (“amend”) the proposal with them. Amendments are offered after the question “would anyone like to speak to that?” is asked.

FACILITATORS: Their role is difficult. They have got to keep people on track by making sure people speak to the agenda item and do it in a timely manner. Sometimes people get really passionate and repeat the same one point in 6 different styles.

BOTTOM LINERS: People who take on the responsibility of making sure stuff gets done.

ROUGHING IT IN THE CITY (09/30)

Craig Ballantyne

We were a lot healthier inside. We were a lot more secure and safe. We held general meetings and committees, democratically. You put your name on the speakers list and you got your turn to speak about whatever. There was lots of yelling and screaming but we did pretty good. We did really good I thought. I was in for six days then the police riot squad came in and kicked us out. We had got a call, an inside tip from the media, that they were coming at dawn on the Saturday. So we wanted to be ready and we did a little barricading. We heard the hammering at about 6:00 Saturday morning. That gave us a few minutes. We mobilized into a circle and we just sat there. It was passive resistance. They came in, approximately 70 riot squad members, and then the secret guys in the stealth with the Uzis and the chief of police and the bigwigs and their video cameras. They tried to provoke us but 54 of us hung strong and sang our songs and we got arrested and appeared in front of the Supreme Court of British Columbia on Saturday afternoon. It was all passive resistance.

But the Sunday night arrest outside was hardcore with cops in uniforms from the neighbourhood. I was just falling asleep. I didn't have much time. The cops came in on Hastings and cut it off and came in on Abbott and cut it off. There were forty uniforms plus management. They literally went, "leave or get arrested." So they did their thing. Three cops came onto me. I grabbed my bag, my packsack, and my bike. And I left 50 feet. I was told to continue on so I couldn't watch the proceedings. It was hard. Then they threw everybody's possessions that people couldn't grab or weren't able to grab because the cops just told people to leave. They wouldn't even let them grab what little we have. They threw it all in the dumpster. I didn't lose anything. I was very lucky. But most people here did. Outside I'm okay. But on the inside I lost lots of stuff. An outdoor Optimus cooking stove. Hand tools: a hammer, a pair of lineman's pliers, allen keys to fix my bike. Stuff I use in my day-to-day activities especially when I work in construction I put them in my tool belt. They took my

personal journal. They took one of my books. I had three books, they took one. They went through our stuff twice. They probably took some stuff for evidence. But they were selective in what they took and what they gave back. We only got back three-tenths of what we had in there. One of our organizers got a dislocated shoulder. Another six cops jumped a photographer. We have 21 witness accounts as far as I know. That was much harder than the riot squad who are known for their heavy-handedness in situations like this.

We all came back on the Monday and we're here and we are now 125 strong. The week outside has been tough but we're getting donations. Luckily the people of Vancouver and all the unions are behind us. But we are very short of mattresses and blankets. We had about 125 last night. That's a low estimate. At least they got a mattress and a warm blanket and food. We have coffee. The infrastructure here can maybe handle 300 if you're lucky enough to get in. We have at least 1,000 people that are homeless. We've buckled down. Tarps, moisture and vapor barriers, anything to get us off the ground we'd appreciate too. Now it's starting to get colder. We have a rainy season here. But the fight has just begun though and we're not leaving. They cut off our electricity so we're roughing it, camping out in the city. Donations of tents would really help. Any old tents bring them down. It's going to be a long battle.

I refuse to pay \$400 minimum for rent to live in a crappy Downtown Eastside hotel. I'm homeless because I don't have a home but I couch-surf and I build my little squats in the woods around. I just came here because I fought for the Woodward building back when the NDP was in power. We bought it. They bought it. And now it's 2002 and this has come again. I believe that we have a real problem with affordable social housing in Vancouver, Canada and the world. I really don't want us to get a homeless problem like the United States has. I'm tired of the government talking the talk but not walking the walk. You can only get lied to so many times before you have to stand up. And we the people are standing up. We'll get arrested time and time again. We'll do whatever it takes within the passive-resistance movement to get victory. To win.

I ARRIVED COMPLETELY BY ACCIDENT (09/30)

Ann Wilden

I arrived completely by accident. I was just walking by when there was a rally. I lived in squats in New York before and I got evicted from all of them. So I was really happy that there was resistance here and that it seemed to be working. I thought you guys stood way more of a chance than we did in the States. That very night I just moved in. I didn't really have anywhere else to stay. I was crashing all over the place including Science World. It was great on many levels. I was really excited about what was going on politically and also it was a roof over my head. That was on a Friday night that I moved in. Unfortunately we were evicted the next Saturday. But in the short time that I was there it was really amazing because everybody was pitching in. It was totally like anarchy in action and working. No-one was in charge. People were just doing whatever they felt needed to be done and whatever they would enjoy doing, to contribute. Things were getting built. There was a kitchen. There was food being made. It was really great. I actually met another girl from New York which was cool. We didn't know each other before although it turns out we had all the same friends in the city. That was a weird coincidence. But besides her I met a lot of people that seem like real people to me. I just really kind of clicked with a lot of people here. It's been good for me socially as well as politically. I would like to stay here. I really like what's going on here but there's a lot of stuff happening at home that I feel that I need to deal with. My mother's housing project is getting sold to a private developer so about 3,000 people including my mother are getting evicted. There's all this stuff that I feel I should be there for.



* a photomontagellustration

Volt

The Queen visits Woodward's

"Social Issues may not be your cup of tea
but homelessness needs to be dealt with effectively.
Demand provincially-funded housing for the poor, disabled and elderly."

I HAVEN'T MET MORE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE IN MY ENTIRE LIFE (10/05)

Chrystal Durocher

I first arrived at the squat on a Wednesday night. The first Wednesday after the big occupation began. I didn't think I was going to stay here but I did because Travis was here. It's been interesting to say the least. It's like family. Everybody has their arguments and their fights. We love everybody and we hate everybody all at the same time. Most of us are here for the same cause so it all works out in the end. I'm happy the way it is but I just wish we were all inside the building knocking on each others' doors to borrow cups of sugar and a couple of eggs. But we're outside and we deal with it. *What was it like on the inside with the sleeping & eating & meetings?* I never attended a single meeting inside because the first one I heard scared me. It was all loud voices—they were crazy—and they scared me so I just laid in my bed and I slept. I just avoided the meetings. The kitchen was awesome. I'd just go into the kitchen and eat any time I want. I think the only problem we had with the kitchen up there was people bitching, "oh, well, you didn't clean up your mess!" How hard is it to run a rag over the table? And so I ended up cleaning the kitchen like four times a day. That was my job. *What's the kitchen like here on the outside?* Militant. It depends on who's in the kitchen. I don't want to name names because that's not nice. When there are a certain couple of guys in there the kitchen rocks, the kitchen rocks. But some of the people who are volunteering, as wonderful as they are—I mean they're doing fabulous, fabulous jobs—they just get really snarky and kind of bitchy and it wears on my nerves because I'm pregnant and bitchy myself. So we end up snarking at each another and I usually win because I walk away faster than they do. But it's almost like it's an institution kitchen. It's like, "this is how it's going to go and, no, you're not allowed in the kitchen and that's it." If somebody happens to sleep through a meal then they're SOL cause dinner's not until 7pm. That's the way it runs. *Wasn't there an attempt to start a second kitchen?* That was horrible! They tried really hard but there were so many people in

the kitchen. Little Travis was trying to cook for 150 people. He doesn't have that many dreads to start with and he was ready to pull them out one-by-one. That poor little man. It was a big bust. The thought was there. Their hearts were in it. But there was just not enough space. Not enough communal organization. And poor little Travis was stuck in the kitchen damned near 24 hours a day trying to cook for so many people. I'm surprised he's still alive. But the thought was there. Everybody's hearts were there.

How is it different now that you have a tent? Nobody can see me when I'm changing my clothes. It's a little bit warmer and there's a little bit more privacy. But our little tent section here is now being referred to as the "rich" section of the squat. I am actually spoiled rotten because I am pregnant. I'm constantly having people bring me food. I'm constantly having people bring me beautiful clothing. The only way that you could possibly tell that I'm a homeless person is that I live in a tent and I haven't combed my hair in two weeks, right? I totally appreciate the tents. They're wonderful. They keep us out of most of the elements. But there's a lot of people that don't have tents and it makes me feel really sad. Sometimes I just want to take all my blankets and stuff out of the tent and just give them to somebody else. But then I get greedy and I think, "no, I'll keep the tent and I'll stay the rich bitch of tent city." It was a wonderful idea. It really was. But it doesn't take care of everybody.

How pregnant are you exactly? Oh God! I'm in my seventh month. Just into my seventh month. I feel like I've been pregnant for ten years. I look like I'm two months overdue. In the past three days I've had nine or twelve different people tell me: "Oh! It's twins!" Wonderful. Wonderful. So, due the end of December and I'm hoping there's only one. *What are your plans if the squat packs up?* Stay as safe and as dry and as warm as humanly possible until November 1st and then we're going to figure out whether we're going to stay in Vancouver or move somewhere, maybe to the Island, maybe back up north. But for October we're outdoors. I need to get settled all through November just in case the baby comes early. If we're going to move out of the city I don't want to leave it too close to my due date. That would be absolutely frantic, trying

to move with a brand new baby. And Travis wants a dog so that could get a little hectic too. Me and him and a baby and a dog trying to move into a new place. Yeah right.

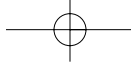
Are you from Prince George? I was there for all of my teenage years so from the time I was 13 until April. Travis and I lived in Trail and we lived in Nelson. I lived in Edmonton for a brief amount of time but it's too damned cold there in the winter. I never lived in Vancouver really so I had to try it. A little bit of rain as opposed to a lot of snow. I like the coast. The city scares me a little bit especially now that we're going to have a baby. In a smaller community I think it's a little easier to raise a child. You worry less. There's less worry, I think. You don't have to worry which immersion school your child's going to go to. You send your child to the school down the block. Letting them walk to school on their own in grade one is not an issue. They're not going to get hit by a bus or attacked by a chihuahua or some madman escaped from Riverview. I definitely don't want to raise a child in the big city. If there was no pregnancy we would definitely stay.

Have you met people at the squat that you'll stay in contact with? Hell yeah! Hell yeah! Like everybody! I have met so many beautiful souls here. If I lose touch it'll crush me. We're all in this situation together. Whether the people are supporters or squatters or just showed up out of the blue and needed a place to stay. There's so many beautiful people here. Everybody is out to help each other and there's no way that I could ever let that go. I haven't met more beautiful people in my entire life. I've met people here that I love more than people I've known since they were born.

POINTS OF UNITY AND STRATEGY OF THE COALITION (10/05)

Coalition of Woodward's Squatters and Supporters

The Coalition of Woodward's Squatters and Supporters formed to fight for social housing as a solution to the housing crisis in Vancouver and all across British Columbia. When the Liberals froze social housing spending in March of 2002 they made a bad situation worse for poor people in the province. Homelessness, wretched living conditions and ridiculously high rental fees have made life dangerously unstable and difficult for many people in BC. The Coalition opened the long empty Woodward's Building on Saturday September 14th to challenge and expose the government's negligence in addressing the needs of the poor and to directly meet the housing needs of the homeless in the city's core. The Coalition drafted a list of demands to define the movement for housing unfolding against the Campbell Government. The Coalition of Woodward's Squatters and Supporters strives to further these demands however possible always in a non-violent way. The Coalition targets the government and business to pressure them to meet the needs of poor and working people in the province, as stated in the demands. The Coalition creates educational material and strives to use and generate statistics to expose the anti-poor, pro-business nature of the Liberal government's policies and to create informed social pressure for positive legislative reforms. We defend ourselves from attacks by the government and business community through positive, constructive initiatives (like opening empty buildings as homes and sustaining tent-cities) as well as through direct actions and mass mobilizations of people to disrupt and agitate the existing situation that kills people. We seek to fight alongside the diverse groups of people who have stepped forward to support the Woodward's Squat. The Coalition believes that the only way to change this desperate situation for the better is to stand together and fight alongside each other. The Coalition is open to anyone who agrees with these basic points.

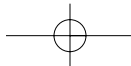


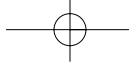
TWO SPEECHES AT VICTORY SQUARE (10/05)

Toecutter & Zeus

TOECUTTER

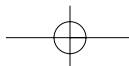
This is unbelievable, guys. I have never seen an open, total defiance against the community, against the people. Just to come right up to us and say, “No! I’m not giving it to you: simple as that. Deal with it!” I mean who the fuck is he to tell us that we can’t have a home? That we can’t have a place to live? I’ve been out there. I’ve seen what the cops can do. It’s a travesty. Beating up a 13-year-old boy and then to add insult to injury by sending him to jail and causing him all the grief. I mean what are we going to do about this? I am so angry, my friends. I am so angry. I don’t know where to begin. But you know what, guys, all I know is as long as I can breathe I’m going to be at that squat. Because goddammit Campbell can’t take the simple thing away from me. I mean I could go to prison. The motherfucker closed down all the prisons! You know? What else do we have? We had three people left from the original bust in prison. One guy refused to sign because he didn’t have a home and he figured, “well, hell, why not stay here and get fed?” You know what I mean? But then he was on the juice. He was on the methadone program. So the motherfuckers said, “hey, we’re just not gonna give you your juice.” Needless to say the guy signed. All I have to say is: No justice! No peace! No justice! No peace! No justice! No peace! No justice! No peace!





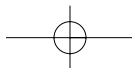
ZEUS

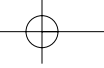
What I'd like to talk about is the cause and the reason why we have to go and occupy Woodwards and develop tent cities and so forth. The problem, the cause, is neo-classical economics. That is: privatization, deregulation, global free trade and the free-flow of capital. That results in an uneven distribution of income causing more poverty amongst the people, forcing people to not have homes. We have no choice but to develop these tent cities. These are a must! And it's a product of today. And it's a part of the revolution that's going to develop and build and spread. This is like a spark that's going to ignite the fire of the people of the East End! And we will win! We will win! We will win! At two levels! At two levels! One. Our victory over Woodwards. With the big "W" we will win. And we will also win against the global imperialist capitalist pigs! We will defy the system! The capitalist system is doomed for failure! It has no choice. The system is finished! We will win as revolutionaries against the capitalists! And we will win over the building of Woodwards! We will win!





The Woodward's Squat, Abbott Street Section, facing south (12/01) – Photograph by Peter Z



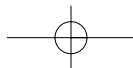


FROM THE WOODWARDS SQUAT
TO WIDESPREAD SOCIAL OVERHAUL
Chris Forth

I arrived late in the evening not knowing what to expect. The ladder had been withdrawn into the building for a meeting, and people camped on cots and mattresses along the perimeter. We waited for half an hour before the ladder was lowered and we ascended into the building. Inside there were many people and a vast floor area, sections of it covered with dust, paint chips and rubble. A TV was set up in the corner of the building, tuned to a local news program. People were gathered in a circular formation and arguing heatedly. I would find later that such meetings tried my patience beyond all endurance and abandon them altogether, but this was still very new to me. I had considered myself an anarchist and anti-capitalist for some time, and was still stupid and idealistic enough to call myself an “activist,” but this was the first real experience I had had with direct or militant action. I was concerned that my own inexperience would shine through, and anxious to participate meaningfully.

I quickly found myself getting to know some of the people there. There was a high turnover rate. Some people came to crash for a while and then move on, some people just came to give expressions of support or material assistance. There was a weird combination of the more typical middle class activists that one encounters and various poor and homeless individuals who, beyond any politics involved, had a clear and direct motive for being there: to have a safe and dry place to sleep. It made, at times, for tension, but it still seemed, in the end, that the two groups were drawn together by, if nothing else, some kind of common enemy. Being roughly dragged from your home by riot pigs has an interesting way of bringing people together.

There were aspects of squat life that I soon got into. Endless meetings marked by shouting and political opportunism, petty bickering, constant demands to organize tasks but with nothing ever getting done. In the end, the delegation of tasks was solved rather elegantly: certain parties simply did them, without waiting for delegation



from the larger group. There was also a constant paranoia marked by the phrase “the cops are coming!” After a while, such false alarms became so routine that any such statement was subjected to a simple test: did the person saying this actually see the cops? If the answer was no (which it always was) then no further mind was paid to it. However, rumours and hearsay did a lot to keep people on edge. I scarcely left the squat in those three days, for fear that shit would go down while I stepped out.

Early on in the squat a strict line of nonviolence was established. I had discussed this with some activists that I knew there, and it had been argued to me that this was purely a strategic choice, not a moralistic or political one. I now think that this is incorrect and that I was in fact lied to and given just a more sophisticated version of the nonviolence argument. I do not believe that the majority of people there could not have been persuaded not to let the pigs have Woodwards without a fight. This was a point of tension between the more conservative elements within the squat and the more radical elements. One of the speeches at the second support rally included phrases like “by any means necessary” and gave the impression that, yes, this was an illegal direct action, and no, we were not fucking around. Several anarchists and street youth also took to the habit of wearing masks at the public rallies. Not surprisingly, the pigs commented on this in the fear mongering pig press. I call this fear mongering because we represented no conceivable threat whatsoever (unfortunately). We were deliberately overstated as a threat, probably to justify the harsh nature of the police response. The “activist”-oriented types seemed to believe it too. There were opportunists seeking to harness the energy and momentum of the squat for political ends, and there were a few of the expected liberal scumbags there trying to drum up support for their personal careers and empty causes.

It was after a major rally that rumours were flying wildly about a possible police crackdown, and it had been suggested that they had already entered the bottom floor of the building. People were chattering, milling about confusedly, and being hastily rushed up the ladder into the building. An anarchist that I had recognized from elsewhere was angrily demanding of one of the squat’s informal activist leaders why

no one knew what was going on, why there had been no attempt to confirm if a raid was actually occurring, and other important questions that had never occurred to me. I was as confused and panicked as everyone else. A meeting was called and the situation was discussed. For the most part, the meeting was people congratulating us and telling us what an important thing it was that we were doing and assuring us of the rightness of our cause. While this can be heartening and boost morale, I quickly grew tired of the failure to confront concrete details and necessities. I spoke my piece and left the circle. It was after this that the same anarchist who had been so heatedly questioning the lack of preparedness earlier approached one of my friends and suggested forming an affinity group, based around our shared commitment to and belief in autonomous direct action (or, more simply, a feeling of being generally fed up with the bullshit that was going on at that time). While we did not seriously consider the possibility of challenging the imposed and unspoken consensus on nonviolence, we decided on a more proactive approach.

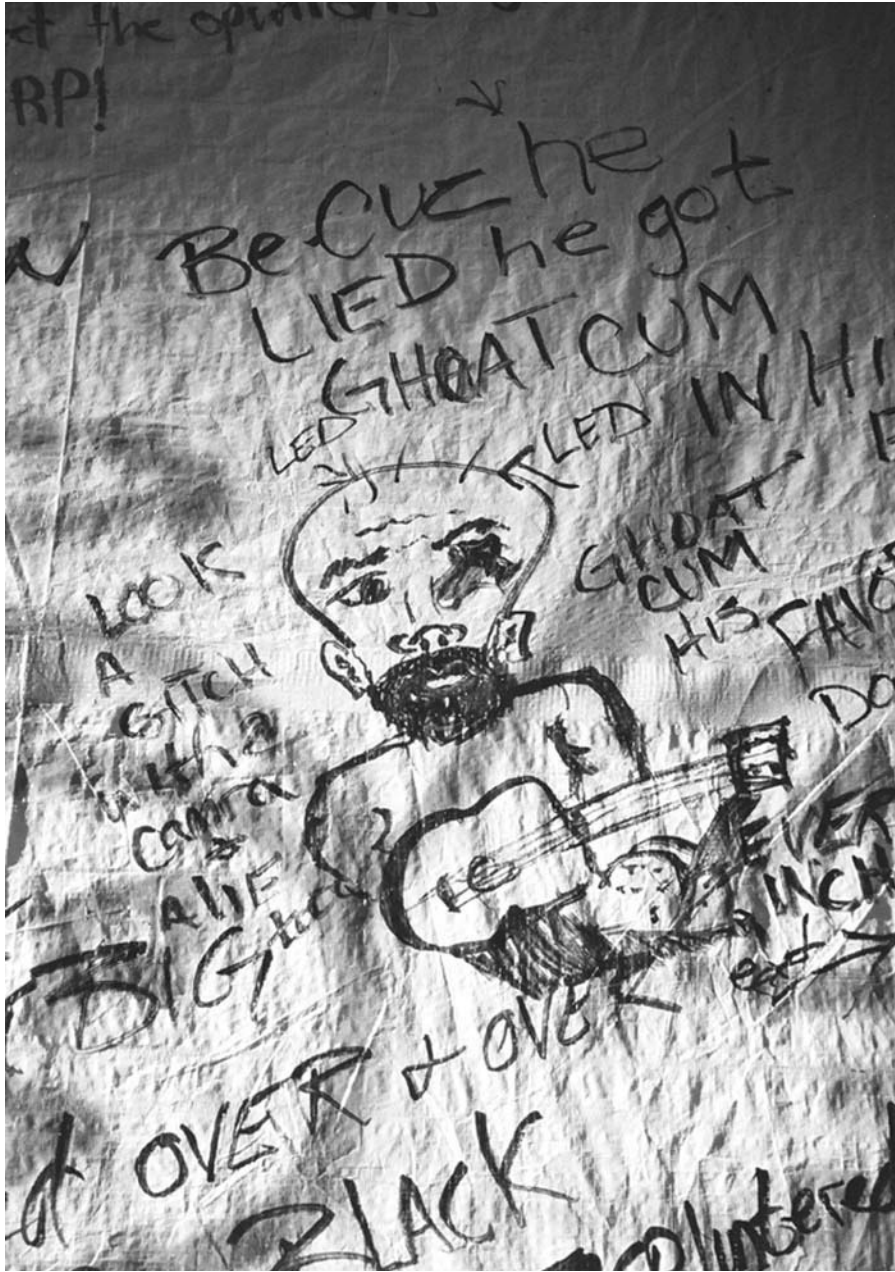
One of our affinity group members had participated in Earth First! civil disobedience campaigns, and mentioned that we had some of the materials necessary to build lockboxes, devices which would allow us to lock ourselves together but still give us the option of unlocking ourselves whenever we chose. The box is basically a cylindrical tube of PVC plastic with a bolt through the middle and layers of sand, tar, chickenwire and, finally, duct tape on the outside, making it very difficult to cut through. A hand is put in each end, and one has a zap strap with a caribbeaner on one's wrist. You then latch the caribbeaner onto the bolt. We began scavenging materials to work on these devices right away. We also began barricading all the stairwells onto that floor. The barricading process was mostly one of just filling up stairwells with rubble, and it would not have stopped any sort of determined assault, which we admitted. The barricades, however, drew fierce criticism, and emergency meetings were quickly called at which fingerpointing and accusations took place. All sorts of absurd arguments were used: first, that barricades were in themselves a violent act, that they would bring down quicker police repression (something

inevitable in large, high profile squats anyway). And, finally, even when it was admitted that barricades were not a violent act, it was still argued that they “speak to violence.” My comrades and I quickly grew tired of these endless screaming sessions and went back to building barricades. Interestingly enough, nobody felt strongly enough about our rather pathetic barricades to try and take them down physically. I credit this to the idea that most liberals are completely alienated from the idea of acting for oneself outside of political mediation. I did not, however, mention this theory publicly, lest it give some of them the idea. Later events would convince me that the majority of the squat supported the barricades anyways.

It went on like this until the early morning of the arrest. The elevator doors were spiked to prevent them from opening. Rubble was collected and piled up in doorways and stairwells. A frantic attempt was made to finish the lockboxes, which, in the end, would have to be discarded as useless. Two crucial flaws were discovered: that the bolts did not go all the way through, allowing the caribbeaners to slide off easily, and also that the lockboxes could be slid one way or another, exposing the zap straps and allowing them to be cut. As we were finishing them off, a very polished looking photographer asked to photograph them. We told him twice not to before he wandered off. At this point the entire squat was crawling with slick photographers and people on cell phones. When questioned, they would often claim to be from one or another student media organization. I suspect many of them were undercovers doing early surveillance and reconnaissance. At an early hour in the morning the pounding on the barricades began. I went upstairs to inform one of my friends and then headed downstairs. People were beginning to gather their belongings and those who did not wish to get arrested began leaving the building. Finally, we assembled in a circle with our arms linked as we saw the riot and crowd control police enter the building. There were also many uniformed pigs there for the booking process. Chants were made and a short speech to keep up morale. The pigs began to encircle and they made comments such as “get the fearless one.” Obvious attempts were made to go for leader figures first. As they started to haul off one of the people I knew, I began to scream

and curse at the riot pig, and stopped at the advice of one of my friends. Eventually they came for me. What the police did in this situation was use something that can be referred to as “compliance technique.” This basically means inducing pain in an uncooperative subject until they comply. It is a technique that is used by pigs in mass civil disobedience demonstrations. They are trained to induce pain specifically in people who will not fight them back. Then my hands were zap strapped behind my back and I was arrested. We were taken down to the station and spent several hours in holding cells before coming before a justice of the peace, signing a promise that we would not reenter or advocate the reentry of the Woodward building. I should also mention at this point that there were many points along the process of my confinement and transfer where I got a chance to interact with other squat arrestees and display meaningful solidarity. There was never any question on any of our parts that what we were doing was right, nor did there seem to be any show of fear. After I got out, there was a festive and supportive atmosphere. I learned that a number of squatters had been pepper sprayed as they tried to leave. I also heard later that the barricades had prevented something like one-third of the expected pigs from entering the building. It would not surprise me if this was the case.

I still regard the Woodward Squat as being a very important chapter of my life. It also taught me some very important things about social activism and resistance. Many theoretical and abstract points were demonstrated to me in a concrete and real way. I saw the police as an occupying, military force, mobilized to protect the abstract notion of private property. I also realized that civil disobedience is, for the most part, a luxury of the privileged: many people would not participate in the civil disobedience action on the grounds that they had warrants. In future, in my opinion, such actions should not give or ask any sort of quarter from the pigs. Anything less is just a more elaborate form of suicide. I will never engage in another civil disobedience action. However, I do not regret my participation in the Woodward Squat. I hope that this example will serve as a further impetus to radical action and eventually contribute to widespread social overhaul.



Graffiti featuring Journalist Andrew Struthers.

I'M STILL HERE. I'M STILL BREATHING.
CAN'T GET RID OF ME THAT EASY (10/13)

Lacey Rainer

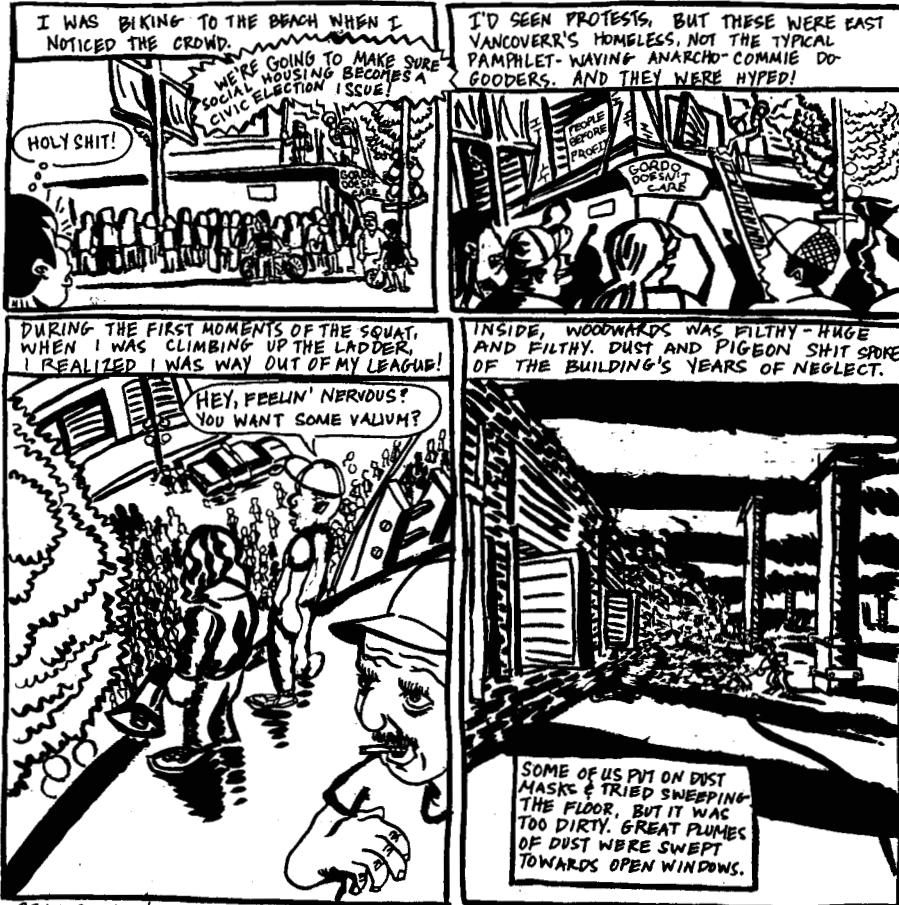
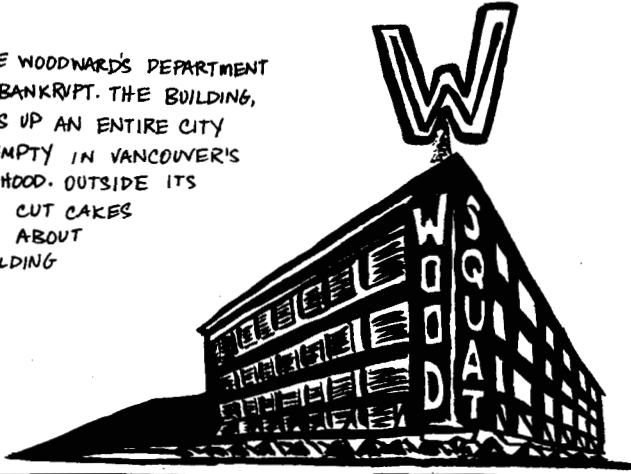
Jiivan was on Commercial driving by and he was freaking out about the squat and I'm like, "where?" It was day one when I came down here. It was big. It was huge. It was scary. It was dark. But it was nice. It was cool. It was working while we were up there. The arrest was fuckin a rush, man. 6:30 in the morning in riot gear, whoa! I was looking at the cops like, "oh, don't hurt me." I was the last one sitting down, though. It was cool that they let me out on my own guardianship. The judge was going to send me back up to Kelowna. She was like, "you don't want a place to stay?" I do, but I got a job at youth centres. I'm working all my life right now. I used to work at five-star resorts in Kelowna but it's harder if you don't have an address. And I never got anything back: my purse, my ID, nothing. They said they were holding shit for evidence but I'm thinking the only thing they could hold my purse for was for having rigs in it. Clean rigs, though. They said they brought the rest of it over. I was the first one to go through all of that and none of it was there.

Yesterday was bullshit. It was this guy. I don't know his name. He comes up and I'm just looking at him like, "I don't know you; you haven't been around here before." I thought he was a cop. But he wasn't. Just a little too paranoid. Ken's talking to him and I didn't want to be rude and say, "fuck off," you know. So I just shut up and sat there. He's talking about the carny. I know people that work there. I've never worked there. I don't go to them. But he said that I'm a fuckin crackhead! I'm totally against crack! I don't like it because it ruined my mom's life. I've found out she's doing it again. But he took my picture and said, "hey, if I get this in the paper what do you want me to say?" I said, "tell them we fought for a good cause." He's like, "yeah, right on!" Then this bullshit comes out. I've been on the street since I was eleven. I've been on my own since I was nine. I raised myself. I raised my little sister. I took care of my

mom, you know? It pisses me off because this is harsh disrespect. My mother's going to read this. My grandmother's going to read this. It's just like: fuck you man! I hope he has a fuckin conscience. Karma. I haven't stopped shaking yet. But it has to get worse before it gets better. It's weird. I went through the week where all my friends were all depressed and shitty shit happened to them. But everybody here was so happy and was just offering me everything. I thought I was going crazy and I was sober. Buddy offered me rent to any place I wanted in the West End. I didn't take the offer.

I've done protests before but this fuckin tent shit is whacked! At first I thought it was kind of degrading to us to sit on the streets every Friday and Saturday night when these yuppies go by and call us down. Whatever. I like this. It's safe here. Chrystal's safe here. We all help each other in our own little ways. I got all my bags packed ready for a raid. I have since after the Sunday. They're going to look for any reason to get an injunction on this. What can we do? Are we going to get beat up and go to jail? Okay, you've got a roof and three meals in jail but you don't got your freedom. I'm all about freedom. It's hard to explain because everybody sees things in their own different ways. I'm trying to see it everybody's different way. I hope they don't raid us. I think they should just give us a chance for one month or two months. Give us the bottom floor or like a quarter of the bottom floor. This is a big place in there. We can all fit in that. Give us a chance. We can live in our tents in there. Why not? Instead of spending the money—how much did they spend on arresting us those two nights? If we fuck up that's our problem. We don't live up to their codes that's our problem. If we do, we fuckin rule. If we're on the first floor there's no falling through the floor. There's one code written off right there. The asbestos is on the fourth floor or higher. This is the first floor. Build windows. Get the air going through there. If you want to have a security guard walking through, fine, have a narc walking through. It's our home. Maybe some people disrespect it but they can leave. Everybody's here for different reasons. I'm here because it's safe. I leave my shit here. I don't like to be alone when I get depressed because then I do stupid things. Whatever. I'm still here. I'm still breathing. Can't get rid of me that easy.

IN JANUARY 1993, THE WOODWARD'S DEPARTMENT STORE CHAIN WENT BANKRUPT. THE BUILDING, WHICH NEARLY TAKES UP AN ENTIRE CITY BLOCK, REMAINED EMPTY IN VANCOUVER'S POOREST NEIGHBOURHOOD. OUTSIDE ITS WALLS, POLITICIANS CUT CAKES & MADE SPEECHES ABOUT RESTORING THE BUILDING & TURNING IT INTO HOUSING. NOTHING WAS DONE. IT SAT DECAYING FOR NEARLY 10 YEARS. BUT ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2002, WOODWARDS IS OPENED!



PENCILS, INK & STORY BY TREVOR M. LETTERS & EDITING BY JESSICA P.

WE EXPLORED WOODWARDS FOR A WHILE.



EVENTUALLY, A MEETING WAS CALLED. THERE WAS A DIVERSE CROWD: HOMELESS, ACTIVISTS, STUDENTS & PEOPLE FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.



THE FIRST MEETING, LIKE ALL SQUAT MEETINGS, WAS LONG & FRUSTRATING. THE SQUAT HAD BEEN OPENED WITH NO CLEAR POLITICAL DEMANDS AND NO PROCESS FOR DECISION-MAKING.



MAKING MATTERS WORSE WAS THAT THE COPS & MEDIA WOULD ARRIVE UNEXPECTEDLY AND ALL HELL WOULD BREAK LOOSE.



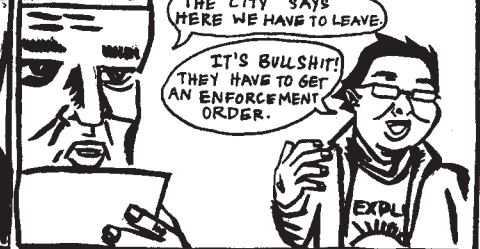
I GIVE CREDIT TO THE PEOPLE WHO STUCK AROUND & FACILITATED. EVENTUALLY DECISIONS WERE MADE & COMMITTEES FORMED.



POLICE CAME BY AND TOLD US WE'D HAVE TO BRING UP THE LADDER. THEY TOLD US TO LEAVE OR WE'D BE FORCIBLY REMOVED.



THESE SORTS OF HOLLOW THREATS, MADE BY THE POLICE & THE CITY, WERE MEANT TO INTIMIDATE US & THEY WERE COMMON. WE GOT USED TO IT AFTER A WHILE.



FOR 7 DAYS, WOODWARDS WAS A HOME! NOT EVERYTHING WAS PERFECT, BUT THERE WAS A KITCHEN, FOOD, & RUNNING WATER.



A LOT OF HARD WORK WAS DONE OUTSIDE OF THE SQUAT, GETTING DONATIONS & ENDORSEMENTS, OR WRITING PRESS RELEASES. MUCH OF THIS SUPPORT WORK WAS DONE BY WOMEN.



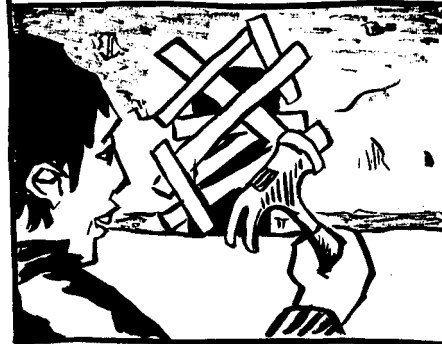
ON DAY 3, OFFICERS ARRIVED WITH A COURT INJUNCTION & THE NEXT DAY WITH AN ENFORCEMENT ORDER DEMANDING SQUATTERS' LEAVE.



TENSIONS WERE HIGH. AN EMERGENCY RALLY WAS CALLED TO DEFEND THE SQUAT. SOLIDARITY & COMMUNITY GROUPS SHOWED THEIR SOLIDARITY.



DESPITE DEBATE THAT SUCH TACTICS WERE "VIOLENT" SQUATTERS DECIDED TO BUILD BARRICADES AROUND THE DOORS AND ELEVATOR SHAFTS TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE WOULD BE AWAKE WHEN THE POLICE RAIDED THE SQUAT.



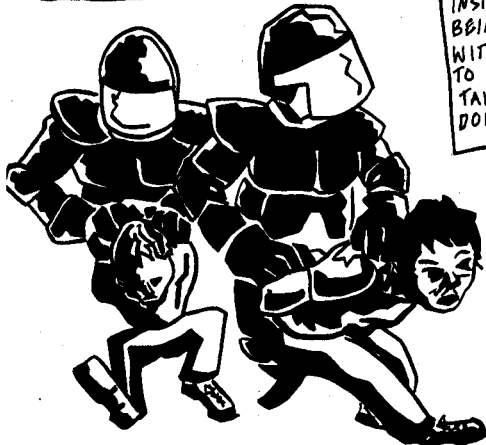
AT THIS POINT, NO ONE KNEW WHEN THE COPS WOULD RAID. SQUATTERS ON PATROLS REPORTED MOVEMENT ON THE FLOORS BELOW. THEN, AROUND 5 AM ON THE SQUAT'S 7TH DAY, A STREET NURSE GOT A TIP FROM A REPORTER.



VANCOUVER POLICE LATER TRIED TO CHARGE MEDIA WITH "OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE" FOR PASSING THIS INFORMATION ON TO THE SQUATTERS.



54 PEOPLE WERE DRAGGED OUT OF WOODWARDS & CHARGED WITH CIVIL CONTEMPT OF COURT.



ALSO ARRESTED WAS A STREET NURSE WHO INSISTED ON BEING A WITNESS TO THE TAKE-DOWN.



HE WAS LUCKY. THE PEPPER SPRAY ONLY GOT HIM ON THE SIDE OF THE FACE & HE DIDN'T FALL OFF THE LADDER!

EVERYONE WHO WAS ARRESTED WAS TAKEN OUT OF THE BUILDING THROUGH AN UNDERGROUND TUNNEL TO THE COURT HOUSE FOR PROCESSING. THERE WAS MUCH COMRADESHIP AMONGST THE SQUATTERS. INSIDE THE JAIL & COURT ARE SHOUTS OF RESISTANCE! SQUATTERS WERE RELEASED BY EARLY AFTERNOON. THEIR ONLY CONDITION WAS THAT THEY WEREN'T ALLOWED BACK INSIDE OF THE WOODWARDS BUILDING. THEY WERE NOT RESTRICTED FROM THE AREA OUTSIDE OF THE BUILDING. THE POLICE ESTIMATED THE COST OF EVICTING THE SQUATTERS AT \$160,000!

BUT I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING OF IT. I HAD BEEN AT HOME SLEEPING. I NOTICED THE SQUAT HAD BEEN RAIDED WHEN I WENT TO SCHOOL IN THE MORNING.



OH SHIT! THEY RAIDED! THOSE FUCKERS RAIDED! I HOPE THEY DIDN'T BEAT PEOPLE! I REALLY HOPE THEY DIDN'T BEAT...

IT WAS AN ANXIOUS FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL; I WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE PEOPLE I KNEW. BY THE TIME I LEFT & GOT TO THE COURT HOUSE, ALMOST EVERYONE HAD BEEN RELEASED.



DON'T BE DISTRACTED! THEY'RE OUT OF THE BUILDING, CHRIST IT WAS DUSTY, IF THEY PEPPER-SPRAYED PEOPLE, SOMEONE COULD'VE PANICKED, THEN...



PEOPLE WAITED AROUND UNTIL EVERYONE WAS OUT. KIDS DREW ON THE COURT HOUSE WALLS WITH CHALK.



WE GOT OUT OF JAIL AT AROUND 10 A.M. THERE WERE PEOPLE OUTSIDE WHO HAD BEEN WAITING FOR US ALL NIGHT. I PUT THE LACES BACK IN MY SHOES & WE ALL WALKED TO VICTORY SQUARE.



WE MARCHED BACK TO THE WOODWARDS BUILDING.

THE COWARDLY & DISGUSTING ACTS OF THE VANCOUVER POLICE DID NOT BREAK OUR SPIRIT. INSTEAD, IT MADE US STRONGER!

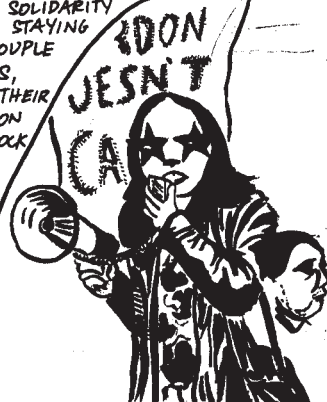
IT ALSO EXPOSED TO MANY THE BLATANT INJUSTICE & LEVEL OF VIOLENCE THE GOVERNMENT WAS WILLING TO UNLEASH TO CRUSH PEACEFUL DISSENT.



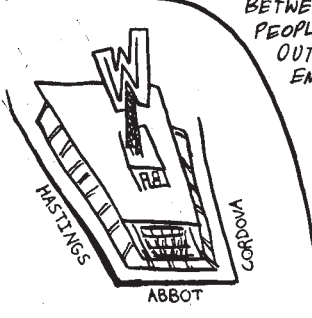
IT SEEMED UTTERLY LUDICROUS THAT THE PRIORITY OF THE POLICE & GOVERNMENT WOULD BE TO DESTROY PEOPLE'S HOMES & ONLY BELONGINGS IN A NEIGHBOURHOOD WHERE PEOPLE SLEEP IN ALLEYS & UNDER BRIDGES.

WHERE DID THEY EXPECT SQUATTERS TO GO? AFTERALL, THEY WERE HOMELESS TO BEGIN WITH.

FROM HERE, THE SQUAT EXPANDED & SPIRALLED FAR BEYOND ANYTHING PREDICTED. A RALLY WAS CALLED TO DEFEND THE SQUAT; CELEBRITY POLITICIANS CAME TO SHOW SOLIDARITY (USUALLY STAYING FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS, GETTING THEIR PICTURE ON THE 6 O'CLOCK NEWS & THEN TAKING OFF!)



ALL 3 BLOCKS OF THE OUTSIDE AWNING OF WOODWARDS, WHICH WRAPS AROUND 3 SIDES OF THE BUILDING, BECAME OCCUPIED BY VANCOUVER'S HOMELESS.



BETWEEN 120-160 PEOPLE SLEPT OUTSIDE THE EMPTY BUILDING EVERY NIGHT! PUBLIC SUPPORT KEPT FOOD AND DONATIONS COMING. THE SQUAT WAS RUN BY THE SQUATTERS THEMSELVES.

THE COALITION OF WOODWARDS SQUATTERS AND SUPPORTERS PASSED REVISED DEMANDS. (SEE LAST PAGE)

NON-PARTISAN ASSOCIATION (N.P.A.)



JENNIFER CLARK

THE N.P.A. WHO HAD HELD MANY TERMS IN OFFICE REPRESENTED THE MORE CONSERVATIVE APPROACH TO DEALING WITH THE PROBLEMS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOODWARDS & THE PROBLEMS OF THE DOWNTOWN EAST SIDE BECAME KEY ISSUES OF DEBATE BETWEEN THE TWO MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES COMPETING FOR POWER IN VANCOUVER'S NOVEMBER 16TH, 2002 CIVIC ELECTION.

THE "LIBERAL" OR ALTERNATIVE SIDE OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM IS REPRESENTED BY LARRY CAMPBELL & C.O.P.E. CAMPBELL, A FORMER CORDNER, SAYS HE'S IN FAVOUR OF SAFE INJECTION SITES & THE "FOUR PILLARS"*. APPROACH TO THE D.T.E.S.

COALITION OF PROGRESSIVE ELECTORS (C.O.P.E.)



LARRY "HAPPY" CAMPBELL

* "FOUR PILLARS": A PLAN TO HELP THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WHICH INCLUDES HARM REDUCTION, TREATMENT, ENFORCEMENT & PREVENTION.

A PUNK SHOW AT VICTORY SQUARE KEPT THE MOMENTUM GOING !!

SQUATTERS WERE BARRED FROM A PUBLIC POLICE BOARD MEETING BY RIOT COPS. BEATINGS BY POLICE & ITEMS STOLEN DURING THE POLICE RAIDS REMAIN UNACCOUNTED FOR.



SQUATTERS DISRUPTED A CITY COUNCIL MEETING & DEMANDED THAT MORE THAN 100 UNITS OUT OF 500 IN WOODWARDS BE ALLOCATED FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSING, SHOULD IT BE SOLD TO A PRIVATE DEVELOPER. AFTER MUCH DEBATE, COUNCIL DECIDED ON 150-200 UNITS, BARELY ENOUGH TO HOUSE THOSE SLEEPING ON ITS SIDEWALK.



COPE WON THE ELECTION BY A LANDSLIDE! RIDING ON A WAVE OF RESENTMENT TOWARDS THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, AND FRUSTRATED BY THE N.P.A.'S INCOMPETANCE IN ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS, VANCOUVER CHOSE A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO ITS TROUBLED CITY.



BUT

WILL CAMPBELL STAND BEHIND THE SQUATTERS WHO HELPED HIM GET ELECTED?...

DAYS AFTER BEING ELECTED, LARRY CAMPBELL PUBLICLY SUPPORTED AN INJUNCTION.

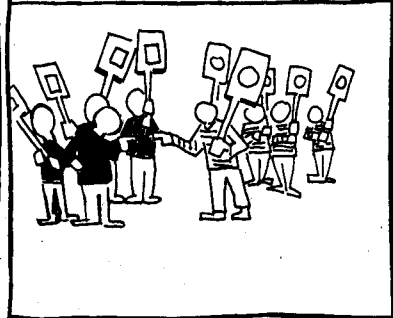
THANKS FOR THE VOTE!



THE SQUAT HAD BEEN RUNNING FOR OVER TWO MONTHS. THE HOMELESS CONTINUED TO KEEP THE CAMP GOING. MOLDY MATTRESSES & WET BLANKETS ADDED TO THE HOPELESSNESS OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD CRIPPLED BY POVERTY & DRUG ADDICTION.



WHILE SQUATTERS WERE FIGHTING THE ELEMENTS & TRYING TO HOLD ONTO THE LITTLE HOPE THEY HAD, MUCH OF THE ACTIVIST SUPPORT GOT CAUGHT UP IN ITS OWN INTERNAL FIGHTING.



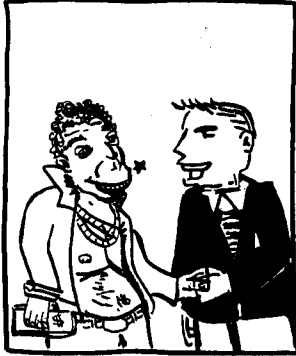
THE LEGAL DEFENSE TEAM FOR THE SQUATTERS PRESENTED THEIR CASE IN COURT. THE JUDGE WAS UNSYMPATHETIC & LET ONLY 4 OF THE 12 DEFENDANTS PLEAD THEIR CASE AGAINST A NEW INJUNCTION.



TWO DAYS LATER, THE COURT ISSUED AN INJUNCTION. THIS FURTHER DEMORALIZED THE ALREADY ISOLATED SQUATTERS. THINGS STARTED TAKING CONTROL OF THE KITCHEN & CASH DONATIONS, USING SQUAT RESOURCES FOR FRIENDS OR DRUG DEALERS.



WISHING TO AVOID NEGATIVE PRESS, VIOLENCE, OR CONFRONTATION WITH ACTIVISTS, THE CITY DID NOT ENFORCE THE INJUNCTION. INSTEAD, THEY PAID THE PORTLAND HOTEL SOCIETY \$10,000 TO TAKE DOWN THE SQUAT, CLEAN THE SIDEWALK & PUT



A FENCE AROUND THE BUILDING. THE PORTLAND GAVE 50 MEMBERS OF VANDU (VANCOUVER AREA NETWORK OF DRUG USERS) \$50 EACH TO HELP WITH THE EVICTION, BUT ONLY A HANDFUL PARTICIPATED.

THE PORTLAND WAS GIVEN \$93,000 BY THE CITY TO MANAGE 50 SQUATTERS FOR FOUR MONTHS. ANOTHER 8-10 PEOPLE WERE FOUND ROOM IN HOTELS & SHELTERS. THE MONEY TO HOUSE THE SQUATTERS CAME FROM THE CITY'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING BUDGET.

MOST SQUATTERS, HOWEVER, WERE NOT FOUND SHELTER. OUT OF THE APPROXIMATELY 150 PEOPLE LIVING AT WOODSQUAT, AROUND 60 WERE FOUND A PLACE TO LIVE. WHAT'S WORSE IS THAT MANY PEOPLE WHO ENDED UP MOVING INTO THE DOMINION HOTEL WEREN'T SQUATTERS AT ALL, BUT DEALERS WHO HAPPENED TO BE AROUND WHEN PEOPLE NEEDED TO GET THEIR NAME ON THE LIST FOR HOUSING.

IT WAS AN AVERAGE, GREY, DRIZZLY, VANCOUVER DAY WHEN THE SQUAT WAS TORN DOWN. IT WAS FAR MORE ANTI-CLIMACTIC THAN I EXPECTED THE END TO BE. ANYONE LIVING AT THE WOODSQUAT WHO WAS NOT THERE THAT DAY HAD THEIR STUFF THROWN AWAY. DESPITE THE HORRIFIC CONDITIONS THAT COME WITH LIVING ON THE SIDEWALK OF A CITY STREET, SQUATTERS WHO DID GET A PLACE WEREN'T EXACTLY ECSTATIC WITH JOY.

MANY SQUATTERS WERE DRIVEN TO THE SIDEWALKS OF WOODWARDS BY THE DESPERATE CONDITIONS OF THE HOTELS & SHELTERS THAT WERE THE ONLY PLACES THEY COULD AFFORD TO LIVE. MOVING BACK INTO A HOTEL AFTER DEFENDING WOODSQUAT FOR 92 DAYS HARDLY SEEMED LIKE A VICTORY.

SINCE THE MOVE INTO THE DOMINION HOTEL, SQUATTERS HAVE BEEN MOVED TO TWO DIFFERENT HOTELS. CONDITIONS ARE VIOLENT & GRIM. THE CITY CHARGES \$325 PER MONTH FOR UNITS WITH NO KITCHEN OR BATHROOM.

THE WOODWARDS BUILDING HAS BEEN SOLD TO THE CITY & THEY ARE LOOKING FOR A PRIVATE DEVELOPER. COMMUNITY FORUMS HAVE BEEN HELD BY THE CITY TO CREATE A "VISION" FOR THE BUILDING.

ON APRIL 7TH, 2003, "OPERATION TORPEDO" WAS LAUNCHED. AN ATTEMPT TO CLEAN UP THE NEIGHBOURHOOD BY REALLOCATING 40 COPS TO THE DTES, ITS ONLY SUCCESS SO FAR HAS BEEN TO PUSH DEALERS FROM ONE END OF THE BLOCK TO THE OTHER. THE "FOUR PILLARS" STRATEGY IS LOOKING LIKE A POLICE BATTON. PIVOT LEGAL SOCIETY HAS SUBMITTED A REPORT WITH 50 SWORN AFFIDAVITS DETAILING INCIDENTS OF POLICE BRUTALITY.

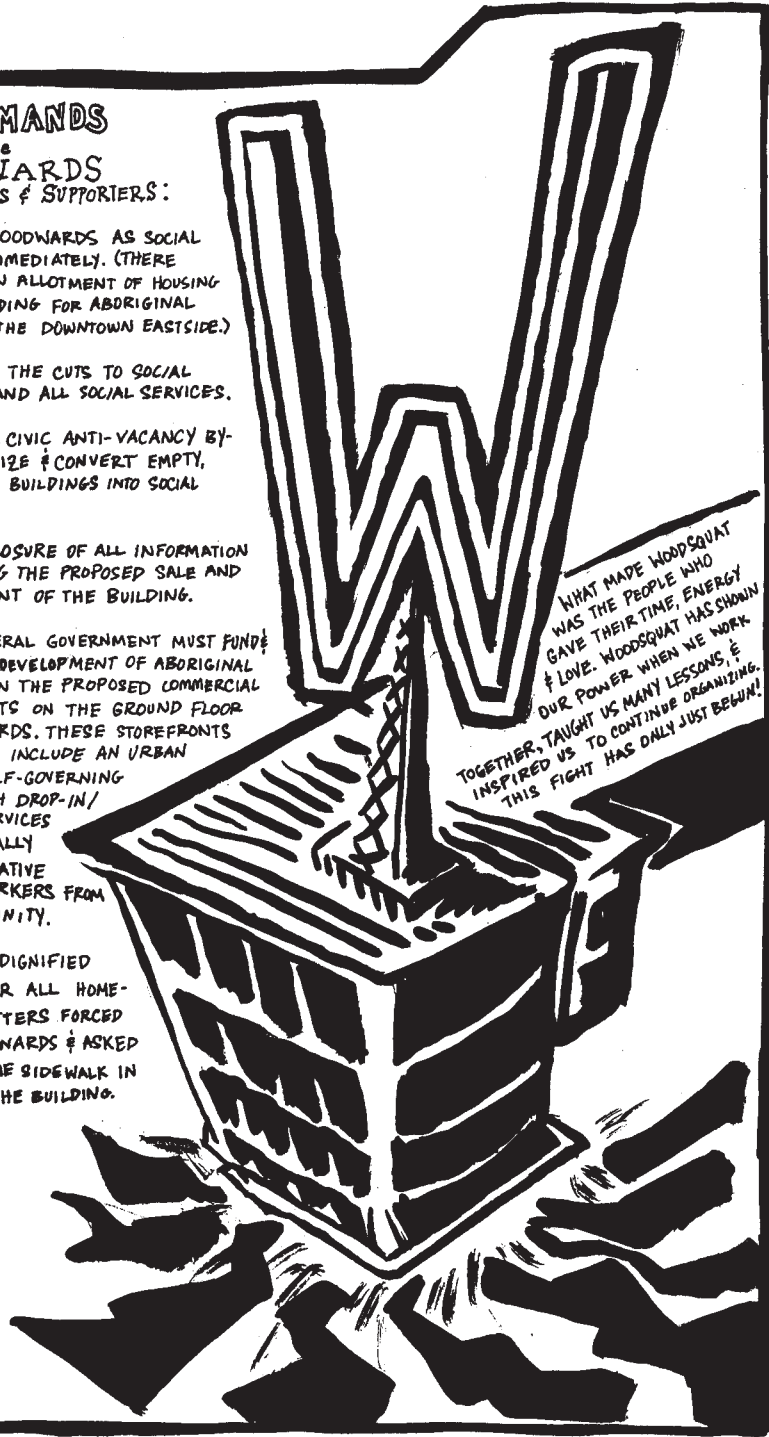
ACTIVIST GROUPS HAVE OPENED A SAFE INJECTION SITE, A HEALTH INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD'S HIV/HEP C EPIDEMIC. 5 MONTHS AFTER IT OPENED, A GOVERNMENT-RUN SAFE INJECTION SITE BEGAN. ITS SUCCESS WILL DEPEND ON HOW STAFF UNDERSTAND ITS USERS & THE DEGREE TO WHICH IT COOPERATES WITH THE POLICE.

ON JULY 2ND, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT VANCOUVER WILL HOST THE 2010 OLYMPICS. ACTIVISTS DEMAND SQUAT APART, OPEN A TENT CITY, & DEMAND LOW-INCOME HOUSING & AN END TO THE TWO-YEAR-OUT-OF-FIVE TIME LIMIT ON WELFARE.



SIX DEMANDS of the WOODWARDS SQUATTERS & SUPPORTERS:

- 1 DEVELOP WOODWARDS AS SOCIAL HOUSING IMMEDIATELY. (THERE MUST BE AN ALLOTMENT OF HOUSING IN THE BUILDING FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE.)
- 2 REVERSE THE CUTS TO SOCIAL HOUSING AND ALL SOCIAL SERVICES.
- 3 DRAFT A CIVIC ANTI-VACANCY BY-LAW TO SEIZE & CONVERT EMPTY, ABANDONED BUILDINGS INTO SOCIAL HOUSING.
- 4 FULL DISCLOSURE OF ALL INFORMATION REGARDING THE PROPOSED SALE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUILDING.
- 5 THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST FUND & SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABORIGINAL BUSINESS IN THE PROPOSED COMMERCIAL STOREFRONTS ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF WOODWARDS. THESE STOREFRONTS MUST ALSO INCLUDE AN URBAN NATIVE SELF-GOVERNING OFFICE WITH DROP-IN/ SUPPORT SERVICES AND CULTURALLY SENSITIVE NATIVE LIAISON WORKERS FROM THE COMMUNITY.
- 6 DECENT & DIGNIFIED SHELTER FOR ALL HOMELESS SQUATTERS FORCED FROM WOODWARDS & ASKED TO LEAVE THE SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING.



WHAT MADE WOODSQUAT WAS THE PEOPLE WHO GAVE THEIR TIME, ENERGY & LOVE. WOODSQUAT HAS SHOWN OUR POWER WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER, TAUGHT US MANY LESSONS, & INSPIRED US TO CONTINUE ORGANIZING. THIS FIGHT HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN!

THEY THINK WE'RE DISPOSABLE BUT WE'RE NOT: WE'RE RECYCLABLE (10/15)

A Native Man



The night before we moved in I had a hard time sleeping. It was the first time that I've done anything this radical. I felt proud to be a part of it all once it all got going. There were three of us. I'm the "native man" as I'm referred to in *The Vancouver Sun*. There's the three of us and the dog. We had to wait across the street at The Metropole for the truck to show up. They're the ones with all the supplies, all the original camping gear that we took up with us, the two ladders that we used, and all the other tools that we needed to get our banners up and get into the building proper. I was kind of leery at first but then I looked around and I noticed there wasn't any cops around. I guess they're all up at the protest that we had planned. It came off pretty good. It took us about half an hour, not even half an hour—BANG!—we're inside the building. He just pulled up in the truck, we pulled everything out, threw the ladders up, started climbing up, right upstairs there. I was leery about the dogs because it says "K9 Unit." But apparently they were stuck downstairs on the ground level. They got another dog up on the sixth floor. They can only roam certain areas of the building. Once we were in we secured the stairs in case the dogs were set loose they wouldn't be able to get down or up the stairs. But we found out a couple of days later that they had a dog in one of the offices up there. The first night wasn't too bad. It was pretty dusty when we first moved in. There was dust everywhere and we weren't really prepared for that. But we had a good response. We had an open house the first day. We invited lots of people up. I think the oldest one to come up was in his 60s and the youngest one was perhaps two years old. It was a

pretty good response we had, all these people coming up, having a look around and helping us set up for the first day. I have a guest book list for that first day that I want to get printed up if that's possible.

We had a lot of different people coming in each day. The first day we had twelve people and then it doubled up to twenty-five. Next thing you know we were at forty five. We had nightly meetings. We had everything set up. We had meetings about what we wanted to do, how we wanted things set up, where people wanted to sleep, on the second floor or the third floor, whichever floor they wanted to. We had everything quite organized. We told them there was a lot of safety concerns as well. We talked about which areas we wanted them to keep clear of. At the end it turned out to be about fifty-eight people when they eventually came by and arrested the people on the inside. But they did it pretty sneaky, you know? We didn't know there was a tunnel from the old Woodward's parking lot underneath Cordova Street. That's how they got in. The doors were all secured. They had everything all boarded up. That's why they could hear them from the inside, with their battering rams. BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! I wasn't there for the initial arrest. I was looking after Jim's dog. We got word that they were coming in to raid. Jim wanted to get his dog out and I guess he was pretty worried that he'd get hurt or killed. But they've reinforced everything since then. Next time we go in, if we do go in again, then it'll have to be with a chainsaw.

One thing I've noticed on the outside is that it's grown quite a bit. It just started off mainly along Abbott Street and a bit of the way along Hastings Street. Now it goes all the way around to the end of the building along Hastings and all the way to the end of the building along Cordova Street. There's still people coming in to find a place to sleep. The shelters are all full. There's a lot of different issues that the people have to deal with. We're trying to get them safe affordable housing, if we can. It's like a little community now where everybody's looking out for each another, which is good. We should all stick together, you know, and look after each other. None of this in-house fighting. If they all can get along that's a plus on their side. If we can stick with the

organization and keep it that way it'll keep going. We've been here one month now. One month and one day. Our original intention was at the most seven days. So we've surpassed that now by three weeks. Which is good. It's turning into a political hotbed. Apparently in the paper they say they want to try and put everybody in homeless shelters and try to get them off the street. Apparently they got another injunction to come along and clean this all up again. But if they do that we'll just come right back like we did the last time. It happened pretty fast. One minute everybody's up there. The next minute we're all down there. We're standing around. All of a sudden tables come out, tents started appearing, mattresses. It just snowballed right from there. It kind of grew and grew and grew. I'm proud of that moment and glad to see everybody get together and start pulling everything back together. A lot of people lost all their possessions and they're homeless already. What they have is what they carry on their back. The police came along and just threw everything in the garbage. I missed that night. It's funny. I had a dream that I was asleep and that everything was gone and thrown in the garbage. Then I actually did wake up, at my place, which is right across from Victory Square, and I see everybody rally around there. Then I got the news that they did clean everything up, came by with the street flushers and threw everything in the garbage, disposed of everything, and tried to and make it look like there was nobody even here to begin with. But we fooled them. We came right back, and BANG! Now we're here.

We've had a lot of support from different people. The Latino group had a big soup day. They had a couple of big pots of different soups. The Women's Centre brought over a couple of big pots of soup too and they stayed and served it all. And we have one lady that comes down every other day and she brings down two buckets of home-made soup. She does this all on her own. She doesn't get any money for it, or any stipends. She does it all on her own, which is good. There's lots of support from people on the outside. Hopefully we can get what we want which is to turn Woodward's into social and low-cost affordable housing and maybe some local merchants in the ground level. Maybe even open up a big detox in the basement.

Because there's a big basement where they used to have the Food Floor. They could turn that into a big detox. We only got two detoxes in Vancouver and they fill up really fast. When people want to go to detox they don't want to have to wait a day or two because they just slip again and go right back to whatever it is they were into. But if they have a nice big detox that could hold a lot of people. Maybe have one floor for people who've finished their detox and they could go move into that floor. But if this court injunction comes through I don't know what's going to happen. It's going to be kind of touchy. They're going to come along and throw everybody out again and throw away all their possessions. They think we're disposable but we're not. We're recyclable. We are. Give us the right tools and we can do stuff. That's all we need. We can do it. These people aren't stupid by a long shot. There's a lot of very talented people down here that just got caught up in the wrong situation. And they end up down here.

The neighbourhood has changed quite a bit over the past 35 years. One of the most notable changes is when crack hit. The whole Downtown Eastside has gone really downhill from that crack. It's been pretty crazy. A lot of violence from that shit. The most you'd see is the odd junkie here and there. Back then they used to hide more or less. We're here to take back the streets as well as take over a building. We've got to clean up the area for sure. We can't have these crazy crack dealers down here complaining that they're losing money [because of the squat]. Well go sell your product somewhere else. We don't want it in this neighbourhood. We've already got enough violence and mayhem going on. Hopefully we can get our objectives met and the government will give in. Eventually Campbell will come and have a look and see the situation. He probably wouldn't be too welcome in the neighbourhood right about now. I just hope it all comes together and works out for everybody. That's one of my wishes for this year.



Chris Barton & Angel Williams



Nick Olsen & Matthew Bonnetrouge

UNTIL WE WIN (10/15)

Hidden in Dark Well

I was staying on the streets so I thought I'd come check it out. I went in the second day. Inside I got to meet some new people I've never seen before. Met a lot of people in there. I was interested with construction work. Helping them with the construction work. When I first got in there they weren't too organized with that just getting it started. They were busy basically working on getting the donations and food in there. It was pretty cool, actually. I enjoyed it. People got along pretty well, actually. When I was in there there was the odd argument in the meetings but that's bound to come up in a meeting. There was a lot of meetings in there. Too many actually, for me. I got along with pretty much almost everyone in there. There were no arguments. No troubles. The way they had a kitchen in there was cool. People cooked for themselves. Not like down here where they have to wait for meals. In there you could cook your own meals and you were safe and could keep yourself clean.

I was in there when the police came in but then I chose not to go. I chose not to at the last minute. I was sleeping when they came in. All I heard was a big BANG! BANG! Holy shit, I was freakin. I thought I was dreaming at first. BANG! BANG! People were screaming. Blowing the horns off. I was right at the window, getting out. If I didn't get out when I did, then I probably would have got caught with that girl there, cause she got caught really quick down there. I was down three people before her. If I was any slower I would have been in jail. I lost some ID. Never retrieved the ID back. My status card, birth certificate, my SIN card. Some clothing. The clothing I got for free so I didn't bother.

It's a little harder out here. We got more people to feed, it's true. We had a little trouble with the blanketing. We got quite a few donations. It's a little colder out here now cuz its winter. Pretty much I get along with people out here. We get a lot of problems with the people who are passing by on the street. Especially with the drunk

people from the west side. They are chanting like, "Gordon Rules! God bless Gordon Campbell," and stuff like that. They are just trying to rile us up. They want us to get in an argument. Not worth our time actually. We know why we're here and we don't need their opinion. If they want to think that way, let them think that way. We believe we're here for a good reason. We're here for good reason. We want the social housing.

I got a place now but I wouldn't have a place if I didn't get injured. I had no place to come to when I got out of the hospital. I had no house to go to. Then I had APC help me out with welfare. They helped me get a place. The place is alright. I just have no food there because I don't have no support money. So I figure I might as well just stay here. I got a tent and I can still fight for the good cause. I don't really want a place. I just want pain-killers, food. The food situation was a biggie when I got out cause I needed the food and I had no food. This is the only place that gives out free food where I don't have to walk around. I can rest here. I got lots of friends and family here. I feel safer down here than I would in a hotel room with nothing, no TV, no nothing, no food. So I got all the support I need down here, actually, which is really great.

More people are showing up everyday. We're getting good donations. Lots of support from the people in the city. Lots of support and people sticking together here. We got the odd fights and stuff but then we got peacemakers that come and talk to them. People that want to stop and settle the differences and let them see why we're really here. Food's a real big issue that people are arguing over here. "We're not getting three meals a day. I'm not getting three meals a day. I'm only getting one meal a day." Other than that a lot of people are starting to stick together here. I don't know about that injunction. People don't know what to think about that injunction. The first one got dropped and now they're calling a second one. I hope they don't get that second injunction. I just want the squat to stick together and be strong for if we do get moved out of here we can come back here with a good plan of action to fight against the government and the police, until we win. And we will win. I really strongly believe we will win. I'm just gonna stick with that instinct and keep fighting for this cause. Until we win.

REPORT FROM THE POLICE BOARD MEETING (10/16)

Shane Davis

I asked a few very direct questions. What is the status of the items confiscated in the police actions September 21st and 22nd? There was a lot of stuff that went missing that was unaccounted for. We've been given no explanation. Why are the City and VPD trying to remove peaceful homeless people from a public street? Why are they trying to get an injunction to do that? I stated to them that we are one of the safest areas in the Downtown Eastside and that there are far more pressing police concerns in the area. People come to the Woodward's Squat when they get injured because they know that we can take care of them. They know that we're a safe place. There's 158 people on average sleeping there every night. They feel safe sleeping there. There aren't many places where people feel safe in that part of town and it's a crying shame. Then whoever is the head of the police board said, "now we're going to move onto other agenda items. I've heard your concerns." He would not give us an answer in regards to my questions. He wouldn't even give me an answer if they would give me an answer at a later date. He gave me a number. I got the number to call so that we can be on the agenda for the next police board meeting. I saw so many people that were not let into the meeting that I knew should be there. There were ten of us in the audience. Each one of those ten should have been able to get up and address the board. There were probably 50 people, 60, here, that should have been addressing the police board. It's not a public meeting. If it were a public meeting we would have been given the agenda. At the meetings I go to the agenda is written on a board and we speak to the agenda. If it's so public then why isn't that information public? And why was there a one-hour closed-door meeting before the public meeting took place? And why is it necessary to have "crowd control" officers with 4-foot batons? I'm not an unruly person. I'll leave when asked. But it's not necessary to have that sort of presence at a public meeting. That just provokes people into a more militant stance, in my opinion.

LETTER TO PREEMPT THIRD POLICE EVICTION (10/17)

Drafted by the Coalition of Woodward's Squatters and Supporters

We the undersigned are writing this letter to support the Woodward's Squatters in their struggle for social housing and social justice. In response to recent statements made by Chief Constable Jamie Graham and others, we would like to make four points that he and others need to understand, if they truly want to achieve a peaceful resolution to the situation.

1. *There are over 150 homeless people camped in front of Woodward's.* Squatters and their supporters have been keeping count of the numbers and origins of the people sleeping outside, and we know that the overwhelming majority of Squatters are homeless and in need of housing. We know that it is one of the most peaceful blocks in the Downtown Eastside.

2. *We oppose the police attacking homeless people.* The Vancouver Police Department should spend their time and money policing real violent crimes that go on in our city every day. Should they attempt a violent solution to this political crisis, they will only provoke a public backlash and entrench hostility to the police. Both times that the police have used force and violence, it failed to deter people from continuing, and failed to shift public support and opinion away from the Squatters.

3. *We oppose the eviction of homeless Natives from unceded Native land.* We are all living on Coast Salish land, a people that have signed no treaty to extinguish their sovereignty over the land. Over one third of the people sleeping around the building are homeless Native men and women. This should not be surprising given the high levels of aboriginal poverty in the DTES, Vancouver and Canada as a whole.

4. *We demand decent and dignified housing for all.* Winter shelters are an inadequate response to homelessness. Shelters are, by themselves, just a Band-Aid. Winter shelters are simply a Band-Aid on a Band-Aid. We the undersigned demand that the Police do not attempt any removal of homeless people camped around the Woodward's building without finding decent and dignified housing for all of them.

CAMPBELL IS THE WTO VIRUS (10/24)

Claude Maurice

I'm sick and tired of seeing my friends dying of pneumonia outside in back alleys. I lost many friends down here. I lost over sixty friends. Half of the ladies of the night that got killed at the pig farm I knew personally because they come to Carnegie, have a coffee, chit-chat with the front desk, before they go to work. A lot of the people that die of Lysol and a lot of heroin addicts, I knew. A lot of AIDS patients, I knew. I'm sick and tired of seeing it. There is no reason for that mayhem. We've been paying tax since 1917-18, the First World War, to now. Don't tell me it's the debt of the war that we're paying. Its been paid and over-paid. What about the living human beings in Canada? Especially First Nations. They're being mistreated and treated like dogs. They're not dogs. They are human beings. So they shall be respected as such. You push somebody long enough and eventually he's going to yell at you to let you know you are right in his face. Or her face. There is no reason for people to be in other people's faces. We are all human. Some work. Some don't. But we're still human. We pay tax in our lives, be that sales tax or room and board tax, it's still tax. It is a tax on a paycheque or the tax on a pack of cigarettes; I'm paying tax. Therefore, that means I'm paying back what I'm getting every month, or part, about 75%, into their system. So stop treating me with contempt. If you've got a job it's because I'm here. If all of us disappear then you're without a job because there is no need for you. I wish we could still be here and not have a need for the politicians and the WTO. We are trying to be self-supporting. And we are trying to do the best with what's given to us. There is a lot of single people that come and give from their own kitchen. People who understand what it is to be the way we are. And those people I give a great thanks to. There's also some people, that, we're just a little pawn in their political game. Those people I don't care very much for them. Politicians are just a bunch of little liars. They show once every four years. They do their puppet show, get votes, and disappear

behind walls for four years. And the whole four years, they're telling us in the microphone, telling us where to go, and how get there, and how fast to get there. I don't believe in them. I came to the Woodward's Squat because I didn't like the way the police talked to the people in front of the Crosswalk the night they kicked you out on the street. I told myself, "if they're coming back I'm gonna join them." Because, to me, the police is supposed to help people, not brutalize them. All my life that's what I've been seeing. It's a bunch of bullies showing a badge which is a licence to beat the living bark out of you. It don't represent that they're gonna protect me. It represent that if I say what I think I'm gonna get a club over my head. And I'm supposed to be grateful for that. No thank you, basically. So I learn how to avoid being beat up by them. Simply: you're polite, show respect and play dumb. The dumber you are the more they leave you alone. You start being a smart-ass and they're on your case and they won't let go. I know what it is to have a mid-teen young man with a machine-gun asking you for your ID. Not impressed. Québec in 1970 was FLQ when the army moved in. When your own government puts the army on you, I'm not impressed. It's like Germany pre-war. So Canada is no better than any other country in the world. They all put their army on their people. I wouldn't be surprised if that happened here. With Campbell I expect the worst. He's a virus. He's the WTO virus.



Ángel – Photograph by Woodward's Squat Native Caucus

HERE IS HOME (10/27)

Angel

I ended up losing my job at the Harrison Hot Springs Resort because the government said my papers were no good because I got them from the chef at the hotel. I worked there for five years and I was buying a house. I had a car. I was supporting three kids on my own and Campbell walked in and said, "Angel, your papers are no good." Not just mine but a lot of other people's too. Anybody that didn't have their papers through an accredited school was "released" or "let go," as they said, "to seek proper training." "You're more than welcome to come back when you've got a certified paper from a certified school." That would have been about three or four months after Campbell came into power. I tried for a while to make it on my own with the money that I put aside. Eventually the money that I had put aside had run out. My UI had run out. So on and so forth. I second-mortgaged the house and started looking for work. The second mortgage ran out. The money just ran away. With three kids under the age of seven it was hard. When I applied for welfare they told me, "you have a house: sell it." So I sold the house, paid off the second mortgage and the first mortgage, and moved into a little apartment. I survived there for about five months then the money ran out. Once I sold the house they said I wasn't eligible for welfare because I was able to work. My question to them was: "how do you expect me to work when the papers I do have are not acknowledged by the government or any other board at the moment and therefore people won't hire because they're not allowed to hire people without papers in a chef's position?" And they said, "you're going to have to find a way." I said, "well, are you going to fund me to get my education so I can get a chef's paper?" They said no. I said, "alright, so what do you expect me to do?" They said, "well, find a job."

I had three children in tow. So I walked up to my ex and I looked him in the eye and I said, "I'm not going to be able to look after the kids. I don't have a place for them to live. As of tomorrow I'm on the street." My ex looked at me and said, "Angel, I'll

take them, they'll be okay." I said, "alright, I'm going to go to Vancouver and see if I can find work." I swore I wouldn't come back here. But it's a big city and it's close to my kids and there's a lot of work, or supposed to be. I was down here five weeks, searched for work, still couldn't find it. I'm still searching for work. And every time I apply for welfare they tell me I'm not eligible because I'm able to work. I am actually Disability II status but they refuse to grant it to me since the cutbacks as well. So as it stands right now I sleep here. Still trying to get on welfare or find work. Still trying to keep everybody's spirits up, hearts in tow.

I've been down here since September 14th so it's been roughly 44 days now. It's a lot of fun down here, sometimes. How to explain here? Here is home. It's a sanctuary for a lot of people that are on the streets. It's a sanctuary for people that used to sleep in alleys, that used to sleep in parks, that used to sleep in the rain if they couldn't find cover. It's become a place where they can go when they have problems, if they need somebody to talk to, if they need a shoulder to cry on, a hand to hold, a meal in their stomach or just a little bit of laughter. It's become home. We are striving here to make a unit, a group of people, a place for everybody to go if they need help. More in the sense of social housing. We do not believe that homelessness should be an issue down here. We do not believe that people should be without homes, without food, without shelter, without clothing, without anything. Their rights and freedoms should be met.

To be honest, I found my quest. My quest is to put heart back here because there's a lot of heartless people in this town. One person with a little heart giving heart to other people, giving love and friendship and companionship to other people opens a door. There are a few of us left who have compassion, actually care, and actually love everybody equally for who they are and not for what they can give us or what they're going to do for us or what we can gain from them. There's so many feelings and emotions down here that you just can't put into words. If you want to know what it's about down here my best advice is actually to come down and spend a night with us and just listen. Don't give advice unless you're asked. Just listen.

CALL FOR EMERGENCY MOBILIZATION AND ACTION (10/29)

Determined Housing Affinity Group

When will these people be pushed around for the last time?

Many are asking this today.

The eviction notice handed to individual squatters is only a request from the state. There is no legal course for the state to follow through with eviction until there is a court injunction. However we at Woodward's realize that there will be a time when those threats are not empty and idle. This notice we've received is representative of what is to come as the city works its sneaky tricks under the scenes for legal loopholes to end this squat. People can not sit around and afford to wait for the squat's demise to be slowly planned with all the resources of the state to back it up. That is why we should always be a step ahead.

The author of the City's letter, D.H. Rudberg, is the individual responsible for applying and following through with the court injunction procedures. Rudberg has told the Anti-Poverty Committee the court injunction process will begin at noon Wednesday should the squatters not have left.

Let it be said however that the homeless crisis faces the gales of winter, and we can not expect poor people to wait for any more empty promises to be made and broken. The City will not be able to house the number of people camping at Woodward's in time for dark, Wednesday night. With the winter weather ready to begin raining on Vancouver, the Woodward's squatters must be sheltered immediately for their health and safety.

This is a call to all people (labour, homeless, social groups and concerned) available to escalate the conflict when there is so little time for debate. The defeat of Gordon Campbell will be a snowball effect. For every attack on the people of British Columbia by the Liberals, the more bridges his hateful regime will burn. We will do what it takes in order to achieve the only significant outcome in our eyes: victory, and shelter.

Take solidarity with these people about to be evicted from nothingness. At deadline, 12:00pm Wednesday October 30th, we call all able bodied supporters of the squat to join us at 101 Hastings and Abbott to oppose the injunction and gentrification process. A plan is being developed by a newly formed affinity group to ensure that all squatters who need shelter on Wednesday night will have that opportunity given to them. We are feeling confident that we will be more able to house the homeless than the City Tenants' Assistance Program of Vancouver, however necessary.

On Wednesday at noon we will be able to respond to these attacks publicly with our words and action. We will be needing help to move some people. We need trucks, vehicles, coffee, multitudes of supporters and a hint of a new spirit in British Columbia. It's time that B.C. FIGHTS TO WIN.

Bring everyone, spread the word, this is a desperate hour. The mood at the squat today is not of joy, but not of defeat. Solidarity.



SQUATTER THREAT—THE BLACK SCARE

Insurgent-S

The Vancouver Sun and VPD are busy stirring up a lesser and more ridiculous version of the “Red Scare” of the past. In several recent front page stories and articles, *The Sun* has written of the threat posed by squatters and anarchists to a “peaceful” class-divided city. The squatters and anarchists must be doing something right to cause such a fuss! An editorial in the October 29th issue declares that it is “Time to cry ‘Enough!’ on the anarchist squatters.” “Ever since the Woodward’s Squat began, controversy has raged over whether the squatters are homeless activists in search of low-cost housing or more anarchists looking for a little rabble-rousing. As the squat enters its seventh week, it looks more and more like the latter.” Surprisingly, *The Sun* does not commend the anarchists who have faked homelessness successfully for more than 45 days! Apparently their editorial board cannot find the brain-capacity to entertain the idea that a person could be homeless and an anarchist at the same time. But the main intention of the editorial has more to do with lying about the identities of the homeless squatters, and denying that they are even homeless at all. These lies should be laughable to anyone who has had any interaction with the Woodward’s squatters at all.

The VPD seems to be getting all upset about anarchists too. The head of Vancouver’s “Odd Squad” is hatching paranoid conspiracy theories about anarchists involved in filming police misconduct around the needle exchange table at Main and Hastings. In a private e-mail that *The Sun* somehow got ahold of, cop Al Arseneault reports that “a well-known anarchist, as well as a street lawyer, were on hand to try and secretly film us removing this table (it appears to have been a ‘bait’ site in order to picture us police in a bad light).” While we question the VPD’s intelligence information as to whether this person is an anarchist or not, we definitely find his theories to be both hilarious and stupid.

Al Arsehole isn’t the only cop getting himself worked up about Vancouver’s

revolutionaries. Constable Mark Tonner, who writes a regular column for *The Province*, had his own words to throw in. “Anti-enforcement types, these so-called ‘latte-leftists,’ compete to portray us as criminals in childishly tangled revolutionary language,” he complains in the October 27th issue. Well Mark, your brothers don’t make it very hard for us when they pound on school children, as they did at the recent Britannia Police Riot on October 3rd. But maybe Mark was there, got a rock to the head, and is suffering from short-term memory loss. We can only speculate at this point. He goes on to whine about the complications squatters create for the police and pathetically pleads for squatters and activists to accept whatever crumbs city hall decides to hand down. “It would be a shame if it (the plan for Woodward’s) were knocked off the rails by people whose only loyalty is to rebellion,” he says. This all must be really stressful for Mark. Perhaps early retirement is in order.

The VPD has also seen fit to put the fear into developer Geoff Hughes: “Vancouver police have warned him to be particularly wary of ‘certain anarchists’—like the ones who terrorized merchants and shoppers at Pacific Centre mall last May during a protest, ostensibly to oppose the provincial government’s implementation of a \$6-an-hour training wage for young BC workers.” “This is a group that has attempted to infiltrate the people who are disadvantaged and homeless. They’re not interested in solving the problems of the DTES. They want to overthrow the government,” Hughes told *The Sun* (October 28th).

By the way people are exaggerating the squatter and anarchist threat in Vancouver, you’d think the revolution was right around the corner. Then again, as John Clarke of OCAP has pointed out recently, the authorities are not unaware of the potential for a massive squatters’ movement across Canada, a potential that is beginning to be realized with recent squats in Ottawa, Québec City, Victoria and Halifax, or the October 26th squatting actions in Montréal, Sudbury and Toronto, including the 3-month-old Pope Squat. The authorities will continue to attempt to divide the movement through media lies and brutal repression but it becomes clearer each day that they are getting scared. They’re afraid for a reason.

LETTER TO CITY ENGINEER DAVE RUDBERG
DELIVERED BY HAND TO CITY HALL (10/30)
Coalition of Woodward's Squatters and Supporters

You signed a letter dated October 28th, 2002 that gives the squatters set up around the Woodward's building 48 hours to move. In this letter you "demand" that all structures, tents and objects be removed from City streets and sidewalks on or before noon of Wednesday October 30th. You offer the City Tenants' Assistance Program as a housing resource and the City Engineering Service as a moving service; you neglect to mention where people are expected to go. Perhaps you are unaware that Judy Graves, who works with the City Tenants' Assistance Program, has been at the squat nearly daily for the last couple weeks. Despite her hard work and sincere efforts, she is without civic, provincial or federal resources and her task is impossible. She has been unsuccessful in finding and securing accommodations for all the people living there. This can be reasoned in a number of ways:

1. There is a housing crisis in the City of Vancouver. Market rents are far above what people living in poverty can afford and there is a severe lack of social housing. It is estimated by city reports that the average rent in a one-bedroom apartment in the city is 142% of the monthly income of a person receiving regular welfare benefits. The Federal government ceased funding social housing in 1993 and the rates of construction in BC declined by 75% at that time. The BC Liberals cut social housing spending shortly after they got into power and effectively ended the construction of housing in the province. City reports show that while 25% of the population of Vancouver qualifies for social housing by income allowances, only 8.5% of the housing stock in the city is social housing. Approximately 85 residential hotels are lost to tourist conversion and demolition every year and there is no social housing being built currently to replenish this stock of low-income housing.

2. Welfare cuts have made the application process onerous and time consuming and keep people on the streets. Even if the squatters encircling the Woodward's

building right now were to all march down to the nearest welfare office and ask for a rent cheque, they would be denied and given an application date three-weeks away. For the many squatters who do not receive income assistance it would be impossible to secure rent monies for your eviction day even if they were to find housing in time.

3. Living conditions in the residential hotels in the Downtown Eastside are terrible. People who can find housing in hotels are almost certainly doomed to harassment and sexual abuse by corrupt landlords and building managers, dangerous and filthy living conditions and terrific isolation and depression. SRO's further complicate and escalate vulnerable peoples' mental health concerns and introduce alcohol and drug dependencies that people develop to cope with poverty and inhumane living conditions. Residential hotel staff are not trained or prepared to deal with many people who live in their rooms. City Hall considers SRO tenants to be "transitional homeless" due to the desperate conditions they are forced to endure. You cannot, in good faith, abandon people to this.

4. Cold, wet weather shelters are not sufficient alternatives to housing, not in availability, in living standards nor in accessibility. In 2000 there were 400 shelter beds in the Lower Mainland and an estimated 300 to 600 people still sleeping on the streets every night. Cold wet weather shelters are warehouses for people; lines of mats on a cement floor with strict sleep and wake times, long lineups and unsafe conditions. Women avoid these shelters and stay with often dangerous "Johns" because they are not comfortable sharing a dorm with a hundred men. People are turned away from these shelters because they are full or because of mental health or alcohol and drug issues that the shelters cannot deal with... these people sleep in alleys, in parks and in doorways.

The Woodward's Tent City has taken shape and attracted over a hundred and fifty people because of the housing crisis in the City, the attacks on poor people through the Welfare system and because of homelessness, alienation, poverty and the problem with the leaking band-aids used to deal with these problems by all three levels of government. Ordering people to leave Woodward's will not end the housing crisis in

Vancouver and it will not address the problems of poverty and homelessness that plague the lives of the squatters. We are answering your demand with a demand of our own: WITHDRAW THE REMOVAL ORDER AND HOUSE PEOPLE.

The Woodward's Squat is the safest place for the homeless in the Downtown Eastside; that is why so many people stay. A community has taken shape on the sidewalk around that building; a community that is based on respect and mutual aid, a community that shares everything it has, and for many it is all they have. You cannot break this community with your orders, your laws, your police force or their violence. If you move us we will not scatter and disappear, we will stay together. We will continue to resist the governments that have created and maintain the poverty we live in. We will continue to fight for survival. If you want us to leave the sidewalk in front of the Woodward's building, open the doors and let us in.

Sincerely, The Coalition of Woodward's Squatters and Supporters.

MONSTER LIBERAL HALLOWE'EN BALL

Admission by Donation

Hide behind this mask
Scare seniors!
Scare kids!
Scare Everyone!

Benefit*

* Please bring food or toiletries for the squat

for the Woodward's Legal Defense Fund
WISE Club 1880 Adanac St. at Victoria
Doors: 7:30 **Wednesday Oct. 30**

Featuring:
Flying Folk Army * Solidarity Notes Choir
Po' Girl * George Mann & Julius Margolin
The Cunning Stunts * & much more...

PRIZES FOR SCARIEST MLA & GORDON CAMPBELL MASKS

It's Easy...

1. Cut along dotted lines
2. Cut out eye holes
3. Poke a hole in each ear
4. Attach a piece of string from ear to ear
5. Tie one on and cut like a thing

THIS IS IT (11/01)

Roy Gladiator Archie

When I first got there it seemed like a sleep-over or slumber party with some friends. I joined up as a soldier to defend the people from bodily harm, from anything. I did not understand what I was involving myself in. Lo and behold as the winds blew and the winds of change came I found myself on the Cordova side, by the two entrance doors, as you go west, on Cordova towards Cambie. There was a lot of crack smokers that would come around that area there. I didn't mind them. But when I started to deal with the dealers that were coming there, in groups of four to six, I was just one man and I had to literally one day take out a metal bar and say, "get the fuck away from my home." They didn't quite take me seriously until I pulled out this metal bar. Needless to say they moved after that. Words were exchanged and they threatened to be back. Another night I was laying on my little cot there and a blade came through my tent that just missed my head. The very next night a group of men came by. They grabbed the mattress that my tent was on and literally picked it up off the ground and threw it, with me in the tent, against the wall of the Woodward's building. Another time a car, a white BMW, four-door, drove by with several individuals in the vehicle yelling obscenities at us: "poor bastards, get a job, good-for-nothin bums." They proceeded to throw beer bottles and chunks of rebar out their window. Praise God, nobody got hit. That was the first time they went around the block. The second time they went around the block we weren't ready for them either and so they threw more objects at us. Nobody got hurt. Everybody got missed. The third time they came I had a good ten guys here with bats in their hands. They stopped their car and backed all the way up to Cambie.

I call Cordova my street because it literally is. As far as my people are concerned, they needed another kitchen down there. Maybe even an out-house, but to no avail. But we pulled together and made the best of what we had, towards making ourselves comfortable. I would get on people's case if they peed on the

sidewalk or by the drain. I'm nobody's nanny but when people walking by say, "you fucking pigs, you're disgusting, what a stink," that affects me personally because I'm also a representative for the people here. I myself would go around with a broom and a bucket. I would clean up their messes and then I would make their beds for them. So when another passerby would see this they'd think, "oh, they're not that bad." So that's how I felt about that. As far as the people on Cordova, they're a little displaced, a little pissed off. They're not quite so sure who, what, when, where and how. They're outcasts from the squat. But they have faith and they ain't going anywhere. This is it. The government screwed us out of everything so far. And, pardon the expression, if we just roll over and take it dry, they're going to continue to do what they're doing. It's totalitarianism and dictatorship. It's not a request, "please get off the sidewalk." It's a demand. And so people like ourselves—we might be peasants to the king out there—we revolt. Nonviolently so far, praise God. May that not happen. But, if need be, it'll happen. I ain't scared of a fuckin thing. I ain't scared of the cops, for sure. They know that I ain't scared of them. I have a healthy respect for them and their authority. I will abide by their laws that they have to abide by too. But if I see them screwing around, hurting my brother, you bloody better believe it I'd jump on that motherfucker right there. If I saw the cop abusing his authority and hurting you I would put myself in harm's way so that you may go free. Cause I love you man. I don't know you but I love you man.

Recently what's happened is the letter we got from the engineers. I find it ironic and kind of more than just a coincidence that when they showed up and said twelve noon, by 12:45 there was an accident on Cordova where a large slab of cement just so happens to crumble down from five stories up. The scaffolding if it's done properly should not even move. That ruined my home. My tent was trashed. There's many rips in it on all four sides. The door's been broken on it. Personal belongings went missing: cassettes, clothing, books, paperwork, a bit of change and some food. Not impressed. It ruined my security. It shook me up. But, like a good soldier, with a good platoon, we rallied back together. We got the game plan and we continued.

And so now I'm displaced, again. Last night I stayed at the Salvation Army Haven. They saw my picture and my comments in the newspaper. They know I believe that Jesus Christ is my personal Lord and Saviour. I have to make that clear: I believe in Jesus. They went out of their way and got me a bed. The Salvation Army opened up the cafeteria to some of the squatters to come in and have a peaceful, safe sleep.

During the 35 days that I've been here I've been through a lot of garbage. But it has not moved me. It's made me more resilient. My vision is more clear. The tenacity that I have within me now is like steel that has been tempered. I've been put into the fire, put on the anvil, hammered, to get the garbage out. What you're seeing now is me being formed to the character and personality that the Creator wants me to be. And I'm here for you too, brother. Even if I have to lay down my life for you, I will. To make sure that you're safe. And maybe one day, if I get taken out, hey, it'll give faith to other people. I would rather die for something that is truthful than to live life in a lie and deception and fear. In the beginning when I first came there was a lot of friction between I, myself, and many other people. But now, for instance, the gentleman that just walked by, he salutes me. People salute me like I'm a commander-in-chief. They named me Gladiator. That isn't something that is handed to you. You gotta earn their respect. Like this gentleman here, grabbing the cups. I don't know what he would be like in the trench, in the field, with me. So, I don't know what he's like. But you, I know what you're like in the trenches and I know what you're like in the field. I do stand beside you because I know what you're made out of. And you know what I'm made out of. So we can depend upon each other under pressure. I'm not a flaky motherfucker. A lot of them are. I still love them and I'm still there to support them.

May God arise and may His enemies be scattered in our midst. I believe with all my heart that we're on the crest of a tsunami wave, a political one at that. And the Woodwards Squat, and all the people there: we're just surfers, hanging onto the board, going for the ride, waiting for the inevitable crash. May God have mercy on all of us when that comes, in April.

ON THE POLITICS, ON ADDICTION, ON PRISONS AND PIGS, ON CLASS WAR

T. Forsythe

ON THE POLITICS

Often, in bourgeois democracy, rather than simply killing or jailing dissidents, governments are forced to play a PR game in the media, in order to save face and maintain the lies of constitutional rights, freedom, police accountability etc. So, when simple brutality doesn't make the problem go away (like beating and arresting 60 some odd DTES residents in Woodward's) our fearless rulers fall back to things like media smear campaigns, and buying off local politicians and NGOs to contain the situation. Although in the case of Woodward's I doubt that any of the leftists were paid off, someone certainly was. They seem to be attracted to media cameras like flies on shit. This phenomenon of self-policing leftists seems to be limited to North America. I remember non-homeless people showing up claiming to be the "organizers" and making decisions for people. One womyn was the self-proclaimed organizer of the Woodward's Squat. And ever since then when I've run into this person, they've come off as nothing but a no-good politician. I remember one meeting where this womyn was telling people not to "spare change" and not to use drugs on the squat because "it will look bad in the media." Come on, you don't walk into the ghetto, straight out of the white middle class progressive leftist circus and start telling poor people they can't use drugs and they can't panhandle, then once the media has gotten a sound bite or two, waltz back to your flat in Gastown or wherever the fuck and sleep in your nice warm bed. And it was people like this who sold out Woodward's in the end. All of the decisions at the squat were supposed to be made by a council of homeless squatters. Of course, in the end, the council consists of Jim Leyden (not homeless), some other non-homeless activists and maybe some squatters that were given food and money to be on side with the "organizers." Now of course, no one at the squat was actually told about the secret meetings, especially the young anarchists who were clearheaded

enough to actually move in a direction that would be beneficial to the people who slept at the squat. But whenever the kings of Woodwards were confronted about this, they simply said that “kids don’t understand” and other ageist crap. Us kids understood fine. We understood that \$8000 was donated to the squat, most of which no one at the squat ever saw. We understood that those who were controlling all of the food donations ate better than we ever did. We understood that the leftists were using the poor for their own political gain. We understood that when the squatters were moved to the Dominion then the Stanley Hotel, that the Portland Hotel Society got 90 thousand dollars to house the squatters. This wasn’t to pay the rent as the squatters were forced to pay \$325 a month. Where that money went? Nobody knows. Most likely into the hands of DTES poverty pimps. Where are most of the squatters now? Still homeless. Still on the street. Still abandoned by this society. Where are all of the leftists? Still with nice places to live. Still with warm beds to sleep in. Still with deep pockets.

ON ADDICTION

I spent a few months sleeping on the sidewalk outside of Woodwards. In that few months a lot of people passed through. And I saw a lot of addiction. People who allow themselves to become addicted to drugs have been crying for help from society for so long. Nobody listened. Society abandons people and all across Canada some of society’s most vulnerable members end up in the worst place imaginable. Abused children, the mentally ill, the outcasted. Native people who have been forced off their land by white people with guns and uniforms. White people who bear gifts of blankets and bibles. All these people end up at the bottom of society with nowhere else to turn. This is how places like the DTES are born. Now I can’t even count how many addicts who needed someone to talk to, and I was there, the ear that wouldn’t walk away on them. How many people said to me “I need help,” “I want to get off this shit,” “I don’t want to be an addict anymore.” Yet a few days later, or a few weeks later, they’d be up to the same old business. Not because they want to, but because they don’t have

anywhere else to turn. Treatment programs are full. There's a six month long waiting list. How are people supposed to help themselves? There's millions of dollars for the Portland Hotel Society to hide the problem here and there. Millions for the pockets of the richest people in the poorest neighborhood in Canada.

ON PRISONS AND PIGS

No room in the treatment programs but plenty of room in the prisons. No money for people to help themselves, but plenty of money for 50 more po-lice (pigs, po-po, 6, 5-o, flatfoot) in the DTES. There's no room for the poor in society, but there's always an empty jail cell. There's no help, but there's always the end of a nightstick. Without poverty, there would be no money to be made in the prison industry, in the policing industry, the Salvation Army high-ups would be broke and so would the Portland. All of the fuckers whose job it is to keep down the poor would just have to get a real job.

ON CLASS WAR

The rich in this society don't want to see the poverty they create. They don't want to face the consequences of their privilege. They don't want to see the clear cuts through old-growth forests that make their furniture and their mansions. They don't want to see the people starving, while their grocer throws unsaleable food in the trash. They don't want squeegee kids washing the windows on their suvs. They want to ignore their problems. The time when they could get away with their ignorance with impunity is over. The class war is just beginning, and poor people will fight back. We will rub our poverty in their faces and on their windows, we will not let them get away with this brutality any longer. The retreat is over.

MOVEMENT TACTICS AND ELECTORAL POLITICS (12/03)

Shannon Bundock

Yesterday the newly-elected Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE) majority took control of the Vancouver City Council. This rise to power was facilitated by the social and political climate in the city during the weeks leading up to the election. Public opinion was shaped by key election issues. The efforts made by an unlikely coalition of working poor, drug users, urban aboriginals, disabled people, homeless people and many others were successful in mobilizing a sympathetic public around the crises of the Downtown Eastside: from the four-pillars to the housing crisis. The housing crisis as an election issue gained prominence as a result of the work done by the squatters and their supporters. As a party based on the principles of social democracy, COPE relies on the momentum of social movements to promote itself and claim legitimacy for electoral politics. Social democrats rely on social movements to influence public opinion and gain support for social issues. They then ally themselves with these movements in the hope of being seen as providing a solution to the social crisis.

The squatters constantly and persistently made clear the responsibility of the municipality to provide social housing. The Coalition of Woodward's Squatters and Supporters drew up demands that specifically addressed the responsibilities of the civic government and the Coalition called upon them to implement these demands, asserting that any inaction was unjustified. Through this COPE candidates attempted to suggest the problem was not the result of an overall municipal trend to offload civic responsibility, but rather that the problem lay in the specific council, its inaction due to the NPA majority. Throughout the election, COPE alleged that, if given the chance, they were willing to deal with the housing crisis in a meaningful way. COPE allied itself with the struggle at Woodward's and took it on as their own struggle. COPE candidate Jim Green even went as far as to tell *The Vancouver Sun* he was disappointed the organizers did not involve him in planning the opening of the squat. As a result, COPE

was successful in convincing many people in this city, including many squatters, that they were serious about finding and carrying out real solutions to the housing crisis. Despite this, some skepticism remained and it has been apparent that our struggle does not end with the victory of COPE. We will need to continue demanding the civic government take responsibility for housing. COPE must be held accountable for promises that were made to the squat and we need to demand they recognize the crucial role we played in their rise to power.

We must realize that the success of our struggle will not be determined by politicians. The power in this struggle is in the unity and commitment we have as a mass movement. With this power the role of electoral politics becomes arbitrary. The only reason our struggle is being addressed by politicians is because we have power and we are forcing them to address our issues. We are able to influence and steer public opinion in our favour because we are right in what we are doing.

The housing crisis is affecting many people in this province and country and that will only change if we win the battle for affordable and dignified housing. We know that social democrats are characterized by their ability to give us nothing but tokenistic support. This support has amounted to empty promises. Our power lies in the strong public support that has succeeded in forcing candidates notoriously oppositional to social justice to come out in favour of social housing. During the lead-up to the election, mayoral hopeful Jennifer Clarke was put on the spot by a squatter and asked if she supported social housing at Woodwards. She said that she and the NPA did.

The Woodwards Squat has made it clear that we must use electoral politics tactically within the goals of the movement. We must push for our demands with vigilance but still maintain a healthy mistrust of any politician that promises to solve our problems. This experience with electoral politics has proven that winning Woodwards will not happen through deals in a boardroom with a private developer. Winning Woodwards will not happen during a city council meeting or in the BC legislature. Winning Woodwards will only and can only happen in the streets with a mass-based movement.

ABSOLUTE CHAOS

Adam Murray

I was living across the Burrard Street Bridge with a friend of mine with his dogs. We were camped in a vacant lot on Davie and Howe, I believe, right across from Fitness World. There's a big hole in the ground and that's where the puppies were born on my buddy's birthday. My buddy Dave and I got into an argument and I told him to fuck himself and I walked around for a few hours and I decided to go down to Woodward's. They have plenty of spots down there. So I went down. It looked pretty weird. I had no idea how many people I knew down there. It was pretty creepy once I realized that I had friends and family down there. I said screw it and walked around the corner and decided to set up camp and move in. It was great. I was really, really impressed with the squat. I loved it. The amount of food that was being served was incredible. Everybody was getting fed and nobody was bitching. Everyone was having fun. Everybody was sitting around smokin weed, drinkin beer and smokin crack. Everyone was having a blast. It was pretty funny. I wasn't there for the full 92 but I can definitely account for over 60 days myself. It was absolute chaos every day. It was absolutely fuckin nuts. And that was okay. It wasn't a big deal. It just got to the point where people quit doing their jobs and decided, okay, screw you. And that's not fair. There were altercations all the time. I suffered the loss of two of my own tents that I brought to the squat, destroyed, because of drunks. One guy sat down on my tent and he ripped the front section right off.

I was the last tent on Cordova, my teepee and my domed tent. I was the furthest one away. That's the way I wanted it for me and my dog. We had to adjust to this new way of living outside for him and myself. I ended up moving around to the front side of the building, on Abbott, after my dome tent got destroyed. My shit was back there and I was going to move it anyways and I woke up to hearing the bars falling off the scaffolding. I remember the noon horn. Five minutes later bars started falling off the top of the building. It was fuckin retarded. Absolutely

retarded. The scaffolding collapsed in on itself. It was hilarious. It was total sabotage. I know it because the contractor doesn't miss things like that. They don't miss a nut or bolt in the scaffolding at all. They can't. It's just not possible. I moved out onto Abbott that night and stayed there until the tear-down.

With the injunction that I was there for, which was the second one, they didn't do anything. They threatened. They said, "we're going to come get you." We all sat back and said, "come get us then: you're going to have to have a lot of cops with you." You can't just move 150 some-odd squatters just because some guy is getting paid over \$20 an hour to push a pencil on his fuckin desk without setting foot on the street and realizing what's going on out there. What the fuck does he know? They didn't even send anybody down to say, "hey, fuck off." It was hilarious because we were all waiting and waiting because of the deadline. They didn't even send one bloody person down except for Judy Graves. I basically sloughed her off. I didn't like her. She looked like a snake to me in the beginning. I won't even acknowledge her existence when I see her outside. She disgusts me. She didn't have too much to do with anything except harassing people into homes they don't want to move into. You just can't tell somebody to move into a home if they don't want to be there.

I guess the squat just kind of died. You take a group of people that have lived together in unity for 92 days out on the sidewalk in close quarters and you throw them into a comfortable house and what do you expect them to do? They didn't set any goals. They didn't tell us what we needed to do even though the people that were in charge knew what we needed to do. The unity that we had on the outside collapsed. Nobody was giving a shit about anybody else or what anybody else needed or could use. They just gave up on themselves and everybody else at the same time. I have no idea exactly of the politics that were included with taking us off the sidewalk. But what I do know is that the Portland Hotel Society was paid \$10,000 to do it. And I haven't seen a cent of that, not that I'd want it. I don't give a fuck about it and I don't care about the other \$93,000. But if the City wants to give away all that money, well, I think they gave it to the wrong people.

WE NEED TO BE LEFT ALONE (11/14)

Lyn Tooley

When I moved into the Woodward's Squat I had been homeless for almost six months. Woodward's was a place I could call my own. After months of living in other people's space, of having to live my private life in public space, I finally had some privacy. I could simply sit in solitude and think. I could relax and rejuvenate. Not constantly preoccupied with finding a place to sleep and food to eat, my days opened and I began to feel creative again. I began planning the room I would build for myself in the building and what a great space it was, how much potential it had. I imagined six floors laid out like villages with private homes and public spaces, workshops, learning centres and places we could all heal and learn how to care for ourselves and each other. I thought of squats like Christiania in Denmark and autonomous farm villages in Guatemala where poor and disenfranchised people, left in dire straights by their governments, had collectivised to provide for their own needs and created decent, high quality lives for themselves out of nothing, out of the garbage their societies had left behind and on land that has been left abandoned.

We don't need government interference to solve our problems. We need to be left alone, unmolested and unharassed by police brutality and government do-gooders. We need to explore, understand and develop solutions to our problems, in our own way, by ourselves. We don't need charity, we need community. In a community, everyone is cared for, everyone strives to meet the needs of each person. In a community, greed and over-consumption is not acceptable. In a community, it is unthinkable that some should go hungry while others feast, or that some have more houses than they can visit in a year and pay no tax at all while others have nothing because their parents had to sacrifice the cohesiveness and functionality of their families to work and pay the rent.

It is never recognized that workers pay to earn a wage. We pay not with money, but with our time and energy to put towards the maintenance of our personal lives,

our families and our communities. When the personal and community cost of wage labour becomes too high, very few of us have the luxury of quitting our jobs and “downsizing” our lifestyles. The effects of this cost burden, which could be called personal/community deficit, is stress and dysfunction in our families and our communities. We become unable to meet our needs individually and collectively. We have been forced by economic conditions to sacrifice the health and integrity of our personal lives and our communities in order to work for companies and factories that profit off of our labour. When these businesses are forced to recognize the disastrous effects they have had on our lives, they turn their noses up and try to blame us, for being lazy or drug addicts and tell us to pick ourselves up by our own bootstraps.

The Woodward Squat was, and is, both about challenging the depletion of personal and community building resources by the demands of wage labour and business profit. And Woodward is about healing the damage this insidious dynamic has created in our lives. The basic unit of this healing process is space; land. Denying us access to a land base, to house ourselves, is to deny us the rest of our lives. If we have no place to lay down in safety to rest and no food to nourish our bodies and no community to build our spirits, we have no ground to work from. We are like plants without roots. And it must be recognized that we are not victims who have fallen through the social safety net, or parasites and criminals. The degraded conditions we live under are a direct result of the affluence others live in. And it must be recognized that we are not asking the affluent sectors of society to give us charity to help us fix our own mistakes, we are demanding that the affluent sectors of society take responsibility for the detrimental effects their affluence has on our lives, and to compensate us for the losses we and our families and our communities have suffered. We are taking responsibility for our own needs using the only resources left available to us: waste spaces, garbage materials and our creativity.

CITY ANNOUNCES HOMELESS ACTION PLAN: GARBAGE BAGS & “DEAR CAMPER” LETTERS (11/23)

Friends of the Woodward's Squat

This afternoon the City of Vancouver announced how they will proceed with the injunction, sort of. They sent a City social worker to distribute large black garbage bags to residents of the Woodward's Squat with a short letter addressed “Dear Camper.” The letter is dated 23 November and states that “The City is preparing to clear the furniture and tents from the sidewalk, sometime over the next week. It is important now, that you make a plan, about where you will go. Please gather your possessions, and be packed, and ready.” Many people at the Squat were insulted and angry when the social worker handed out garbage bags. As anyone even vaguely familiar with the Woodward's Squat would know, the City of Vancouver destroyed everyone's possessions in City garbage trucks last time around (on Sunday 22 September between 11:00 and 11:30 p.m.) and they are likely to attempt it again in the final days of the outgoing City Council regime. The suggestion that people's clothes, blankets, identification, and other personal items belong in garbage bags is, of course, a difficult one for even the most hard-hearted to accept. The vagueness of the City's threat, which fails to specify a time or date for the second street “cleansing” or what the homeless should be “ready” for once they have packed, has led a few people to leave already. Some have left the safety of the group and gone back to the dangerous alleys, underpasses and parks by themselves. Neither the City of Vancouver nor the incoming COPE Council have made any effort to prevent police violence next week by formally requesting that VPD Chief Constable Jamie Graham exercise his discretionary power in this case. The Woodward's Squat Emergency Response Team will issue a statement at noon during the support rally on Monday 25 November at Abbott and Hastings. Please attend: bring cameras and vehicles.



The last demonstration at the Woodward's Squat (11/25) – Photograph by Jason X

WOODWARDS SQUAT UNDER IMMINENT ATTACK: WITNESSES NEEDED (11/25)

Anti-Poverty Committee

After 73 days of existence, the Woodward's tent city has proven to be by far the safest place for homeless people to live in the streets of Vancouver. Thanks to generous support and donations, an independent community based on mutual aid and respect has been created and sustained. This community is now under imminent attack and needs your support more than ever. The city of Vancouver has obtained an injunction to disperse people back to unsafe parks and dark alleys, where isolation threatens their very survival. Many organizations have endorsed the existence, continuity and demands of the squatters' community. We now depend upon solidarity and credibility of outside supporters to assure the basic human rights of the squatters be respected. We need you to stand by us as legal observers and witnesses. The first two waves of arrests at the Woodward's Squat and Tent City occurred during the night and early morning, on September 21st at 6:00am and September 22nd at 11:30pm. As a member of the Woodward's Coalition of Squatters and Supporters, the Anti-Poverty Committee has been empowered to set up witnessing support shifts during these periods when the squatters feel they are the most vulnerable. We have divided these most critical times in three shifts of 4 hours: from 10:00pm to 2:00am; from 1:30am to 5:30am; from 5:00am to 9:00am. And this every night from November 25th until December 2nd. The shifts overlap to allow for orientation and introduction of the different teams. The safety of the Woodward's Squatters relies on the presence of credible supporters to witness, record, and by their very presence even prevent the potential policing actions during the coming week. We are asking you take on one witnessing shift. Please contact the Anti-Poverty Committee to sign up and coordinate your very needed presence in the struggle to defend and protect the only concrete and accessible alternative to homelessness in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Please bring cell phones, cameras and video cameras.

STICK TOGETHER! POWER IN UNITY! WE WILL WIN! (11/29)

Woodwards Squat Emergency Response Team

The City got an injunction against the squat last Friday. But Judy Rogers, the City Manager, and other senior bureaucrats have not been able carry it out. They say they are waiting approval of the enforcement order today. If they get the order it means that they will be able to bring in the police to take the squat down by force. The police say they will not move unless ordered to do so by Judy Rogers. The City government and the Liberals have not been able to set the cops on the squat because they are paralyzed by public opinion. We have witnessing shifts here every night to keep the public involved in the squat and to break down a lot of the claims that the Government and the media make up. When the squat was inside Woodward's they had an enforcement order for five days before they moved in and kicked people out. They MIGHT come in today to take the "objects and structures" away and they MIGHT not come for couple of days or a week. REMEMBER: there is a new government in the City on Monday and it would look really bad for the "people's government" to break-up a Tent City in the first week they are in power. This weekend is a very dangerous time. We have to STICK TOGETHER to fight against the Government that sends the police to break the Tent City. They cannot break the squat. They can remove the tents and shelters, but they cannot break the people here. If the cops come to take things away, take what you can carry, stand and watch them. Remember their badge numbers. Remember the city workers that load things in the garbage trucks. Our weapon is numbers. Whenever we get attacked our numbers grow. Whenever they take our things the donations flood in from all over the province. The strength of the squat is not in the things on the sidewalk, it's in the people involved. The Government wants you to fight the cops so they can justify breaking the squat. If we stand strong and fight smart they will expose themselves. They are attacking people who are just trying to survive. If they attack us it is because WE ARE WINNING. And we will live to fight another day with more power than ever before. STICK TOGETHER & WE WILL WIN!

W.O.O.D.S.Q.U.A.T. #48

W

**STICK TOGETHER!
POWER IN UNITY!
WE WILL WIN!**

DAY 77 - FRIDAY - 29 NOV 02

W.O.O.D.S.Q.U.A.T. #51

MEETING FRIDAY TO ELECT
A NEGOTIATION TEAM
7PM @ THE CROSSWALK




DIAGRAM OF THE SQUAT STRUCTURE
TWO LETTERS FROM CITY COUNCILORS
ON A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT

DAY 83 - THURSDAY - 05 DEC 02

IF THE POLICE COME TO BREAK THE SQUAT, STICK TOGETHER!

1. MAKE SURE THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU ARE SAFE
2. WATCH WHAT THE COPS DO AND WRITE DOWN BADGE NUMBERS
3. MEET IN THE MORNING AT VICTORY SQUARE AT 10AM

The injunction is not against people only against objects. They do not have the right to "move you along." If they try to arrest you tell them that you have a right to assemble on the sidewalk and the injunction says so. If they try to arrest you ask them what you are being arrested for and tell them you want to speak to a lawyer. If you are arrested call: 727-8471. Write this number on your arm in case this newsletter is taken.

I'M COMPLETELY DISTRACTED
WITHIN THE FIRST SEVEN SECONDS

Taum Danberger

HmmCanary yellow illegal glaze
Uranium cobalt glass is flowing
annealing stress cracks
Resist the Cuts

DISTRACTIONS, INTERRUPTIONS
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS
Woodlawn Firewatch
Two sides reborning

Senecense Old Glory
filming the story
Thanksgiving CRAB Beach
Masses hucking stones
Go back splash into the Ocean
Manly imperative disruption of our CRAB Habitat

Heighten the interest
take me out! of the picture
“Not another Freaking Question!”
Thet parking meter gets more change thans I does...”

Wots the Bitch guaranteed

THE PEOPLE UNITED WILL NEVER BE DIVIDED

...the Pregnant woman, indignant chief...
the last three on the ladder!
Empire's back with baseball bats
We don't like the odds or the safety pins

Yellow rag journalism
Fifth wheel grinding
SIX BUCKS SUCKS ?
jest 'ah sleeping on the streetZzzzz

We protest duh conditions
Handicap Revisionism
Creationism, Catastrophism
WHY DO I USE ?
Apply pressure
Surveys
Varied points of view
"We petitions the conditions
is there any support for this?"

Lines forming Seven Directions
Up and Down Sideways...
Backwards And forth...

Tonight's readings performing
All our relations
Reflections of light

rainy night streets

Buck a loonie, up 'yer ass
Our affidavits' affirmation
FIRST PEOPLES RIGHTS
ABBOTT AND HASTINGS

Fights in the kitchen
hungry tired folk
Hope of Donations
the reassessing redistribution
and Tobacco as food (GROC)
May you never thirst
Fresh clean water is from the tap
Last in First out R E M E M B E R
WE challenge assertions of al 'yer alleged authority
Yah! Assertions of authoritarianism. And it is
the people's inclusion
decide 'round here
FangCougars contribution... Refuted...

Seven seconds later dissatisfact
Cosmic considerations once in a while
Can't get to it can't get it back
The perfect combination
A L L I N O N E
Everyone sleep together
N o w Aware We Go Here Now
Moment beginning DECEMBER Next Year

All we own, we owe

We ate them
where are they
vegan beats
Regina Repeal Enforcement Order
We don't even know if its comin'

LISTEN TO THIS

Seven seconds in
three seconds out
the monied the without
VCR involved unable owning
or borrowing

Deflections narrow bandwave vibrations
prisms of light
the recording the S T O R Y
but the real thing bein' said
the r e a l words
What works, who isn't

Pathogenic Epidemiology
Real Peers Respect Here
R e a l i t y
L I G H T I M A G E S
and at night...

S O C I A L I S A R I G H T

Reparations
Recognitions
Mandatory anything
D e n y / D e f y the liberals existence to do this. *Ahh*

The Handicap
struggle and axistance
Wonky aggregated cells O r g a n i z e
more committees let's defend lend a hand thanx 'fer trying
You again as friend

W E W I L L W I N

WWARR Ants O U T S T A N D I N G
Attentions tents they're watching!
Injunction Disorder
did not prohib or limit
Defendants Other Peoples
Lawful Assembly

Any part thereof sidewalks and streets
Her Majesty the Queen versus
The People's Opposition
Reverses Regina Repealed Repeats

And all the welfare recipients
that are not afraid

of the youth unified
WE want our Liberty

British California
How to take over
Step aside and let us try too

Unceded swamp first people's demand
let's regrow the aboriginal forest for rest for trees

This corner is the oldest the part of this acreage and for four hundred the floor
could buckle under and the shoring of
the flooring the cost of safety and saving of lives

Living Harm Reduction

Alternative tries attempts the cost of these recovery is
in time free rent resale 'yer position 'yer only business
is to correctly standardize like as the
First People's tries for the elderly
to be served first and as unable
You should do it for us but
exactly that for the people exactly that and nix 'yer own admission
that the very opposite is the Gov't hidden agenda
the Seniors B U I L T this country
but 'yer policies denied them
robbed and undone destroyed by 'yer corrosion
an inequality made mandatory a rightway Gov't
gone wrong...

and its... ON WORDS

For Words

would (our) words... a h e l p ? ? ?

a home a place to stay

(the) Hard To House...

Whitecaps waves Expos Pilings

H a r c o u r t s promise handicapped

the dying the streets loud and noisy

the plea: Unsanitary!!! The Creatures

free ranging pets clean up their mess

the hazards: Pathogenoic Epidemiology

Strickness the sickness! I'm Happy

healthy strong and free

the birds tweaking he made 'em talk!

"Thanx 'fer saving me... Jest you"

O K It's not 'fer me too crazy to repeat

the centre of contentious claims say

who initiated litigations Equal refusal

Submissions or doft a cap except regret the

Missing Wymen, the disappeared or recently passed on...

did now for a tune we jammed hey like fine

thanx 'fer tuning now get offa my set

Boredom a c r i m e was this worth the effort?

Why did I bust into Woodwards?

THE DEFENDANTS AND ALL OTHER PERSONS HAVING KNOWLEDGE OF THIS ORDER BE DISPENSED WITH EXCEPT FOR APPROVAL BY COUNSEL PRESENT AT THE PRONOUNCEMENT PROHIBITED AND RESTRAINED UNTIL THE TRIAL OF THIS MATTER DECEMBER TWO THOUSAND AND THREE

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS ORDER THIS INJUNCTION DOES NOT PROHIBIT OR LIMIT THE R I G H T OF THE DEFENDANTS OR ANY OTHER PEOPLES TO LAWFULLY ASSEMBLE ANY PART THEREOF PUBLIC ROAD, LANE AND SIDEWALK AND ANY OTHER WAY NORMALLY OPEN TO THE PUBLIC ACUTE ANGINA OVERTHROWING THE THROWN TERRY HALL VERSUS REGINA RUBBLE

Pile 'o Bones

Invited to attend does it matter
attendance of the mtg address concerns
unknown procedures (WE Grieve) inadequate training
address the rights the f i g h t s 'fer f o o d
for unable can'ts afford a place to stay
safe from a night winters conditions front lines
Perks Xtian dealrs Cabbies 'fer duh GRrrrrls

Check out time H I G H N O O N Keys the Front Desk

Save the Kokanee, b l o w up the dams let the rivers
run free California reneged B I L L I O N S so 'yuh seize
"No need to sell electricity..." Replant the Aboriginal Forest
Western redwoods Douglas Fir trees end somewhere
in C A L G A R Y A B The End on the Bowness
Sarcee or Pagani @.org

WE BELONG HERE

Kathy May Lee Rattlesnake

I had no place to stay. I had no place to stay and I was sleeping outside with my late husband. He had a room but he used to bring blankets outside and we used to sleep outside. That's how I started staying outside. Then I heard about Woodward's. That's when I first, "hey, let's go there now," you know, but my husband was dead already and I was going there with Terry Prince. And everybody started calling me auntie, you know, "eh, give you a tent." We had a big tent, big yellow tent, at the time. And one night I come home and there was a big thing going on there and they said, "you can't go there," and I said, "what the fuck you talking about man?" I said, "my husband's in there." "No, you can't, there's the cops out there." I guess they were working on the side and the thing fell down [the Cordova Street scaffolding collapse on 30 October]. So after that they moved us to the front. Well they moved me to the front. I don't know where Terry went at the time. We were on Hastings then. I was sleeping with the dog. What's his name? Cool. My baby. He's still missing eh? I woke up in the clothing room with Cool and my husband Terry comes walking by and he says, "what the fuck you doing here?" "I'm sleeping, yeah, with the dog," I said, "he's keeping me warm." Then they moved me again on the side by my brother Frank Ermineskin where that old lady used to rob us. She stole all my clothes and everything. So I said, "listen here, you're moving out. I'm moving in." "Okay Kathy, okay." I moved in. And I said, "bring all my clothes back." She was selling my clothes up on Main, straight up, biker's place. She was selling all my stuff there. I didn't know it til I fuckin connected. "Bring my fuckin shit back." "You know what, I could take you to court," she said. "You take me to court," I said, "I'll charge you for fucking stealing my fuckin clothes." Three bags of fuckin clothing, man. She stole all my blankets, underclothes. That's how come they kicked her out of there to begin with. Ever since that I went to work on the front desk. I wanted to see what the fuck's going on. So they put me on the front. "Kathy can you work 20 hours, daytime?" "Fuckin rights," I said, "I can." "How about your

brother?” “Yep.” My brother works security. And my friend Doris, she was the main lady. I counted the money. I counted the money what she took in.

Were you ever inside the building that first week? Yes. I was upstairs with my high heels and I fell down. I was on the second floor. They wouldn't let me come down cause I had high heels on. I went on the stairs. I was really drunk with my friend. I went upstairs and next thing—BOOM!—I fell on my fuckin knees. And the boys said, “Oh no, mum, you're not going down there, you're too drunk, you'll have to stay up there for a few hours.” I made my way back down. And to begin with they have a nice place upstairs up there til the fuckin pigs fuckin I don't know why they fuckin got the boys. I'll tell you what it was like. It was like a wake. There's a little dim light and everybody's quiet. It's like a wake like at a funeral. They mind their own business and all that. There was fuck all going on to begin with. I can't see why those fuckin pigs came down there, fuckin disturbed it. If they started minding their own business. Like they're minding their own business all the way, protecting a place like Woodward's.

What did you think of the kitchen and the food at the squat? Pretty fuckin rotten. I mean I come up for breakfast. I didn't understand who was working in the kitchen. Everybody owned the kitchen. I fuckin didn't. I wanted what's her name out of the fuckin kitchen. “What the fuck you doing here you bitch?” And my boys were there, right, “auntie get her outta here.” That's the first bitch I threw out of the kitchen. After that we stood there. I'm here to protect the people, natives and white, whatever. These are my people and I love all my people. And people like this shouldn't be sleeping outside. Like this fuckin Campbell. Look at him now. What comes around goes around. My people shouldn't even be standing outside or sleeping. You can get killed or everything else. You can get killed outside anytime at night and now these fuckin pigs fuckin figure: how come people are sleeping outside getting killed? Ask Gordon Campbell, the fuckin rat. Tell him to go join that guy from Calgary. What's his name? Tell them to have two fuckin beers together and join the highway together and smash each other's fuckin cars. That would be a real Campbell style. In my books Campbell is an asshole. He's a fuckhead and I don't give a fuck what he is with Klein.

What happened on the day of the take-down of the squat? On the last day of the squat my fuckin tent was flattened and my brother's fuckin tent was halfway in the sidewalk. Now why did these fuckin assholes do that? I never got nothing back. Twice I never got nothing back. All my clothes and everything. I never got nothing back. The people that were supposed to be working there said, "oh we got your stuff at the West Hotel." No, there was fuck all there. Why don't they fuckin support my fuckin clothing back and everything. And Jamie was living next to me, my nephew, and Jamie got ripped off too. I don't blame Jamie for what he's doing. He was doing real good there. He was protecting my clothing and everything, my tent. I was living in my tent. It was cool. Then all of a sudden my tent would collapse. I come home one morning and my tent's collapsed. I try to put it back again. Same thing happened. Somebody pissed inside my tent. My clothes are all soaked with piss. I had lots of nice clothes in my tent. That's when I figured hey fuck this man I'm going to go sleep at the Crosswalk. I spent most of my time in the Crosswalk and I come home in the morning. My tent's still been abused. And my brother's tent's been abused.

When the squat ended they moved some of the people into different hotels—what happened to you? Ah shit man. I went and stayed at my sister's and then I seen the news and I came back downtown. Tried to find my shit and all that. And I started staying at the Crosswalk. I stayed at the Crosswalk and then I started sleeping outside. I was sleeping outside. Anyplace there was room. I was sleeping by St. James, inside the church. I had my blankets with me. Doris finally found me and said, "Kathy what are you doing?" I was passing out in Pigeon Park. I said, "I have no place to sleep." "Come here," she said, and she took me down to Portland. And we looked and they had a vacancy there at Park Place. And she said, "you want to stay here?" "Yeah, I'll stay here, it's a place to sleep." I had no window or nothing to begin with. I didn't think about it. And I stayed there. I been there since then. I don't really like it. I usually leave 6 o'clock in the morning to go take a shower and all that and watch my TV. I take off. I can't sleep there. I can't read. I can't stand that closed door. Before that I didn't even have a TV, you know. It was like a jail. I gotta get out of here. So I

went to the Crosswalk. Spent most of my time in the Crosswalk for about a month. Even though I have a place. I can't stand that place. As a matter of fact they had a knifing there the other day. I'm moving out of here. This is no place for me. I'm going to Alberta in April. I'm just going there, get some money. This way I can pay my rent back. When I get back from Edmonton in April I'd like to have a nice fuckin place, everything. Not a jailhouse. You've seen my room. You seen that, eh? What a dump, eh? What a fuckin dump. 350 a month and it's a fuckin dump, man. You seen the fuckin place, man. No fuckin window. You can't breathe.

We're gonna get Woodward's. Clean the fuckin rats out of the fuckin place and the mice, before you move in. That's what I think. We're gonna take it and we know we're gonna take it. Hey, what the fuckin cops trying to take over or what? Fuck off man. Eh! Fuck. Eh, so now the pigs are going to win? Fuck that man. Nope. This is our place. What, are they going to move us to the police station and move us to Woodward's? Fuck that man. What I heard was—my nephew told me that—we have won. If the cops are going to move in there, might as well build our fuckin tents back again, that's what I think. Fuckin rights man. Move in again. Don't ever give up. Let's move in. If the cops are moving in, we'll move in too. Fuck them, man. Fuckin right. I'll do that. I'm one of the squatters and I'll fuckin do it. Hey I'll be the first one to fuckin move in there with a fuckin TV this time. Fuckin rights. I'll build one. These fuckin pigs think they're taking over. Fuck that man. Hey. We belong here. This is a native city, man. Native land to begin with. Fuckin white people like you!

THIRD WOODSQUAT MEMO EXCERPT (12/10)

*Judy Rogers, Vancouver City Manager
in Consultation with the Woodward's Response Team*

CONSIDERATION

A) i) THAT Council authorize an Operating Agreement with the Portland Hotel Society for the operation of 53 rooms in the Dominion Hotel (210 Abbott St.) for a total cost not to exceed \$183,000 (\$80,000 for rent, \$10,000 for a damage deposit and \$93,000 for the provision of staff and services by the Portland Hotel Society) for the purpose of accomodating the squatters camping on the sidewalks around Woodward's, on terms and conditions as outlined in this report; ii) THAT the total maximum amount to be paid by the City to the Society be set at \$203,000 to allow for a contingency fund of \$20,000 over and above the initial maximum of \$183,000 for the Operating Agreement, with disbursements from the contingency fund to the Society to be authorized by the City Manager if the Society is required to provide additional services on short notice; iii) THAT funding be provided from the Affordable Housing Fund; and iv) THAT no legal rights or obligations shall arise or be created until all the required legal documentation is fully executed on terms and conditions to the satisfaction of the City's Director of Legal Services. B) THAT Council approve a two stage process for moving campers from the squat and for dismantling the tents, etc. comprising the squat, as described in this report, with the community, facilitated by the Portland Hotel Society, moving the campers in the first stage and the City, supported by the Vancouver Police Department, enforcing the injunction requiring tents, etc. to be removed from the sidewalks around Woodward's in the second stage. C) THAT Council authorize the City Manager to approve expenses that the Portland Hotel Society may incur to a maximum of \$10,000 to move the campers from the sidewalks around Woodward's into housing and shelter, source of funds to be the Affordable Housing Fund; and D) THAT Council authorize the City Engineer to proceed on or after December 15, 2002, with enforcement of the injunction prohibiting tents, furniture and other structures to be placed or erected on the sidewalks around Woodward's.

MOVING THE SQUATTERS AND DISMANTLING THE SQUAT

It is proposed that moving the squatters into housing and shelter, and dismantling the squat be undertaken in two stages. In the first stage, the community, facilitated by the Portland Hotel Society, would move all the campers that were willing to move into housing and shelter: community volunteers, facilitated by the Portland Hotel Society, would, early in the morning, tent by tent, invite all the campers to pack up their personal belongings and bring them to the New Portland Hotel; those campers who have packed up and left Woodsquat will be offered a full breakfast; once the campers have eaten, a triage team composed of the Portland Hotel Society, City, MHR and VCHA staff, as well as other non-profits will be available to assist the squatters who will be assessed on the basis of overall need including welfare status, mental and physical health and will be offered housing or referred to shelter; once they have housing or shelter, the campers will be provided with vouchers to the Army & Navy for clothing and supplies; and the campers will then be moved into their new housing or to a shelter. The VPD will prepare a contingency plan, including police on standby, to deal with any issues that arise from the community's initiative to move the campers from the squat. Once all the campers who have agreed to pack up and leave the squat have left, the City would proceed with the standard enforcement as follows: the Vancouver Police Department would establish inner and outer perimeters around the site; persons within the inner perimeter would be advised to pack up whatever they can and to leave within a specified short period of time; any persons remaining within the inner perimeter would be escorted by the VPD outside the inner perimeter, with the possibility of arrest; and the City Engineer would proceed to dismantle the squat, with the tents, mattresses, etc. taken to a secure location to be stored pending retrieval by their owners. No triage operation offering housing, shelter and welfare assistance would be provided. By the time enforcement is undertaken, three triage opportunities will have been made available. The budget for the the community to move all the campers that want to move into housing and shelter could be up to \$10,000. The Portland Hotel Society would facilitate the community's initiative, and it is

recommended that the Portland Hotel Society be paid up to \$10,000 to cover these costs.

THE RISKS

The proposed two stage move of the campers into housing and shelter, and the dismantling of the squat presents a number of risks that Council needs to be aware of. A standard enforcement would consist of a single stage with triage happening at the same time as enforcement. This approach minimizes the risk to the public, the campers and protestors, City staff and the police. It involves the mobilization of substantial numbers of police officers whose presence limits any propensity to violence.

The Portland Hotel Society has provided an alternative for a community led solution which they believe would be undermined by a substantial police presence. They understand that enforcement may be necessary but they believe a standard enforcement would generate confrontation. They understand that there is potential for opposition from some of the campers and protestors, but believe that a community-led move of the campers from the squat can be successful.

[REDACTED]

SPECIFIC RISKS THAT COUNCIL NEEDS TO BE AWARE OF INCLUDE:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CONCLUSION

Much of how the end of Woodsquat will unfold is in the hands of the protestors and campers themselves. The Portland believes that there is broad community support to end the squat and that the APC will most likely back off if the community comes out in numbers to dismantle the squat. However, there is no guarantee that enforcement will not be required. If enforcement is required, there will be a substantial police presence to ensure public safety. Given the conditions on site, staff believe the dismantling of the squat is now urgent. [RTS 03132; severed under FOIPA s.13]

LETTER TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL (12/12)

Woodwards Legal Defense Committee

Dear Mayor and Council,

Welcome to office. We understand that many of you had a hand in ensuring that the City did not move on the enforcement order over the past four days. Thank you. We also appreciate your intervention and will remember that you did this for the residents of the Woodward's Squat. We hope that you will continue to exercise discretion regarding the enforcement order and that you will complete the negotiation process in good faith in order that the City may provide decent and dignified housing for everyone remaining on the street. We are also expecting you hold the City of Vancouver responsible for any police action at the Woodward's Squat.

We however recognize that you have both stalled and ignored the real issues surrounding the struggle for decent and dignified housing for people and are only inclined to act on this due to our growing public support and open public criticism on your position on social housing. The housing crisis in Vancouver is a systemic crisis. The Woodward's Squat is only the most visible manifestation of this crisis. And while we are seeking a just resolution to the Woodward's Squat, we also expect that the newly elected council will adequately address the housing crisis on a systemic level as well.

In regards to the Woodward's struggles in particular, however, we as a Legal Defense committee, dedicated to bringing justice to all people involved in the Woodward's housing struggle, will be pursuing Civil claims against the City of Vancouver for wrongful destruction of people's property on September 22/02. We will be pursuing Civil claims against the Vancouver Police Department in respect to police brutality and destruction of people's property by the Vancouver Police Department on the morning of September 21/02 and the evening of September 22/02. We feel your role as newly elected council belongs in supporting the Woodward's defendants and applying pressure to the City of Vancouver and the

Vancouver Police Department to settle fairly and substantially with the Woodwards defendants in the BC law court.

We recommend the following remedies:

1. The City should issue a written apology to the residents of the Woodwards Squat for the destruction of their possessions by Engineering Services on Sunday 22 September;
2. The City should take disciplinary action against the senior manager in Engineering Services who ordered the destruction; and
3. The City should provide fair compensation for the destruction of these possessions. Our preliminary inventory of items destroyed by the City was distributed to Mayor and Council at your meeting on 22 October. Inquiries regarding property destruction and the process of providing fair compensation should be directed to the Woodwards Legal Defense Committee at <woodwards-legal-defense@lists.resist.ca>.
4. The City should commit to settling financially with Woodwards defendants in Court.
5. The City should commit to the safety and the human rights of the people they represent here in Vancouver by pressuring the Vancouver Police Department to be accountable in court to the Woodwards defendants on the matter of property destruction and police brutality. It is unfortunate that the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Department haven't taken responsibility for, or offered compensation and apologies for, the treatment of people at the Woodwards site on Sept. 21 and 22.

We as the Legal Committee would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with the new Mayor and Council.

Megan Oleson
Woodwards Legal Defense Committee

TRANSCRIPT OF NEGOTIATIONS DISCUSSION (12/12)

*Reverend Davin Ouimet, Woodward's Squat Negotiation Team Spokesperson
& Cameron Gray, City of Vancouver Housing Manager*

Cameron Gray: Hi.

Reverend Davin: Hi Cameron.

Cameron Gray: How are you?

Reverend Davin: I'm too stubborn to die.

Cameron Gray: [silence]

Reverend Davin: I'm one of the negotiators with the Woodward's Squat and the reason why I'm phoning you is because you're the Housing Manager and I'm kind of wondering what it is you're doing to get people housing.

Cameron Gray: Well, probably working with the Portland on a number of fronts I guess. But I have to say that we've been asked by Council to refer all calls regarding what's happening down there to Councillor Green. He's handling all the discussions. And that's what we've been instructed by the City Manager and Mayor's Office. So you're going to have to talk to him. He really wants to sort of be overseeing all this pretty closely.

Reverend Davin: Well I understood from his press thing—I got an email from him that said he wasn't really willing to deal with it until next week. And I mean if people are moving into the Dominion on Saturday or Sunday I think next week is a little too late, don't you think?

Cameron Gray: Well I mean that's still up to him to say, you know. Those are my instructions. I work for City Council and that's what they've told me to do: to direct people to him. The best thing is, you've got issues, you can talk to Mark.

Reverend Davin: It's not that. I'm dealing with a hundred and some odd people. I'm negotiating for them.

Cameron Gray: No you're not.

Reverend Davin: Excuse me? What did you just say?

Cameron Gray: You're one of a number of people who are interested and we've been talking to lots of folks, right. And I appreciate that there's a lot of people who have interests here. But you really have to talk to Jim. We don't know the whole lay of the land and we're letting the Portland take the lead. And you should talk to Jim. Really. Jim's in charge of this.

Reverend Davin: Well, for one, I am negotiating for the hundred and one people at Woodwards and I'm quite a little offended that you would come and say that I'm not. For one, I've been elected by these hundred some-odd people to speak on their behalf.

Cameron Gray: I'm not aware of any election. I'm about to hang up. Goodbye.

TACTICAL SITUATION AT WOODWARDS (12/23)

Inspector Dave Jones, Vancouver Police Department Operations Division District One

The original strategies had called for a plan to limit the opportunity for reoccupation by leaving police resources in the building while the owner properly secured the potential access points. A squad had been called out to stand by on the street in the event of a spontaneous occupation of another building. A protest group had begun to assemble at the courthouse lockup and this latter group had to be redeployed. This allowed people to congregate outside Woodward's and occupy the street. Makeshift shelters were quickly assembled. The first response to this came later that day when a plan was formed to have city crews pick up the debris and remove it. Sufficient police resources were assembled using late afternoon shifts held over after normal booking off hours. City crews began clearing the sidewalks and a number of activists attempted to obstruct police. Seven were arrested and charges tendered to Crown. City crews apparently disposed of property thinking it was garbage. This led to the only civil action from the entire Woodward's event. The next day the sidewalk was reoccupied and the sidewalk squat quickly grew. So too did the power of the activists who were arrested. Crown declined to follow through with charges, citing public interest having been met by the removal of them in the first instance. Regrettably this emboldened the activists. One had now escaped charges in protests three times. It was impossible to miss the reluctance of Crown to proceed with charges. Arguably this omission to pursue a charge led to an ugly incident on October 03 at UBC. During a visit of the Premier several activists attempted to attack him, succeeding in knocking down a police security officer before escaping. Later that day as the Premier was to appear at Britannia Community Centre activists became involved in an incident that led to several arrests for obstruction and assault. Crown this time laid charges and applied some stringent restrictions regarding proximity to the Premier and the visiting Queen of

England. These more strident and confrontational activists had their jets cooled considerably and this was the last incidence of activist violence in the Woodward events. A demonstration on Dunsmuir Street on October 07 coincided with a luncheon at the Vancouver Hotel for Queen Elizabeth, Prime Minister Chrétien and Premier Campbell. The area restrictions set up for key activists arrested at the Britannia event prevented them from moving to the Hotel Vancouver and the demonstration, attended by fewer than 100 people, fell apart within an hour. Subsequent demonstrations failed to attract more than 100 people. Although noisy, there was a clear reluctance by demonstrators to put themselves at risk of arrest.

From the beginning of the squat police had to prepare for and deploy resources for 12 demonstrations where the Woodward Squat was used as a tool to attack the Liberal government policies. After the final demonstration on November 04 at the Hyatt Hotel, where about 80 people showed up, the activists stopped doing demonstrations with the exception of one called for Victory Square by one of the original squat organizers that failed to attract a single supporter. While the demonstrations had ended the squat continued and the effect on the November 16 civic elections cannot be overlooked. In Vancouver a clear mandate came for a change in approach. Many journalists described the vote as a vote against the provincial government and the Woodward Squat was clearly being used as a symbol for discontent with the provincial government.

Police were clearly on the front line in dealing with demonstrations and there was concern that the activists would use the police involvement to further their cause. Indeed, during the same period one of the people arrested when Abbott Street was cleared was a law student who published a report on alleged police abuse under the auspices of the PIVOT Legal Society. The police goal changed considerably at this point. The emotion around the housing issue leveraged by the significance of the Woodward site made repeated removal of tents and property from the streets a problem. People would simply set up again and police would be drawn further into this social issue. Police met with City Staff and an agreement was

reached that saw the City assume primary responsibility for dealing with the squat. Police would assume a support role. The City approach was to document the effects of the squat and apply for an injunction to clear the street. This transfer of primary responsibility was important in separating the police from an appearance of interference in lawful protest. That the squatters were breaking a civic bylaw by camping on the street was not seen by City Legal as having sufficient weight to overcome Charter rights to free assembly and speech. In fact, being on the street was a right. The only offence was erecting structures on the sidewalk. In many Canadian cities union pickets are set up lasting years in public spaces and are seldom interfered with. Therefore the only way to deal with the squat was to show harm to the community that outweighed the Charter right to protest. The City then identified their strategic objectives and worked on a legal front to obtain an injunction as well as a social front to locate shelter for people. Some simple math illustrated the cost of police involvement. The cost for police to remove the squatters from inside the Woodward's building exceeded the entire cold weather shelter budget for the winter. City and Provincial funding was applied to expand the budget for cold weather shelter and about 50 beds were opened early. The first shelter offers were rejected by the squatters on the basis that it was shelter and not housing. Police had approached the Portland Hotel Society about solutions and that group was exploring the possibility of renovating a nearby building. The shelter beds filled quickly but not with the squatters...

Generally, a refusal to obey an injunction remains a matter of civil contempt as long as the dispute remains between the parties. Where there is an element of public defiance that challenges the authority of the court the matter may become criminal. The distinction between the two, the manner of investigation and potential outcomes are important from a police perspective. Both types of contempt have three common elements: a court order that applies to that person; the person knows of the court order; and the person disobeys the court order. For criminal contempt a fourth condition is that the person breaches the order in a public way

thus engaging the general public in the dispute by challenging the authority of the court. This latter breach must be open, continuous (several acts) and flagrant (make it obvious the court order had no affect). An important distinction is that under civil contempt the complainant can drop the matter. This occurred in the injunction to remove people from the inside. Counsel for the owner of the building, without notice, advised the court that they did not wish to pursue the contempt. The court responded by ordered costs against the government. With criminal contempt the matter can proceed without the complainant. An example of criminal contempt could include a situation wherein if a protester were to make a public statement or the waving of signs in front of a camera were to bring attention to the defiance of the injunction then the provincial Crown would take up the matter as criminal contempt. This distinction between the two types of contempt required a plan that took into account the collection of evidence not only of the disobedience to the court order but to associated public defiance. Thus the investigators assigned began to develop tactics that would enable all of the elements of contempt to be collected.

During the next few weeks the media continued to cover the story from a point of view sympathetic to the protesters. The situation caught the social imagination of many people who dropped off money, food and other items. Conflicts within the squat for control were constant and money and other items were stolen. Washroom access became an enormous problem and some of the money provided went to have portable toilets installed. Many still did not use them and simply relieved themselves in the lanes. A group of convenient militants moved in with makeshift weapons and crystal meth. There were reports of firearms and that some organizers had removed them to a safe place but refused to turn them over to police. Some of the organizers through this piece of nonsense destroyed what limited credibility they had with police. Within the squat there was a constant ebb and flow of the power structure. At one point the APC attempted to seize control for the second or third time and asked people at the squat to mark an x on the forehead of anyone they did not trust. At the conclusion the only ones with x's were the APC representatives...

INVITATION TO PREMIER GORDON CAMPBELL

Dayl Scheltgen

Office of the Premier
PO Box 9041 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

January 12, 2003

Dear Premier Campbell,

We are sorry to hear about your incident. We invite you to come down to the Dominion Hotel on Thursday, January 30th to share your experiences with alcohol and substance misuse. We could use your input on the experimental four-step program proposed by Bruce Alexander and Jonathan Tsou. We appreciate the efforts of the Portland Hotel Society and look forward to your future support for our community during this transition. If you are unable to attend on the 30th please let us know when we can get together: we will come and meet with you at your convenience. We may be reached at 604-681-6666.

Yours truly,

[signed]

Dayl Scheltgen
Spokesperson, The Woodward's Squat Negotiation Team
Spokesperson, The Woodward's Squat Emergency Response Team
The Dominion Hotel, 210 Abbott Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 2K8

ETERNAL TURTLE ISLAND

Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society

WAHRS has developed several demands around the squatter action since the advent of the Woodward's occupation. During the action we discussed the possibility on several levels that this action has a defensible position, as all land in the Greater Vancouver Regional District is disputed unceded territory. Initially our demands were as follows: 1. Vancouver Native Housing get proportionate adequate funding allocations to meet the high demand of First Nations people in DTES. 2. First Nations health organizations immediately devise plans to polarize health services to meet the needs of First People demographically specific to the epidemic that is occurring in DTES. 3. Aboriginal Business Canada and Industry Canada fund retail business on the ground level to be run by and employ aboriginal people; as reasoning we may cite the wage disparity First People endure daily. These demands were discussed with the large body carrying out the actions and also accepted. The Human Rights Watch also came and voiced their individual support as well as advising us that we may have a means to defend against the pending injunction. It did however take several discussions to gain consensus and since then we have had to revisit several of the same discussions to bring people to the same page: 1. Long House community healing centre. 2. Income assistance for aboriginal people administered to aboriginal people by aboriginal organizations. 3. Unrestricted access to waterfront for the residents of Portside (CRAB) Park. We do stand in unity with our brothers that do keep up the fight at Thornton Park and do support all the demands, which they are stewarding.

CHAIN REACTION

Tony Snakeskin

It was not an easy feeling for me when I was there at the time. So lo and behold I started using drugs even more just to stay awake. It got to the point where I was staying up for four or five, six days. It got to the point that I started doing that heroin dance, that tweak dance, whatever you want to call it, just from staying up, from staying awake. Well, my body could only take so much, and my mind could only take so much. So, at one point, I had to leave Woodward's for thirteen days and I went to detox. That wasn't a good experience there, because, well, I detoxed. I got healthier. I got my rest. My mind started to come back and so I asked the staff if I can go. And they were not willing to let me go unless I was in a treatment centre or in a recovery house. I tried to get in but everything was full. So I left there and the very first place I went to was back to Woodward's. It was a good feeling. It felt like I was home.

I was surprised about how long it went on. I figured it would go on for thirty days, sixty days if we were lucky. Why did it go on that long? Well, after seventy-two days, there was an election. The whole Downtown Eastside rallied behind COPE. Somebody started all this and knew exactly what they were doing. They needed an issue to raise up and homelessness is just a perfect one. The squat started strategically, in my opinion, just before the elections for Vancouver City Council. I figured that somebody had hired a few people to start a squat, to rally some people to get people behind a certain party. This is exactly what happened. It all turns to Larry Campbell cause he was all "for the people," you know. When did it stop? After Larry Campbell was elected. He made a promise of permanent housing, which, in my opinion, is a crock of shit because the permanent housing they gave were hotels. People didn't want to see needles and drug dealers. Didn't like stepping on needles in their carpets. It was all useless. They just put them back in Single Room Occupancy. People didn't want Single Room Occupancy hotels. The government put them right back in to Single

Room Occupancy places and said, “there, Woodward’s Squatters, have a nice life.” These kinds of hotels we wanted to get out of because there’s too much drugs, too much drug haven, in these buildings.

It’s all about politics. It’s all a big money scandal here. The Downtown Eastside is run by what I call poverty pimps. This goes down to the King of England kind of days. The way it is the rich get richer and the poor stay poor. If the rich don’t have the poor to rule over who the hell do they have to rule? And this goes on and on through the centuries. The reason that the rich stay rich is that they force people to stay poor. Same with our governments, whether it be federal, provincial or right here in Vancouver. They need some poor people. They need some addicts just so they can set up a few courses. They say, “look we’re setting up a drug program,” then hire some people. Without the poor people Larry Campbell couldn’t even be Mayor of Vancouver.

The family is still in contact with each other, among the native people and a few of the white people. The native community that was at the Woodward’s Squat, they’re still out and about. Some are at the Stanley Hotel. Some are at other places. Out on the street we’ll still say hi to one another. Sometimes the cops roll up and they think we’re a bunch of drug dealers. There’ll be ten Indians hanging out smoking a couple of joints or sharing cigarettes. We just like the family feeling from hanging out with each other. “Have you seen Glenda today or Kathy Rattlesnake?” You know, everybody always asks about each other. People ask about people that they haven’t seen. If I haven’t been out in a couple of days, they’re banging on my doors, bringing a couple of sisters by. “How’s your health? How’s your room?” Cause there’s so many people who’ve died in this community. People die rotting away in their rooms down here. It’s reality. People die in their rooms. Of overdose. Of alcohol. Their livers give out. Or maybe they just die of a broken heart. Basically, they’re too ashamed, whether they’re drinking alcohol or shooting coke, or whatever, their family doesn’t want to accept them cause they’re addicts. So everybody watches out for everybody down here. Cause we’re native people. The only thing we have is each other.

After the new government came to power the Dominion Hotel was a doggy-bone they threw the squatters. The Dominion wasn't even properly renovated when they moved in the squatters. It took everything that was out in the open at Woodward's and bought it into closed quarters. I used to go to the Dominion and visit my friends all the time. It brought this uneasy feeling. But once again it's back into the crappy hotels that people didn't want to live in. I sure as hell don't like living in one. I got to share my bathroom with twenty other people who got AIDS or Hep C. Twenty other people with no living skills. Piss on the floor. Shit on the walls. I'm not the neatest person but you know I don't put up with this kind of stuff. Other squatters used to tell me stories that they were afraid to take their shoes off *in their rooms*. Cause in the carpets there were needle points that were left by drug users, broken off. Who knows if they're contaminated with Hep C or AIDS? People were stepping on these so they couldn't take their shoes off. So here they are, they go to bed, take their shoes off, wake up, first thing they got to do, to get out of bed, is put their shoes on. That's not living. That's surviving. That's not even existing. That's learning how to survive. That's not home. People found it safer living on the streets. So did we accomplish anything in terms of adequate housing? No. In terms of raising awareness? Yes. We made people see that whether we're homeless or whether we're alcoholics or whether we're drug users, we're still human. We still deserve a chance at life as well. Maybe the squat will start a chain reaction in the native community. To learn how to help ourselves.



Kathy May Lee Rattlesnake



Jewel C



Gary G. Gates



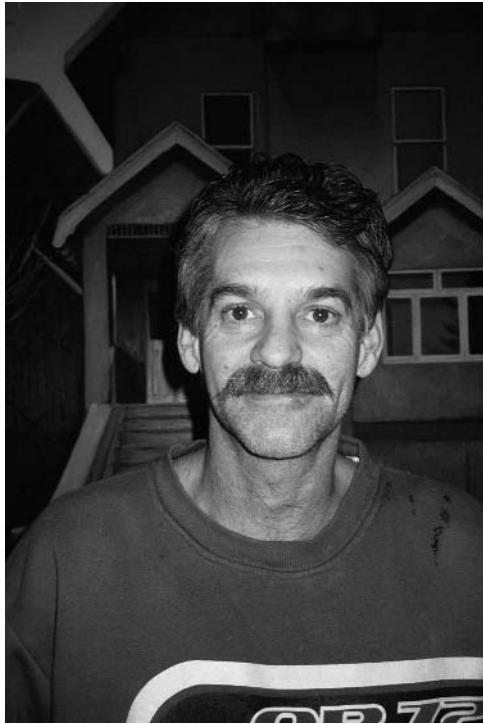
Vanessa Louis



Elvis Ace Nelson



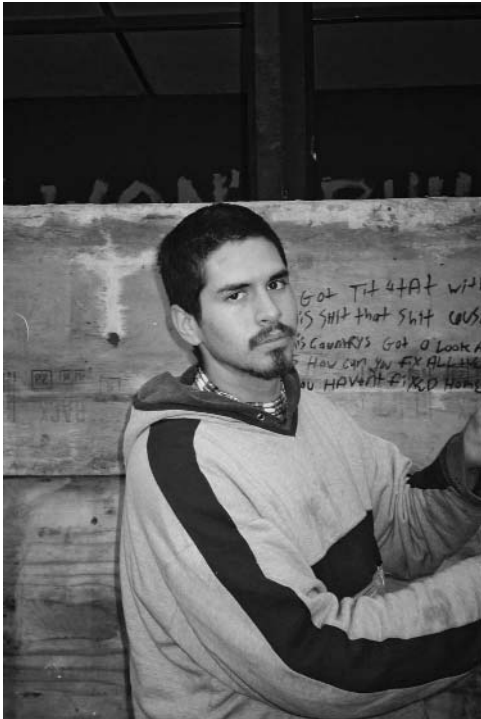
Bernice Simms



Dayl Scheltgen



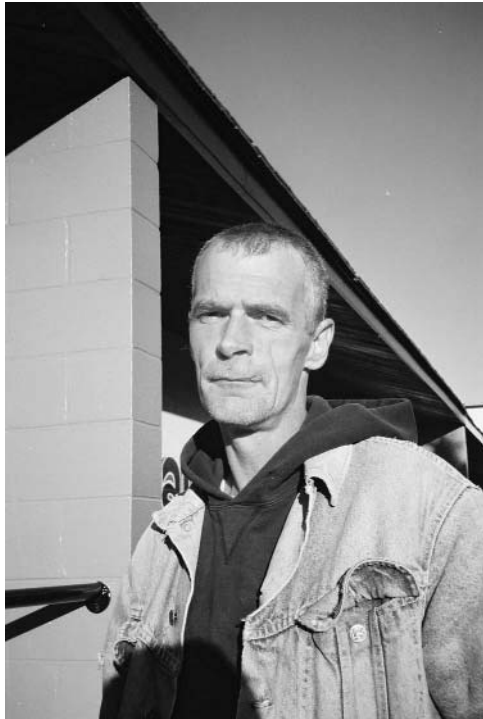
Bruce Gongola



James Dempster



Cadillac



Ken Howard



Roy Gladiator Archie



Reverend Davin Ouimet



Claude Maurice



Tony Snakeskin



Theresa D. Gray



Toecutter



Chrystal Durocher



Skyy



Beverley Gladue



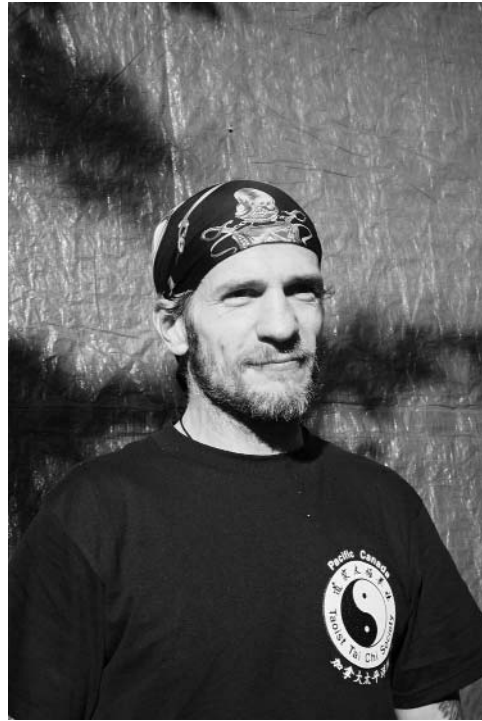
Taz



Sky Wright



K. Wester



Ron M



Travis Livingstone



Roger Rabbit



Tom



Adam Murray

A THOUSAND SONGS TO CHOOSE FROM

Elvis Ace Nelson

The time has come.
Love is calling you.
What are you gonna do?
O child O child come home.
Nowhere to run. Nowhere to hide.
Love is shining. Souls are floating.
What are you gonna do when you turn 52?
Half a century's gone and still you got nothin to do.
Nowhere to run or nowhere to hide.
You gotta face up.

I represented the Woodward's Squat with my guitar. I went out to sing to everybody, took my guitar, played, brought in people to put donations in that box every day. To keep the peace. Music keeps the peace. So music kept the peace. I got the exposure to my music, and you know, the people of the ghetto get happy. It became interesting because there was more songs to write. So it was beautiful. My music went on the Internet. People around the world saw this black guy in the ghetto with a guitar in his hand, not selling drugs. Singing music. And the song was so beautiful. Even the police they put money in my case. My time has come. Time to make it.

Half the people from the squat just disappeared. Honestly, I think the majority sold out. They were bribed. They all sold out for whatever it was. I don't know. But I stuck to it. Money cannot buy what I worked for. I don't care who sold out. Their loss because karma's a bitch. They used what they used and for what? A little money? Why be a king for a day when you can be a king for life? For me it's all about my protection. My protection is my art. When I write a song my song goes on the Internet telling

people where to send money to. I can't just leave it. My ass is on the line. Or else I would have left this project a long time ago. I am there and here I am still. I claim to have rep because I've completed what we're supposed to have completed at the Stanley Hotel. I'm fully motivated now. I am very thankful. God bless me. God bless anybody like me.

By the way I study souls so I can see right through their eyes. I told them they're full of shit. I have a right to. My music represented. My music brought that place together. Bigtime. Half of everything and the people of the ghetto donated. And the recognition went to who? The government! Holy fuck! How could that happen? When the "W" lit up, the government—what the fuck?—what happened to the ghetto? I don't understand that. That's beyond me. Everybody sits there all dumb. They're all hush-hush. Somebody paid them to shut their mouths. Wow. Nobody can shut my mouth. Nobody can pay me or buy me. Sorry about their lot. My investment is music. I'm sticking to the purpose of the reason I understood why I went there. My thing is music and to help kids. That's it. The rest I don't care about. Keep me out of it.

It's going to be okay because people who do bad, no matter how big they rise, they will fall. The victory comes to the people who deserve it. Come the victory I'll be happy but I aint gonna put them down. I'm gonna kiss them all. Love em. Don't hate em. You can't hate em. You gotta love em. You gotta look down at em and say, "Man, I know your damned soul. You're a greedy S.O.B. It's your fault. But guess what? You're going to end up smoking crack in the ghetto. All that money you made? I bet you're going to end up smokin it in the ghetto. You'll be stuck in the ghetto the rest of your life. Fuck you. You're going to get fucked. The same way you thought of whatever you think of: you're gonna end up doing the same thing." So think about what I'm saying. All up to you.

LILY OF THE VALLEY

Hazel Hoyle

...and he said to them, the harvest indeed is great, but the workers are few; supplicate therefore the Lord of the harvest that he may send out workmen into his harvest.

Go: behold I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves... Luke 10: 2-3

Two days before the Woodward's occupation began I met a girl I will call Lily. Lily had been sitting on the same spot of Hastings Street pavement, day after day. Her face was dirty; her hands filthy. She rolled a few cigarettes with rollies and scraps of burnt tobacco from a zip-locked collection of discarded filters found littered on the ground. Lily does not panhandle. She does not speak. Sometimes she was curled up in a ball against the wall. Other times she just sat with her body disfigured, crumpled up. Her head was always down. Her clumped-up, long locks dangle down and hide her face. I had walked past this woman many times. That Friday on my way home, as I walked by, the Lord stopped me and my conscience said, "go back." This time, I listened. I was certain this woman had been badly abused by men, the world and the drug scene. She had become a damaged product that can't even get into any of the corrupt trades (sex or drugs), even if she tried. She had bottomed out.

What did I do? I obeyed the Spirit of our Lord. I listened closely for moment by moment instruction. Mostly, I just sat there beside her, staring out at the traffic screaming past on this polluted Vancouver street. Staring out at the drug deals and the prostitution traffic in front of the store across from us. Staring out at life through Lily's eyes. I sang a few songs, prophesied over her a few times. Read a couple Psalms. Prayed lots. Offered once to wash her face, then her hands with the cloth and water in my bag. Her flinch and fear of touch screamed volumes. Mostly though I was just there being in her space. Paying her attention for about 40 minutes. Until God said to go. She never said a word the entire time. During one song, I noticed her lips

forming a twitch of a smile and she did sit upright almost the whole time I was there.

So many people walked past and didn't even look down. So many looked down with fear in their eyes. So many people who don't give a damn about Lily. I too walked past her so many times. But somehow, this time, I felt her sadness when I walked by. Sadness so strong, I couldn't ignore it. What else really mattered at that moment? Before I left I had a strong desire to find a flower to leave with her. The odds of finding a flower in this neighborhood, though, were pretty slim. Instead, I drew a picture of flowers with the pink highlighter and green pen from in my pack. I placed it beside her when I left: the note told her, "You are the lily of the valley."

A few weeks later, while visiting the Woodsquat I saw Lily there for the first time. I was excited, but never exchanged words with her about that first encounter. I'm not sure if she remembered me or not. I suppose it didn't matter. Her hair was combed back into an elastic and her face was clean. She looked like she had hope. I spoke with her a few times during the three-month occupation. I learned her real name and found out she lived in a shelter for women that didn't open til midnight. The wet mattress she laid upon during the day awaiting meals at the kitchen was a not a permanent fixture. Although, neither was the shelter. Lily was not at Woodward's to make a political protest. She wasn't there because she wanted to hang out and get high with friends. She wasn't a "rebellious" runaway looking to live a cool adventure story. Lily was there because she had no place to be. Her days were spent on a donated filthy mattress surrounded by broken-hearted people with nowhere else to be.

I was in support of Woodward's because I was in search of assisting the truly helpless: the spiritually disturbed, the physically disabled, the mentally ill and the drug addicted. Unfortunately, these were not the ones in the end who were moved into safe housing by the efforts of the protest. Instead, the most needy got lost in the move and were left outside once again to fend for themselves—only now, once again without the security of community. The people there were involved in operations and they worked together as a community. This was a community of communal living people that worked. I had never experienced anything like it. People there were giving

and giving. They literally gave socks off their own feet to another who was cold. They gave the shirts and jackets off their backs for one another. I had a lot to learn from these people.

I attended the squat as a Christian in efforts to bring love and support. I served food. I talked to people. I prayed for people and I sang songs a lot. I attended all the court appearances and continued prayer coverage during these times. What I learned at the courts was that the City of Vancouver had an opportunity to use this situation to make a difference to implement some strategies to eliminate the problems of homelessness in our city. This was an opportunity to help no less than 300 people have a safe place to live. This was an opportunity to try a new strategy of self-governance for the people who were proving to be self-contained in a cooperative setting.

Woodwards was reputed as the safest place to be on the streets. There was power in their unity and there was safety in the numbers. The city was acclaimed to be short only 100 or so beds for shelters. We knew this was an inaccurate count. Still the shelters who turned people away each night were referring them to come to Woodward's. The system there was working. The problem: these people were living outside and many were wet and cold. Many were contracting pneumonia and gangrene and there were no remedies for this. The City had the opportunity to make a difference by allowing something new to be developed in the strategy against homelessness. They copped out and passed the responsibility on to the legal system.

The Supreme Court Justice had an opportunity to use this situation to make a difference to allow for new strategies that would eliminate some of the problems of homelessness in our city. Woodward's was the pilot project of what could have become a solution to homelessness on a national level. The Supreme Court Justice copped out and declared it was not their responsibility and declared that the people living at the squat were lawbreakers. Without remedy and in fact with a pointed remark that whether they stayed on that street front, or moved individually to other corners, to other dry places under a bridge or at a city park: they were lawbreakers and were not

allowed to be there. They were legally demanded and required to vacate the premises within a very short time period. In essence his sentence stated that the homeless on the street were breaking the law by being there and he must enforce that law. He had no remedy for where they could go; only that they had to go as the law had to be upheld. So the City passed the buck to the legal system. The legal system passed the buck back to the City and the people were left without remedy in violation of all the neatly written by-laws, guidelines and bureaucratic legalities of our current democratic society.

I challenged the church on what they are to do when the government lets the people down and the response to a short-term information campaign brought about a lot of prayer and a few names of people offering sanctuary. Sanctuary that did not come to pass. Although God was able, the people of God also copped out on helping the homeless at Woodward's. All these events challenged me to understand the created situation of poverty and wealth in our society.

Some people and some church-goers did take interest and a temporary "solution" manifested: a hotel to house 60 of the people living outside Woodward's. As services to help the deeper issues of the people were neglected we realized this housing was more of an effort to quickly remove the sight of the poverty in this wealthy city from the eyes of passers-by. Unfortunately, all three lists identifying over 114 names collected from Woodsquat residents disappeared the day of the move. It became a first-come first-serve basis and only a small percentage of the persons who moved into the hotel were even from the squat. The day of the move there was a lot of marijuana smoke and not much organization. Many were left behind.

Lily, like about 65 others who were not living at Woodward's to make a political protest or to hang out and get high with friends, didn't make it to the designated home for the winter season. These ones were sent back where they began—homeless combating the streets and the winter weather. Only this time, they were alone to fight street brutalities without the security of community.

FRANCES TO WOODY

Bruce Gongola

The first thing we did at the Frances Street Squats was tear down all the fences between the houses. The first thing I did at Woodsquat was climb the ladder. At Frances it was more individualized while at Woodsquat the lights never went off. Everybody was always doing something with somebody. Frances Street was more of a homey kind of thing while Woodsquat was more like bubbling, shitting revolution. It didn't know where it was going or what it was about but 25 hours a day, 8 days a week. It just never ended. It was always happening. Somebody might go to bed but 40 people at least might be up. At Frances Street people were comfortable with the people they lived with. They knew who they were. They knew who they could trust. Woodsquatters didn't have a fucking clue who they were with, who they could trust, or if they could even trust themselves. You know what I mean? I don't want to call it anarchy. But it functioned as chaos. Frances Street was anarchy in action but Woodsquat was total chaos. Woodsquat was different from Frances in that it was a street scene with people who never had a place to live. People that never had a sense of political power or never had some sense of community love or organization.

Woodsquat was like the gases in a solar system. Energy that takes a long time to come together, to form a planet. That energy was Woodsquat. The Frances Street Squats were like stars. Frances Street had a coalition. Woodsquat was the gases of the universe, spiraling and whirling around, not worried if it was gonna happen or not. Frances Street functioned politically while Woodsquat was manipulated. For all the manipulation I think people really enjoyed themselves and learned a lot. For all the manipulation that happened on all the levels, it didn't make a goddamn bit of difference. If it wasn't for Oka, Frances Street would kind of just have petered along. Oka gave it a hard definition. Woodsquat was primordial energy. It didn't matter what happens. Something was happening. It was all new. It was all heavy, heavy, heavy

power. Even though it had manipulation to it, on a political level, it didn't even fuckin matter. Because it was the people and the energy that was pulsating. It was more people than politics. There was no spokesperson at Frances Street. We all had respect for each other. There was no Jimmy Leyden. There was no PHS in the background.

There are some examples of squatters camps in Vancouver but this Woodsquat thing was unique. It was a page of history that stands on its own even though it was manipulated and used by Jim and Jim and Campbell and Campbell. That's fine. As a people's action the Woodsquat goes down in history on its own. It was not the electoral politics, the PR, but the people who were living it. That's what I was impressed with. I have no qualm with Larry Campbell. But I have no love for the other Campbell. He'll get elected one more time. Then he'll get unelected because they don't want to pick up the pieces. They may knock that goddamn building down. Whatever happens, the struggle goes on. The struggle is about our land. It is not about a particular building or a particular way to live. It is about the changing nature of capitalism and poverty, so that people have a happy life and that everybody is well fed. We've got to make life more fun and be creative enough to not only survive but prosper and not get taken down in their power game.

At the end of Frances, Ian woke up and they were taking his socks to the street. We took everything out of the houses to the barricade because we didn't want a little sweet ending. Squeege rips her mask off and she starts crying. The movie is beautiful. At Woodsquat PHS hired some VANDU people and ex-squatter types to take it down. At 7:30am I woke up and they were there. It was a sweet and sour ending. The sauce was too thin. No substance. No meat on the bone. No bone. No dog. And at the end of both squats there were the same false statements issued in the press about weapons being there. After Frances some of us went into a shared house on Adanac Street then the Broadway Squats started. After Woodsquat some of us went into the Dominion Hotel and all of a sudden everything was behind closed doors. That was a drag. It broke people up even more. There were no kitchen facilities. For a while I talked about taking all the doors off. But I'll save that story for another occasion.

LEGAL STRATEGIES AT THE WOODWARDS SQUAT: LIBERAL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL WRONGS

Noah Quastel, L.L.B.

In September of 2002 a number of persons began occupying the site of the former Woodward's department store in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, both as a way of finding temporary housing, and also to protest the severe problem of homelessness in Vancouver, coupled with an inadequate government response. The provincial government stood by as the Crown Corporation responsible for housing and which also owned the former department store building got an injunction to remove the squatters, and then later the police were sent in to arrest them for contempt of the court order. Some of the protesters had nowhere else to go, and after being released from jail on a promise to appear in November, returned to sleep on the sidewalks around the building. That same night the City of Vancouver police arrested the squatters, including their lawyer John Richardson, Executive Director of the PIVOT Legal Society. The police had no legal power to do this, and in the following days protesters and homeless people came to sleep on the sidewalk. Soon over a hundred persons were sleeping in makeshift tents and cardboard houses and the Woodward's Squat developed.

There is nothing stopping someone from sleeping on the sidewalk, but if you want a tent or a tarp to protect you from the rain you would appear to be in violation of the City of Vancouver's Street and Traffic By-law No. 2849 section 71 which says that you cannot put objects on the sidewalk. The City does give licenses to cafés and hot dog stands, and so City Council could have given approval to the squatters, but Phillip Owen and the Non Partisan Association dominated council showed no suggestion that they might approve the Squat. Instead, the City Engineer gave notice demanding that the obstructions on the sidewalks be removed, and the City made an application to have its by-law enforced. Five lawyers represented some of the squatters in the court before Mr. Justice Lowry. The British Columbia Civil Liberties

Association made a special appearance to defend the freedom of speech of the squatters. Other squatters directly spoke to the judge, bypassing legal formalities and asserting their moral rights. His lordship granted the injunction.¹

Now how is it that when you have nowhere to live, when the emergency shelters are all full, and either you cannot find a room in a Single Room Occupancy hotel or you do not have the money because you are broke and welfare won't cover you, the City will not even allow you to put up a tent under an awning? Isn't it supposed to be that we have a basic right to housing? And if you don't have housing don't you have the right to stay on the sidewalk, and sleep there, saying through your actions, "look, I have no housing?" And when it's miserable and dangerous to sleep alone on the streets, don't you have the right to do so with other people, with the safety that numbers provide? In the case of the Woodward's Squat, the answer appears to have been that the law does not respect those rights. British Columbia has become a place where government social services no longer guarantee everyone basic necessities.² The legal response to the Woodward's Squat shows obstacles to trying to use legal channels to address this.

YOUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHT TO SQUAT

A lot of us feel that housing is a basic human right, but that's often a moral position and it is not clear Canadian law recognizes that right. As it stands now, there are no laws of the City of Vancouver, the British Columbia legislature or the federal Parliament which say you can go to court to ensure you have adequate housing. In this case, it was the City of Vancouver itself that was looking to tear down the Squat. So the only recourse would be to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which is designed as a last ditch protection for basic human rights. The only right there mentioned which might apply is Section 7, the right "to life, liberty and security of the person." In the fall of 2002 there was no definitive statement that denied that the section gave people the right to housing. The squatters' lawyers gave it a try.

The main legal source for this interpretation is international human rights law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the most basic of international rights documents. Article 25 says that everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living, and it includes housing with that. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights—which Canada has accepted—at Article 11 states that the State parties to the convention recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination at Article 5 likewise states that State parties undertake to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law in the enjoyment of the right to housing.

While the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms includes rights provisions that are found in international law, and certainly includes provisions found in regional instruments like the European Convention on Human Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights, it is not an implementation of any particular international human rights treaty. The Charter is to be interpreted on its own terms, as a unique Canadian document. But the Canadian courts have said that the Charter can be interpreted in light of international human rights norms.³ The Charter should generally be presumed to provide protections afforded in similar provisions in international human rights documents which Canada has ratified.⁴ The Charter has been said to be the primary vehicle through which international human rights achieve a domestic effect.⁵

What favoured the squatters' positions was that there were general comments by the Supreme Court of Canada indicating that the Supreme Court judges were not yet ready to rule that Section 7 would never be available in cases involving rights to basic necessities such as shelter. The court has said that the blanket exclusion of economic rights applied to corporations, but that economic rights fundamental to human life or survival could be treated differently.⁶ The *Woodwards Squat* case also had the interesting feature that the squatters and their lawyers were simply asking the courts

to not allow the City to kick them off the sidewalk. While the underlying motivations of some of the squatters may have been to protest the lack of temporary or appropriate housing the immediate concerns of the squatters were to simply have a place to stay. October and November of 2002 were exceptionally rainy and the small overhang gave individuals a potentially drier place to stay. The effect of breaking up the Squat would be simply to have deprived the individuals of the ability to provide for themselves, and the Squat provided security, temporary housing and the ability to cook communally. Rather than demand of the State resources for their maintenance, the Defendants asked only that the state not interfere with their own meagre attempts to provide for their necessities. While bypassing problems with “positive obligations” of the State, this was not enough to shift the judge’s decision-making.

Because of procedural problems the lawyers for the squatters were not able to argue that the City bylaw itself violated the Charter. There are requirements for giving notice of a Charter-based challenge to lawyers for the provincial and federal governments. The short time frame for arranging and launching the legal defence coupled with the disorganization of the pro bono lawyers worked against making that possible. This left the lawyers with two possible arguments. The first was that the bylaw had to be interpreted according to the values that underlined the Charter. The bylaw was meant to stop people from putting objects on the sidewalk, but didn’t apply where this was necessary for people to sleep on the sidewalk who had nowhere else to go. The second argument was that the court, in granting an injunction, was itself required to comply with the Charter.⁷

At the hearing concerning granting the injunction Mr. Justice Lowry concluded that the bylaw was clear on its face and it disallowed the Squat from continuing. The plain meaning of the bylaw was clear and there was no sense to the idea that somehow the bylaw did not apply in the present case.⁸ Mr. Justice Lowry dismissed the second argument on the basis that injunction was the method whereby the City would enforce legislation.

But there is clearly more at play. The City approached the issue from the vantage point that it had a right to seek an injunction under the bylaws, and only in “exceptional circumstances” would the courts not grant the injunction, so long as the underlying wrongdoing was shown.⁹ What is key here is what counts in law as an exceptional circumstance. The case law does suggest that where an injunction is sought to enforce the right of a municipality or city, the courts will be reluctant to refuse it on discretionary grounds. The fact that those who oppose the injunction will suffer hardship from enforcement will not normally be an important factor. The Defendants argued that homelessness was something more than a personal hardship, but fit into the legal category of an exceptional circumstance.

Interestingly, Lowry agreed that many of the people there did not have a better place to go.¹⁰ But rather than speak of lack of housing or homelessness as the underlying problem, he instead chose to describe the Defendants as suffering from “poverty” and described this as “a personal circumstance.” Once so typified, it was open to the judge to rule that personal circumstances were not exceptional circumstances as understood in the legal sense. Lowry, J. made reference to a case in which the Okanagan Indian Band had been engaged in illegal logging, and opposed the application for an injunction unsuccessfully in part on the basis that they needed the wood to build housing and to alleviate poverty within the Nation. Lowry, J. gave as an example of an exceptional circumstance the situation wherein “there was a right that pre-existed the enactment contravened.”¹¹ But the squatters did not fall into the category of such an exceptional circumstance.

Charter rights, one would think, would pre-exist and take supremacy over a bylaw related to sidewalks. If there was recognition of the basic necessity of some kind of housing, this could have been considered as an exceptional circumstance. Poverty encompasses more than an immediate need for some sort of shelter. If there was no issue that shelter was a basic right then surely it could have been seen as an exceptional circumstance in the case. Rather the idea that housing is a basic right was not allowed to come into play in the decision making. This is strengthened by the fact

that in one sentence, Lowry, J. simply denies that anyone's security of the person was threatened.¹²

Once the Section 7 argument failed, other Charter rights had little chance of success. Lowry did not discuss the argument on freedom of association. The Defendants argued that by grouping together, the squatters were protecting themselves and helping each other provide food and shelter, and some of the squatters wrote affidavits saying that they feared physical attack or robbery when sleeping out on their own. But generally the courts only accept freedom of association as the right to join together to do an otherwise legal act, and that merely because an activity is being done in a group does not make it thereby legal.

The argument for equality rights was not successful. The core of the idea was that a bylaw prohibiting people from keeping objects on the sidewalk had a much worse effect on homeless people than people who had places other than the sidewalk to sleep. The impact of the law thereby contributed to the marginal situation of the homeless. This required showing first that the provisions of the Charter providing for freedom from discrimination could be read to afford protection to include homeless persons. Counsel pointed out that City of Vancouver statistics on homelessness showed high percentages of aboriginal persons, persons suffering from drug or alcohol addictions and the mentally ill. Each of these categories had been recognized as grounds of discrimination either under the Charter or under provincial and federal human rights legislation.¹³ Counsel further argued that removing the people from the Squat and forcing them back onto the street would further reinforce their disadvantaged position. The City, in seeking the injunction, showed no concern for the needs or circumstances of the people at the Squat, or in helping homeless people generally. This interesting argument was given little consideration, and Lowry, J. stated only that "there is no basis on which it can be said that the City is enforcing this, or any of its by-laws, in a manner that is discriminatory."¹⁴

Likewise with freedom of expression. The Defendants and the intervenor British Columbia Civil Liberties Association argued that the Squat was a form of protest, and

that the tents, tarps, belongings and kitchen were a form of expression which called out to the squatters' plight. The case law establishes that there is a right to use public property to express what you have to say.¹⁵ Lowry, J.'s response was that individuals are only entitled to exercise their freedom of expression in public places if the form of the expression is compatible with the principal function or the intended purpose of the place. Lowry, J. found that obstructing the city's sidewalks in breach of its by-law is clearly not a form of expression that is compatible with the use of the sidewalks. But its not clear this finding is necessary: the squatters were capable and willing to make room for people to pass so as to allow persons to walk on the sidewalk, and someone sympathetic to the plight of the homeless might also think that the sidewalks could serve the purpose of providing sleeping space and not mere transit.

Arguably, even if these underlying rights were accepted, the case also involved an element of civil disobedience. The squatters were breaking the law to make a point. A lawyer can sometimes use the Charter to strike down laws that violate Charter protected rights, but the courts are not thereby sympathetic to people breaking the law as such. Lowry, J. made it clear that concerns for upholding the law and avoiding disorder were paramount and the reasons for judgement are riddled with the language of Victorian worry—"The occupancy of the sidewalks gives rise to concerns about public safety and sanitation;" "the sidewalk area around the building [was] not available to be used by the public unimpeded;" "people are being attracted to join those occupying the sidewalks so that the numbers of those living around the building are increasing;" and "garbage such as old furniture and furnaces that ought to be taken to disposal sites is now being dumped on the sidewalks." While "those occupying the sidewalks have continued in their unlawful conduct" the City applies to enforce its bylaws "in the discharge of its responsibilities to maintain the streets of the city clean, safe and unobstructed, to be used by the public as intended." Even if Lowry, J. had found there to be the various rights, there was room for him to say that in the present case enforcement of the bylaw was justified. The lawyers for the squatters asked that the injunction be delayed to give the squatters more time to find

alternatives. However, the Squat had already been going for a number of weeks prior to the injunction application and the City and Judge Lowry were concerned with seeing it continue. In the heat of deciding whether to send the police in to break up the Squat this comes off as unsympathetic. However, a properly working legal guarantee of housing would hopefully provide people with decent housing, not simply make squats legal.

WHY THE CHARTER WOULDN'T HELP

The fact is the Woodwards Squat was by no means the first or final attempt by lawyers to try to have judges interpret the Charter to provide for basic social and economic rights. As things turned out, the Supreme Court of Canada released decisions in the case of *Gosselin v. Quebec (Attorney General)* shortly after Lowry, J.'s ruling.¹⁶ The Court was asked specifically to recognize that Section 7 of the Charter included the right to basic necessities and the majority decision side-stepped the issue. In the mid-1980s the Québec government had created a new welfare scheme whereby people under thirty received lower welfare rates than people over thirty. The over-thirty rate was \$466 per month and the under-thirty amount \$170 per month. Those under thirty could, in order to receive higher amounts, participate in a type of workfare. Gosselin had trouble staying in the workfare programs and contested the scheme in part on the basis of violating her Section 7 rights. She joined 75,000 other persons in a class proceeding. Despite Madam Justice L'Arbour's impassioned argument in support of Gosselin's position, the majority of the judges sided with Chief Justice McLachlin's traditional liberal formulation: whether or not Section 7 encompasses economic rights, the case turned on whether Section 7 gave a positive obligation on the state to ensure each individual's enjoyment of those rights. Section 7 speaks of the right not to be deprived of life, liberty and security of the person, and so this indicates the section concerns state deprivation of these rights and such a deprivation did not exist in Gosselin's case.

Those persons who want to read the subtleties of Charter interpretation can read the Gosselin decision. I want instead to give some background and context to why the courts are not leaning towards making Section 7 encompass rights to basic necessities. Part of the difficulty stems from the fact that the Charter does not on its face reflect all of the internationally accepted human rights, that is, it looks an awful lot like those international human rights documents that relate to civil and political rights, and not much like those that protect social and economic rights. Likewise, international law reflects differing opinions on what rights are, and which ones we have.

The view of rights that developed out of liberal philosophers and revolutions of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century—as exemplified in the French Revolution, the American Bill of Rights and the constitutions of the independent Latin American countries—focused on the ways that an individual would be protected from the state and free to engage in the activities of his or her choosing. Rights were conceived as negative liberties and provided bare protections from the state that one needed to have one’s liberty protected. The prime liberties were then freedom of expression, freedom of religion and rights to due process (such as to have a lawyer and to not be jailed without cause) and equality under the law. This was a series of rights that became entrenched as part of Western societies concurrently with the rise of industrialization and free market economies.

Concurrent with the growth of capital in the nineteenth century was an opposition that sought to deepen and expand the concepts of rights. Trade unions successfully lobbied for the recognition of the right to freedom of association, and to form and organize unions. Socialist and communist parties claimed that the most basic of rights were for economic necessities, such as the right to housing, and food. By the time the various international human rights documents were formed in the years immediately after the Second World War, contested notions of rights had crystallized into ideological conflict between opposing states. The Declaration was written after the Second World War (in 1948) and with Western industrialized

democracies squeezed from the East by newly Communist countries, from the South by new post-colonial states. So Article 25 states that you also have the right to food, clothing, medical care and necessary social services.

It's arguable that the trade-off for having states representing such different social orders all agreeing to the various human rights documents was that the documents provided no serious binding mechanisms for enforcement. The European Convention on Human Rights, for instance, provides that the European Court can order member states to pay monetary compensation to wronged individuals or change their internal laws. But the Covenants and Declarations Canada has signed that speak of a right to housing do not have such mechanisms, and the particular provisions that speak to housing do not impose these as obligations that states must accord to each individual. There is no technical impediment to Canadian provinces or the federal government writing laws that would ensure that everyone had the right to housing: rather, social and political antagonism to the welfare state has diminished reverence for the rights Canada has repeatedly recognized.¹⁷

The other part of the problem is that for the most part Canada has remained on the "free world" side of the ideological debates of the early- and mid-twentieth century. Liberal values reign and they do not consider things like housing a right. Throughout the twentieth century Canada's legal and social systems have operated on the assumption of a predominantly liberal conception of rights as a constraint on the individual's pursuit of his own ends in a market economy. The Charter encompasses for the most part civil and political rights such as rights relating to due process under the law, safeguards of criminal procedure and formal equality under law. The conception of social and economic rights—rights to basic living standards and necessities such as food and shelter—go to a very different conception of society wherein the state embodies collective efforts to ensure basic standards of well-being, and each has a right to live according to those standards. The purpose of rights in one approach is to protect the individual from the state, whereas in the latter the state takes an active role in forming the economy to ensure the realisation of individuals'

material needs.¹⁸

The courts reflect this. Technically there was no case law prohibiting Mr. Justice Lowry from finding Section 7 rights, but there were plenty of prior cases going against it. The courts have long said that Section 7 did not protect economic rights and on this basis the interpretation of “security of the person” was rejected as giving raise to rights to housing in a number of cases involving tenants in state housing projects.¹⁹ There are no cases where the right to housing or indeed any social and economic rights have been read into Section 7. There exists also the widely held position that Section 7 came in the section dealing with civil rights concerning criminal and penal proceedings and so dealt with safeguards against state action, not the protection of economic rights.²⁰ As such, the purpose of Section 7 would be to guard against deprivations of life, liberty and security of the person occurring as a result of an individual’s dealings with the justice system.²¹ It was on just such precedents that the majority opinion in Gosselin drew in denying that Section 7 came into play.

The case does not close the door on any recognition of social and economic rights under the Charter but at the same time reinforces the traditional perspective of rights as a safeguard of the individual against government infringement. What makes Justice McLachlin’s ruling so true to liberal form is the absence of an analysis of the interconnected nature of social organizations and the state apparatus. Ms. Gosselin’s “personal difficulties” were something independent of, and not caused by, the Canadian state. This is a picture that excludes the idea of constitutional rights as playing a role in society’s ensuring its members have basic necessities. Likewise, Lowry, J. did not find that enforcing the bylaw provisions involved an incursion into the rights of the squatters, while describing their homelessness—a situation created by government cutbacks to social programs, a lack of affordable housing in the city and a temporary shortage of shelter beds relative to shelter seekers—as the personal circumstances of being in poverty.

WHAT STRATEGY THEN?

The courts are only one piece in the puzzle. The need to invoke the Charter in the first place came from an absence of alternative remedies. If basic laws were in place guaranteeing housing or welfare there would be no need to invoke the Charter. These cases stem from activists looking to the courts to step in where our elected officials have not. But there is a longstanding debate as to whether judge-made law providing a right to housing would give housing advocates and the homeless just what they want. The judiciary is ill-equipped to design and implement these guarantees. Reading in the right to housing would be done on a piecemeal basis and independent of a framework for its enforcement. Even if a right is recognized, there needs to be addressed the further problem of access to justice for marginalized persons. Judges can try to become more sympathetic but it does not mean they can thereby transform a justice system. We need to keep in mind these factors before too quickly condemning judges for not reading in social and economic rights into the Charter on the basis of stopping a court injunction against squatters.

In fact these issues are not new at all. In the early 1990s there was widespread discussion of a new Canadian constitution, which paralleled growing scepticism that Section 15 of the Charter, ostensibly creating equality rights, could be used to further the causes of economic equality. The response of many people and organizations was to press for a new Social Charter as an addition to the Constitution. This was the approach of the National Anti-Poverty Organization in 1991 and 1992 during a widespread national discussion of constitutional reform. The organization's Draft Social Charter had explicit provisions for the right to housing and other basic necessities, as well as provisions for special tribunals that would be accessible to those in need.²² At that time there may have been greater optimism concerning changing the Constitution than there is now. Under the current rules, as provided for in the Constitution Act of 1982, this requires resolutions of the Senate, House of Commons and the legislative assemblies of at least two-thirds of the provinces that have a total of at least fifty percent of the population of all the provinces. The amending formula

has proven difficult and attempts to change the constitution or even the amending formula itself, as seen in the failed attempts of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, bodes ill for as radical a change as a Social Charter. Conversely, a Social Charter could be adopted at the level of a provincial government, and that faces the fewest obstacles of any of the proposals yet canvassed here. But that would require the appropriate political will and as we have seen that is so far lacking, even from British Columbia's New Democratic Party governments.

This all suggests that legal action is limited, and indeed the legal action around the Woodwards Squat was not successful in stopping the injunction or in establishing precedent in law. But like many court cases it served as a further venue of publicity and so constituted one step towards building the political momentum towards the social recognition of social and economic rights.

The author would like to thank the various counsel on the case with whom he worked, being Patrick H. Dickie, David Mossop Q.C., John Richardson, Cameron A. Ward, the PIVOT Legal Society for organizing the legal team and the firm of Vertlieb Anderson MacKay for providing the time and facilities for this piece to be written.

NOTES

¹ The reasons for judgment of Mr. Justice Lowry are *Vancouver (City) v. Maurice et. al.*, 2002 BCSC 1421. Reasons for judgment from Canadian courts released in the last three years are generally available without charge by internet at <<http://www.canlii.org>>.

² Klein, Seth, and Long, Andrea. *A Bad Time to Be Poor: An Analysis of British Columbia's New Welfare Policies*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Social Planning and Research Council of BC 2003.

³ *National Corn Growers Assn. v. Canada (Import Tribunal)*, [1990] 2 S.C.R. 1324, paragraph 74.

⁴ *Slaight Communications Inc. v. Davidson*, [1989] 1 S.C.R. 1038, paragraph 23.

⁵ *R. v. Ewanchuk*, [1999] 1 S.C.R. 330, per Justice l'Huereux-Dubé at paragraph 73.

⁶ *Irwin Toy Ltd. v. Que. (A.G.)*, [1989] 1 S.C.R. 927.

⁷ *Vancouver (City) v. Vancouver Municipal and Regional Employees' Union* (1994), 118 D.L.R. (4th) 417 (B.C.S.C.) paragraph 18 and *BCGEU v. British Columbia (A.G.)* (1988), 31 B.C.L.R. (2d) 273 (S.C.).

8 Vancouver (City) v. Maurice et. al at paragraph 32 and 33.

9 City of Toronto v. Polai (1969), 8 D.L.R. (3d) 689 (Ont. C.A.), aff'd (1972) 28 D.L.R. (3d) 638 (S.C.C.); Maple Ridge (District) v. Thornhill Aggregates Ltd. (1998), 47 M.P.L.R. (2d) 249 (B.C.C.A.) and British Columbia (Minister of Forests) v. Okanagan Indian Band (1999), 37 C.P.C. (4th) 224 (S.C.), aff'd 187 D.L.R. (4th) 664 (B.C.C.A.).

10 at paragraph 18.

11 at paragraph 20.

12 at paragraph 31.

13 Toronto Dominion Bank v. Canadian Human Rights Commission (1998), 163 D.L.R.. (4th) 193 (F.C.A.), at paragraph 15, 16, Entrop v. Imperial Oil Ltd., [2000] O.J. 2689 (Ont. C.A.) 50 O.R. (3d) 18 at para. 89.

14 Vancouver (City) v. Maurice et. al. paragraph 31.

15 Committee for the Commonwealth of Canada v. Canada (1991), 77 D.L.R. (4th) at 385 (S.C.C.) as discussed by P.W. Hogg in his text *Constitutional Law of Canada*, vol. 2 (Toronto: Carswell, 2000 update); R. v. Guignard, 2002 SCC 14; United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 1518 (U.F.C.W.) v. Kmart Canada Ltd., [1999] 2 S.C.R. 1083.

16 Gosselin v. Quebec (Attorney General) 2002 SCC 84.

17 See, for example, the *Comment by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights* "The Nature of States parties obligations" (Art. 2, par.1) : 14/12/90. CESCR General comment 3. (General Comments) Fifth session, 1990 on justiciable legislation at the domestic level. Descriptions of various laws protecting rights to basic standards in different states and countries are discussed in Ewing, Keith. "Just Words and Social Justice" *Review of Constitutional Studies*, Vol. 5, No.1. 1999, p.53

18 The effects of a liberal conception of rights and its antagonism to social justice oriented interpretations of the Charter, especially s. 15 dealing with equality rights, is well documented in Bakan, Joel. *Just Words: Constitutional Rights and Social Wrongs*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

19 Bernard v. Dartmouth Housing Authority 4 January 1988, Halifax 60129 (S.S.C.) affirmed in Re Bernard and Dartmouth Housing Authority (1989) 53 D.L.R. (4th) 81 (N.S.C.A.); Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corp. v. Butler [1994] N.J. No. 407 (C.A.)

20 Lamer, J. in Reference re SS.. 193 and 195.1(1) (c) of the Criminal Code (Man.), [1990] 1 S.C.R. 1123, and Hogg, P.W. *Constitutional law of Canada* (loose-leafed.) vol2. at p. 44-12.1.

21 New Brunswick (Minister of Health and Community Services) v. G. J. [1999] 3 S.C.R. 46 at paragraph 65; Blencoe v. British Columbia (Human Rights Commission), [2000] 2 S.C.R. 307

22 Brodsky, Gwen. "Social Charter Issues after Beaudoin-Dobbie". Edmonton : Centre for Constitutional Studies, University of Alberta. 1992.



The Vancouver Sun printed 40,000 copies of its early edition on 20 September before pulling the run from its presses. The cover photograph in the first version (left) was replaced by a digital "illustration" in the second version (right) that removed the protesters and banners.

SHALLOW STORIES TO ILL-INFORMED PUBLIC:
COMPASSION FATIGUE AS A SIDE EFFECT IN MEDIA REPRESENTATION
OF HOMELESSNESS IN WOODWARDS SQUAT COVERAGE

Diana Leung

While the public's knowledge of social problems is not solely based on the media, it can be argued that it is a major influence on how these issues are perceived. In the November-December 2001 issue of *Adbusters*, Bill McKibben states, "We are the first few generations to receive most of our sense of the world mediated rather than direct. To have it arrive through one screen or another instead of from contact with other human beings or with nature." The public tends to trust the news media to provide and inform them with a fair, unbiased and comprehensive interpretation of current events rather than to trust their own personal experiences (Kinnick et al 686). In discussion that developed in focus groups conducted in spring 2003, student participants agreed that homelessness was a critical issue; yet they had little knowledge about it (QL 3).¹ When asked what came to mind with the word "homelessness" many of the student participants offered a location—Vancouver's Downtown Eastside—rather than a subjective affect or depth-analysis response (QL 23 & 31). This shows a lack of connectedness to this issue even though the location surrounding the Woodward's building is known as the poorest district in Canada. The way in which the issue of homelessness was talked about in the student focus groups illustrated a sense of distant concern and numbness to this issue. It was externalised and the students expected the government to provide a solution. This is reflected in the content analysis of news pieces as governmental actors are the second most coded actor-value in the quantitative analysis. If there is so little known about the issue of homelessness then how are these negative opinions formed?

One possible answer is compassion fatigue. In general the concept of compassion fatigue is applied to world-scale issues such as famines and war. The concept, according to Kinnick et al, include four factors: under-representation of context, heavy

focus on sensational aspects of the story, lack of solutions presented and dominance of “bad news.” For this analysis of media representation of homelessness, the concept of compassion fatigue will be reapplied and tailored to analyse this local news coverage of Vancouver’s homelessness issue. Evidence from the qualitative and quantitative analyses will be used to support the applicability of two of these factors.

With content analysis of the news coverage on the Woodward’s Squat, the researchers dissected news and op-ed articles from both independent and mainstream news publications. The data collected indicated that, of the 49 sample articles analysed, only 29 articles mentioned the topic of homelessness. In the 49 sample articles on the Squat almost one-half failed to discuss social housing at all. This is surprising since the inspiration for the opening of the Squat was to increase the availability of social housing and ultimately alleviate the problem of homelessness.

Naturally, readers should expect the articles regarding homelessness to quote the people who are most affected by it—the homeless. However, homeless people were quoted only twice out of 18 opportunities as the first source. The two articles that quoted homeless people as the first source to appear in each article were from independent media publications, where they were portrayed as victims and instruments to add personalization to homelessness. Likewise, the quantitative data showed that there is an over-representation of governmental actors in comparison to homeless actors, as did a NewsWatch Canada study by Robert Hackett and Richard Gruneau on *The Vancouver Sun* coverage of poverty in 1988 and 1997. Such coverage is becoming “...somewhat less sympathetic in tone, less in-depth in treatment, with decreasing access for advocacy groups representing the poor, and more access for business and government sources” (201). The quantitative data revealed that there were more occurrences of governmental actors quoted as the first source than the homeless. This shows that there is little value given to information provided by the “experts” on homelessness—especially with mainstream media.

Ultimately, the issue of homelessness was taken out of the context of the primary stakeholders—the homeless—and reframed. R. M. Entman describes framing as a

way of bringing certain elements of reality to light while excluding others in a story about social issues (Bullock et al). This removes the immediacy and intimacy between the homeless and the readers. This distance becomes a barrier against the reader's development of affect and compassion for the homeless.

Sensationalism provides an opportunity for the readers to "write off" social problems as a manifestation of the media. In the NewsWatch Canada analysis of *The Vancouver Sun* coverage of poverty, researchers examined whether people living in poverty were framed as "threats" or "victims." In our quantitative analysis of media coverage of the Woodward's Squat the homeless were coded as "victim", "hero", "villain" (similar to "threat" in the NewsWatch study), "survivor", "information provider" or other. Even with the expanded variety of coding options, the homeless were still consistently coded 12 out of 13 times as either villain or victim. The role of "hero" was mostly embodied by protestors at 27.3%.

One may conclude that the label "homeless" in news articles is only associated with stereotypical roles implying a burden to society or individuals in need of help. In contrast, the label "protestor" is associated with initiative and more action-oriented roles. These observations are a perfect example of the media's method of attracting an audience through "conflict, violence and crises over chronic but perhaps more profound problems and for social problems which are visually dramatic and consequential for a large number of people" (Kinnick et al: 692).

To emphasize the news focus on aggressive elements ("protesters") rather than passive ("homeless" as perceived by the media), out of the 29 sample articles that explicitly mentioned the issue of homelessness, there were still five articles (17.2%) that discussed social activism as opposed to directly-related homelessness topics. The topics deemed as homelessness-related are social determinants of poverty, social assistance, physical and mental health, social housing, substance abuse and the economy.

The media tends to sensationalize the homeless in a dehumanizing way as Participant B from the third focus group recalled an interview he had with a reporter:

“one of the papers spent a ton of time talking to me seriously. And then, in the end, one [of the reporters] takes a picture of my hands and feet to portray me as a helpless kind of a person rather than giving strength to my statements” (QL 62). Looking specifically at news articles as opposed to opinion-editorials and letters to the editor—they may not necessarily be presenting a story—the researchers found that almost 90% of the sampled news articles did not contain humanizing descriptions of the homeless. Humanizing, for the purpose of this study, is the effect of portraying characters, specifically the homeless, as regular people. This illustrated the press’ inclination to present sensationalistic perspectives rather than the problems themselves.

The last two factors of compassion fatigue, the lack of presentation of solutions in news articles and the dominance of “bad news,” need to be explicitly addressed in future content analysis designs. These factors are important to consider since the constant presentation of hopeless social-problem stories will eventually create a feeling of powerlessness amongst the audience. Kinnick explains that “this pervasiveness may lead to a normalization of social problems ... [and] will lead to a risk of reader burn out and desensitization” (689-691). For the third factor of compassion fatigue, the presentation of solutions, a preliminary conclusion can be drawn from the Quantitative Report with the variable of future plans where only 36.7% of the sampled articles made reference to possible or intended solutions. It would be interesting to see whether the mention of these plans was consistent with other articles as well as whether or not they described solutions that involved public participation.

Critics may argue that conclusions of media portrayal of the homeless based on this Quantitative Report are unfounded since the researchers had difficulty differentiating the sample articles’ use of the terms “homeless,” “squatter” and “protester.” However, this is a precise example of article contributors’ carelessness in presenting this issue. Poverty and homelessness are complex social phenomena and reporters dispatched to cover the Squat may not hold very deep understanding of the underlying issues that have created homelessness. In the focus group held with Squat activists,

one participant shared an incident where a reporter from CityTV who thought, “ ‘if I spend the night at Woodwards I can get a sense of what it’s like’ and his portrayal of us, you know, in the end was just a bunch of ... he seemed to think that we should have been doing stuff twenty-four hours a day” (QL 65-66). Certainly the multiple causes of the media’s representation of homelessness require more exploration. How does journalistic politics and protest strategy play into this coverage?

Another weakness in this study is the lack of public opinion surveys to conclude how the representation of the Squat in news media has affected public perception. This paper has drawn opinions from the student focus groups as a rough gauge of public opinion. While nine students lend hardly any validity in representing public perception of homelessness, the assumption that post-secondary students are one of the most socially aware demographic paired with their general apathy and detachment toward homelessness as a social problem leads one to believe that results from public opinion surveys could only affirm greater compassion fatigue amongst the general population. It should also be noted that news of the Squat was published extensively in the Simon Fraser University student paper *The Peak* and that many students of this university were directly involved in co-ordination and support of the Squat. However, it is unlikely that any of the student participants of the focus groups had connections with the student activists or *The Peak*.

Another area to explore, if research on content analysis of the media representation the Squat is to expand, ought to be thematic and episodic framing as described by Bullock et al in their article “Media Images of the Poor.” Thematic framing occurs when new media coverage represents poverty in an abstract manner such as through statistics. Episodic framing refers to the method of storytelling through personal experiences of people living in poverty. From informal analysis, the sampled articles tend to be thematic in nature, as several of the activist focus group participants asserted. The low ratio of episodic pieces compared to thematic contributes to the perplexity of homelessness for readers.

To fully investigate the validity of the four factors of compassion fatigue additional research in content analysis and public opinion surveying needs to be conducted. This paper initiates an investigation of how the theory of compassion fatigue applies to the transmission of the portrayal of homelessness. The theory may be used to dissect the media's superficial portrayal of social issues and reveal the myth of "in-depth" coverage it claims and is believed to provide. The implications of this transmission from portrayal to reception are ominous. We are led into the problem of how readers respond to the issue as political actors. An exploration of how these stories are received by readers is required in order to fully understand the effects of news publications on the perception and understanding of social problems.

NOTE

¹ Three focus groups were conducted by Diana Leung, Elaine Lo, Stephanie Montano and Simmi Puri on 11, 18, and 20 February 2003 as well as content analysis of four publications as part of the course requirements for Communications 363 at Simon Fraser University. The first two groups consisted of Simon Fraser University students who were randomly selected on campus. The third focus group consisted of participants who were actively involved in the Squat either as supporters or protesters. Two reports were prepared subsequently: a *Qualitative Report* (QL), which included focus group analysis, transcripts, observer notes, technical instruments and bibliography; and a *Quantitative Report* (QN), which contained the revised research proposal, ethical guidelines and bias, coding protocol and technical appendix.

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Doris Louis

A GHETTO IS NO COMMUNITY: POLICING POVERTY IS NOTHING NEW IN THE DTES

David Cunningham

While the Carnegie Centre celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, those of us living in the Downtown Eastside have nothing to celebrate. At the anniversary on April 27th 2003 speakers talked about community, although few of them have lived and seen their friends die in a ghetto constructed by politicians and enforced by a violent police force. Our new COPE regime, who were elected on the backs of the poor, have done nothing but furthered our suffering, the suffering that they exploited for votes. As the health catastrophe worsens here, more money is put in to maintain the quarantine. With this constant assault, we in the DTES have come to see that we have been abandoned by those on the outside who promised us assistance. The programs that were funded to help us are only helping poverty pimps cash in. The job of the police and private security firms is to keep us corralled in our ghetto, to be herded through their courts and jails only to end up back in the same place we started—on the streets with no money, no housing, no chance. We have been forced to realize that we must defend one another. That we must fight for the rights and dignity that are ours. The struggle of the DTES must come from within the DTES. When one of our brothers or sisters pays the ultimate price in this class/drug war, their death is our death, their heart is our heart and that is the heart of our struggle. For our brothers and sisters.

THE OCCUPATION ESCALATES

When we, the citizens of the Downtown Eastside, were informed that fifty new pigs were to be reallocated into the DTES, we wasted no time discussing the effects their brutality would have on the statistics. We are the blood and bones of those statistics and enough of our bones have been broken and our blood lost, to know: unless we fought more suffering would come. On April 5th 2003, the Saturday before the pigs

escalated their occupation of our ghetto, we took to the streets. Under the banner of VANDU (Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users) 150 of us snaked through the streets—marching to a proposed safe injection site we demanded that it be opened immediately, then marching to a community pig station we declared “no new police.” As we held up traffic and took over intersections our brothers and sisters on the sidewalk saw that we do have the power to stand together. The next Monday, April 7th, the 50 new cops rode in on their horses. Many of them had been reallocated from community policing centers all over the city which have lost their funding from the provincial government. Cops that are used to accommodating suburban disturbances have now been shipped into our ghetto with a vengeance. Other cops are from domestic dispute squads that were also cut by the BC Liberals, so instead of responding to women in terror they are terrorizing the people who are forced to live out on the streets.

SAFE SITES, FOR US BY US

On this same day of invasion our own safe site was opened by a handful of DTES residents and supporters. For all this time the safe site has been able to provide health supplies that are not otherwise being acquired due to constant surveillance, intimidation and illegal jack ups by the police. People have been able, in our sanctuary from the police, to shoot up safely with nurses and peers present as opposed to shooting alone in a hotel room or in a back alley. As well the safe site sends out witnessing shifts to patrol the pigs. Taking down badge numbers and video taping their abuses lets the cops know that they are being watched and will be held accountable at least in their legal system.

OUR STRUGGLE ESCALATES

On April 8th, a day after the added police presence, we rented a school bus and took a field trip to city hall. We did not wait to find out the consequences before taking action for we knew if we didn't nobody else would. The city council was to decide if

they should shell out more money to the police to keep their occupation funded for an extra six months after the first three months. Representing our brothers and sisters was the Housing Action Committee, an organization of residents, squatters, homeless persons, and people living in shelters. We came to make our message loud and clear and loud it was. For almost half an hour, fifty of us held council captive to our rage. We let them know we would fight tooth and nail against them and their police. We educated them on statistics that had been collected by drug users, proving the absurdity of policing drug use. Of 260 people asked about encounters with the cops, in this survey, 65% said after getting their drugs confiscated they immediately got more dope. Some reported they were forced to steal for more money and some said they had to turn to the sex trade, the most dangerous profession in the world. We left city hall chanting SAFE SITE NOW! leaving everyone present knowing that the struggle that has been brewing for a long time was surfacing to new levels. During all the publicity we and the police were getting, the real communication was happening between organizations working in the DTES. The Coalition for Harm Reduction was established linking anti-poverty groups together with lawyers and doctors, all united together against the police and for a safe site. The coalition immediately began creating a base of support for the safe site and our overall struggle. At the same time as meetings were being held in the offices of our supporters, disruptive actions were being conducted in the offices and meetings of our enemies.

NO HOPE FOR COPE

The “people’s” mayor, Larry Campbell, who has made it obvious he no longer needs poor people, had the gall to hold a meeting on the four pillars. The four pillars—prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement—are the foundations for a “plan of action” crafted by the former mayor and some suits who know nothing of the reality we face day to day. We believed it was impossible to discuss the other three pillars while it was only the one pillar—enforcement—that was being supported and used as a baton to beat the poor. Angry residents, the only representatives from the

DTES, were not even invited and were dragged out when it was their turn to address the room full of ignorant COPE supporters. One man was dragged out by the police chief and two other pigs, who retched his arm behind his back, while he yelled that by policing the needle exchange distribution rates have fallen at times below 50%. Our comrades in attendance screamed the same thing and were also made to leave. We stood outside the hall when people were exiting the meeting and spare changed them for money for a safe site since we weren't getting anything from COPE who refuse to put any money into actually helping poor people. On his way out we asked Larry Campbell if he wanted to have a real discussion with us, his response was his turned back and his middle finger.

But we knew we would see him real soon: that same night. While our soup lines were being broken up by cops on horses, COPE was having a \$150 a plate dinner to celebrate all their achievements. Over 30 of our brothers and sisters showed up to crash their party. We set up a poor people's picket line to expose the hypocrisy of those crossing us. COPE has done nothing but systematically lie to us. They promised the Woodward's squatters social housing, they bought the building and are offering the same offer as before: 100 units for poor people and three times as many units for yuppies. They assured residents of our ghetto that they were against the Olympic bid that would force many of us into homelessness. But then they supported an uneven vote that allowed their financial supporters to spend millions of dollars on a propaganda campaign to convince the middle class that money is better spent on highways than social services that would save peoples lives. Then there is their most acclaimed promise: a safe injection site. Claiming council's hands were tied and blaming government bureaucracy, COPE has done nothing but set dates for the opening of the site. These dates have come and gone while our brothers and sisters overdose in alleys and washrooms. When COPE is exposed for the liars they are they will have to save face. To ensure their progressive persona they will give into our demands and hand out some money to show the media just how much they care. In their attempts to suppress our dissent we can hold them up for funding for social

housing and money into different programs.

HEALTH CANADA MAKES US SICK

We know COPE are liars and their supporters have no intention to push for a safe site. That is why we went public with our safe site. We had to open it for ourselves by ourselves. All levels of government have deliberately reneged on their responsibilities. On April 15th HAC members stormed the Health Canada office demanding to speak to Health Minister Anne McLellan. We were told it would take two weeks for a response but after explaining to staff that the only political power poor people have is disruption and we would close down their offices, those two weeks quickly became five minutes. The response as was expected. It was symbolic but we did prove that because poor people cannot afford the time or resources to go through bureaucratic channels direct action and the threat of economic disruption is the only way our voice is heard by the powers that be.

One thing is for sure, they're listening now. On Tuesday, April 29th, the safe site that has been operating for three weeks driven by users and supporters opened "publicly." HAC marched down Hastings to the site and opened it for a press conference where swarms of media reported statements made by representatives of the Coalition for Harm Reduction. Spokespersons from the space explained why it is necessary that professionals and volunteers come down from other neighborhoods to work in solidarity with our battle. Anti-poverty activists articulated why civil disobedience was the only way services could be provided and how this action was applying pressure to the reneging politicians to save face and do what they said they would do. Overall the diversity of the coalition was shown in unity with poor drug users beginning and closing the press conference.

STILL NO JUSTICE?

Now that a movement of poor people has resurfaced and come together to defend one another and fight back we must look at how other movements that originated in the

DTES lost momentum. Since so far we have achieved small victories and are maintaining momentum others now who were here before and are now nowhere to be seen will try to jump on the bandwagon. There is a lot of money to be made from our poverty. That is why our ghetto is built as a fortress to keep us in (services like detox and “safe shelters” built within the quarantine walls ensure that when we get out of treatment we repeat the cycle, again.) COPE has shown that by pretending to side with the poor, agencies of control can achieve more power, more votes, more funding contracts. For poverty pimps and charities there are millions of dollars to be made and very little has to actually reach those in need. For most non-government organizations siding with poor people on one isolated campaign increases their respectability. When it looks like we might win, activists and politicians take over so that what was to be our victory becomes their success.

ONLY TOGETHER CAN WE FIGHT

Most recently we saw this buy off and sell out go down at the Woodward's Squat where poverty pimps sold us out before a true accomplishment could be made. If it is to be us who fight tooth and nail—like did our brothers and sisters who stood their grounds heroically at the squat—then it must be us who determine where and how our struggle will go. When we join groups or sit in on meetings we must be sure to lead these groups through discussions and planning, and most importantly to be representing our brothers' and sisters' will. We are not fighting for votes. We are not fighting for power over institutions that do not serve us. We are fighting for our lives. For real power over our lives. Too many have fallen in this class war for us to lose our struggle or to lose our hope. We must intensify our actions so that their disruptive consequences inflict real damage to our oppressors. Only then will they enter into real negotiations with us in a serious way. Only then can we establish ourselves in the larger movement for justice and dignity. Only then can we fight to win!

TWELVE DAYS OF SQUATTING

Jewel C

On the first day of squatting my squatters gave to me: Woodward's long history.

On the second day of squatting my squatters gave to me: 2 different socks and Woodward's long history.

On the third day of squatting my squatters gave to me: 3 bowls of soup, 2 different socks and Woodward's long history.

On the fourth day of squatting my squatters gave to me: 4 more new squatters, 3 bowls of soup, 2 different socks and Woodward's long history.

On the fifth day of squatting my squatters gave to me: 5 donated things, 4 more new squatters, 3 bowls of soup, 2 different socks and Woodward's long history.

On the sixth day of squatting my squatters gave to me: 6 joints a-smokin, 5 donated things, 4 more new squatters, 3 bowls of soup, 2 different socks and Woodward's long history.

On the seventh day of squatting my squatters gave to me: 7 days a-raining, 6 joints a-smokin, 5 donated things, 4 more new squatters, 3 bowls of soup, 2 different socks and Woodward's long history.

On the eighth day of squatting my squatters gave to me: 8 plastic tarps, 7 days a-raining, 6 joints a-smokin, 5 donated things, 4 more new squatters, 3 bowls of soup, 2 different socks and Woodward's long history.

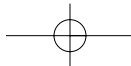
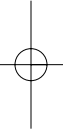


On the ninth day of squatting my squatters gave to me: 9 wooly blankets, 8 plastic tarps, 7 days a-raining, 6 joints a-smokin, 5 donated things, 4 more new squatters, 3 bowls of soup, 2 different socks and Woodward's long history.

On the tenth day of squatting my squatters gave to me: 10 rules for squatting, 9 wooly blankets, 8 plastic tarps, 7 days a-raining, 6 joints a-smokin, 5 donated things, 4 more new squatters, 3 bowls of soup, 2 different socks and Woodward's long history.

On the eleventh day of squatting my squatters gave to me: 11 loaves of bread, 10 rules for squatting, 9 wooly blankets, 8 plastic tarps, 7 days a-raining, 6 joints a-smokin, 5 donated things, 4 more new squatters, 3 bowls of soup, 2 different socks and Woodward's long history.

On the twelfth day of squatting my squatters gave to me: a list of 12 demands, 11 loaves of bread, 10 rules for squatting, 9 wooly blankets, 8 plastic tarps, 7 days a-raining, 6 joints a-smokin, 5 donated things, 4 more new squatters, 3 bowls of soup, 2 different socks and Woodward's long history.



NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

A Native Man is a Tsimshian from Metlakatla & DTES resident since 1968; he popped Woodwards on 14 September 2002 with **Shawn Millar**, a community housing/harm reduction activist since 1996, & **Jim Leyden** (W54), an organizer for the Woodwards Social Housing Coalition. **Ángel** (W54) was born in the Balmoral Hotel in 1976; she worked at the Harrison Hot Springs Resort for five years. The **Anti-Poverty Committee** (APC; 604.682.2726; <http://apc.resist.ca>) formed in February 2002 to defeat the Campbell government through direct action, mass mobilization & casework. **Roy Gladiator Archie** was born & bred in East Vancouver; he served in the Canadian Armed Forces & remains a soldier for the people. **Azad** is a concerned human & active member of World Seed & Freedom Fighters International. **Craig Ballantyne** (W54) was a member of APC & wrote on DTES politics for *The Long Haul* until he was evicted from the Stanley Hotel by the thugs and forced to leave the city. Vancouver journalist & graphic designer **Murray Bush** (flux 604.253.2510) was pepper sprayed at APEC (1997), tear gassed at the Seattle WTO (1999) & arrested at the Britannia Police Riot (2003). **Shannon Bundock** (W54) is an organizer with Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice (FTT; 604.322.1764; www.fire-this-time.org) which formed to build a movement of poor, working & oppressed people against war, occupation & the neo-liberal agenda. **Jewel C** detoxed at Woodsquat; she felt safer in her tent than she does in the hotel rooms she's stayed in since then. The **City of Vancouver** (COV) was incorporated atop unceded Coast Salish land (Squamish, Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh) in 1886. The **Coalition of Woodwards Squatters & Supporters** was factionalized & dissolved by the end of 31 October 2002. **David Cunningham** mobilizes with APC & the Housing Action Committee. **Taum Danberger** (W54) was a DTES resident 1969-1974 & from 1984 until his untimely death in 2003; his collected poems will appear from Thuja Books in 2005. **Shane Davis** volunteered with security, advocacy, repairs & maintenance at the squat. **Ivan Drury** (W54) is a writer & organizer with FTT, Youth-Third World Alliance & MAWO; he is a member of CAW Local 3000. **Chrystal Durocher** (W54) arrived in Vancouver on 18 April 2002 at midnight after a twelve-hour hitchhike from Prince George. **T. Forsythe** is a member of the **Squeegee Council** (604.682.3269 #7401). After the squat **Chris Forth** (W54) moved into the Dominion Hotel then fled to Nanaimo. **Friends of the Woodwards Squat** (FWS; www.woodsquat.net) was a material support group & published 54 issues of the *Woodsquat* newsletter. **Maxine Gadd** is the author of *Fire in the Cove*, *Boatload to Atlantis*, *Backup to Babylon*, *Styx*, *Lost Language*, *Westerns*, *Hochelaga*, *Guns of the West* & *Practical Knowledge*; her tent was among the first three, set up by women on the outside. **Bruce Gongola** is a director of the Mutual Aid Society & was the worst student of Buckminster Fuller at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. **Theresa D. Gray** is a Tsimshian living in Vancouver; her recent writing is published in the *Carnegie Newsletter* & *Surviving with Grace*. **Hazel Hoyle** is the author of *The Sand Between My Toes* (1st Books 2003). **Insurgent-S** belongs to IACST along with those who believe that capitalism & the state won't destroy themselves. Retired VPD Inspector **Dave Jones** developed much of the theory and practice of public order in Vancouver based on his research from the Québec Summit of the Americas in 2000 and the Kananaskis G8 meeting in 2002. **Mike Krebs** (W54) is a member of FTT & author of "From Oka to Bethlehem." **Debbie Krull** is a Cree-Métis from the third generation of the apprehended & a

single mother of two. **Ricky Lavallie** (W54) is from the Standing Buffalo Reservation near Fort Cappel Valley in Saskatchewan. **Kasper Learn** (W54) is an anarcho-punk & APC member. **Diana Leung** is an honours student at the Simon Fraser University School of Communication. **Chris Livingstone** is a spokesperson for the Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society (WAHRS; 604.683.8595; livingstonechris@yahoo.com). **Trevor M** is a cartoonist & APC member. The **Marginalized Workers' Action League** (MWAL; <http://users.resist.ca/~mwal>) is a group of unemployed, marginally employed & students formed in 1997. **Marwan** (W54) is a single father & activist for the defence of Palestinian human, national & indigenous rights. **Bev Meslo** is a co-rep to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women for BC. **Claude Maurice** has lived in Vancouver for 25 years. **Adam Murray** was BC's tenth-most wanted until he was nabbed outside Prime Time Chicken in Fall 2003. **Elvis Ace Nelson** was born in Grenada & grew up in Montréal; he's written & played music for 19 years. **Rev. Davin Ouimet** was elected to the **Woodwards Squat Negotiation Team** (WSNT) by squat residents at The Crosswalk on 10 December 2002. **Noah Quastel** is a lawyer practicing civil litigation & criminal law for Vertlieb Anderson MacKay in Vancouver. **Lacey Rainer** (W54; PGC '97) has lived in Vancouver for three years. When Justice Lowry cut off the right for defendants to speak in British Columbia Supreme Court on 7 November 2002, **Kathy May Lee Rattlesnake** yelled, "Who died and make you fuckin God? This is our land!" The judge was speechless. **Judy Rogers** represents the City of Vancouver on the Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympics & is amongst 100 of Canada's Most Powerful Women. **Dayl Scheltgen** was the only democratically-elected representative for both the Woodward's Squat Negotiation Team & ERT. Writer & printmaker **Kara Sievewright** is the author of *the bruises on my thigh are shaped like a map of italy* (Flagsandcrows Press 2001) & an APC organizer. **Skyy** (W54) will never forget Vancouver: the people will always be in her heart. **Tony Snakeskin** is a board member of WAHRS. **Jeff Sommers** completed his PhD dissertation *The Place of the Poor: Poverty, Space & the Politics of Representation in Vancouver, 1950-1997* at Simon Fraser University in 2001. Writer & photographer **Illara V. Sunburn** resided next door to it all & simply found it hard to not get involved & document the event as it was unfolding. **Toecutter** lived better in prison than he does on disability insurance at the Sunrise Hotel. **Lyn Tooley** (W54) lived for six years with the Solid Roofs & Autonomous Roots Housing Co-op until her landlord sold her house on 1 May 2002. The **Vancouver Independent Media Centre** (IMC) was the main newswire for squat updates, although their editors collaborated with authorities by removing from their website the call for a demonstration against the final eviction on 14 December 2002. The **Vancouver Police Department** (VPD) has been the subject of recent critical reports by the PIVOT Legal Society (www.pivotlegal.org) & Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org); they recently disclosed 1,200 pages of documents pertaining to the squat but withheld another 2,000. **Ann Wilden** arrived in Vancouver by freight train from New York via Montréal & San Diego. The **Woodwards Legal Defense Committee** (WLDC) formed to collect evidence & deal with civil claims regarding the property destruction & police violence on 21-22 September 2002. The **Woodwards Squat Emergency Response Team** (ERT) was elected by squat residents at 327 Carrall on 23 November 2002 to pursue the options for moving the squat to a new location. **Lisa Wulwik** is committed to the class struggle & to the liberation of women everywhere. **Zeus** is writing a book on the links between global capitalism & poverty.

Every Time Win 'Em Over One By One, Always Live, Always Live

A limited edition one-hour compact disc featuring late poet Taum Danberger live at the Kootenay School of Writing, Woodsquat Poetry Nights, and in studio sessions.

Distributed by Friends of the Woodward's Squat. Available November 2003.

*Shanties and Squats, Tents and Tarps:
The Struggle for Housing in Vancouver*

A zine that documents Vancouver's grassroots movements for dignified housing. Through comics, interviews, stories, illustrations and poetry this zine explores the history of housing struggle, behind the scenes of the Woodsquat, personal stories from the tent city, and other actions such as the safe injection site. This is a story by those who fought and continue to fight. Available March 2004.



Revitalizing The Ghetto Uprising

The "renegade" Housing Action Committee of the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) gained broad public attention in July 2002 after they sent a letter to 30 film production companies demanding fair compensation for sex trade workers and tenants displaced by the film industry. In 2003 they intervened to get the overtime funding cut for the disastrous "Operation Torpedo," organized witnessing shifts to deter police violence, opened the 327 Safer Injection Site, joined forces with the Anti-Poverty Committee to open the Victory Squat, and began a campaign to fight illegal "guest fees" at SRO hotels. A collection of writing and statements from the trenches. Available May 2004.

The Neutralization of The Woodward's Squat

In a thank-you letter the Vancouver Police Department bragged about the "unprecedented level of inter-governmental and inter-agency co-operation" involved in breaking the Woodward's Squat in 2002. Who or what were these governmental bodies and public-service agencies? How did they interact? What were the secrets to their success? Based on analysis of thousands of pages of classified and declassified documents, this book is a chilling case study in the new techniques for criminalizing political dissent by deploying redirected "soft" civilian resources across jurisdictions. Available May 2005.

Available from Spartacus Books (311 West Hastings Street in Vancouver 604.688.6131) & Squatworld (www.squatworld.net).