Back in Minnesota, Green was once again happy with life. He had helped save a forest and his girlfriend had returned to him. Later that year we would go and visit him; we had another job for the ELF. But that was still some time away and we had some small packages to make. The next target was the Mall Of America, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the largest shopping mall in the U.S. of A. We started preparing at home; it was time to dig into the hobbycraft supplies.

The carrier for this scheme would be markers. Simple, felt-tipped markers of non-metallic, plastic construction. The kind of multicolored smell-good markers that kids use to draw pictures. This project would require a few simple tools and razor-tipped hobbiest knives. A little glue and some incendiary chemicals. I had used chemically timed incendiaries before when I was young. They were very reliable; I never had one fail to work.

The chemical timer was a gelatin capsule filled with strong sulfuric acid (H_2SO_4). These gelatin capsules can be obtained at most any pharmacy. They come in different sizes and are usually clear. They have two halves which fit together to make a hollow tube with rounded ends. I would put fresh latex gloves on to prevent any sweat from contaminating the capsules. Sweat could alter the time it took for the capsule to dissolve. The two halves were separated and a few drops of concentrated acid were put into the longer, lower half of the capsule until full. Then the top half, which sealed over the outside of the lower half, was gently pressed over and back together again. It would take about forty-five minutes for the acid to dissolve its way through the gelatin

capsule. The filled capsule was generally placed in a small sealable plastic bag containing powdered potassium chlorate ($KCLO_3$) and powdered sugar. When the acid ate through the capsule and came into contact with the mixture of $KCLO_3$ and sugar, it would act as a chemical catalyst and ignite the powder mix.

They burn nicely together, but there is more to it. The mixture for the ignitor was about 60% by weight of potassium chlorate and 40% by weight of powdered sugar. The acid I used was strong sulfuric acid, but other strong acids like nitric acid (HNO_3) or hydrochloric acid (HCL) could be used as well. These acids were 50% strength or higher. All of these ratios could be off a bit one way or another; it would still work. There were variations, of course. Potassium chlorate ($KCLO_3$) could be replaced with sodium chlorate ($NACLO_3$) and of course the per-family of O_4-ending variants of the same chlorates could be used. To extend the timer beyond 45 minutes, I would get a larger gelatin capsule and double them up, one inside the other. This would extend the time to about two hours at room temperature. Hotter or colder temperatures would speed up or slow down the acids, and the time. Obviously the acid was not added until one was ready to use it; until then the acid remained in a small glass bottle with an eye dropper top.

This was just the ignition part to the incendiaries. The main part would be made of, by weight, 50% $KCLO_3$, 45% magnesium (Mg) powder and 5% sugar as a binder. To this powder a small amount of alcohol would be added to make a thick slurry mixture. When lightly pressed and dried it would

make a semi-hard solid, the sugar acting as a binder to hold everything together. When ignited, this solid would burn very hot and bright, like a pyrotechnic sparkler at a rock concert, it would shoot flames everywhere. Now all of this needed to be repackaged into some markers, then we would be in business.

First the markers were disassembled. The bottom had a plastic end cap that sealed the barrel. This end cap was pulled out of the marker and set aside on the work table. There was now an open bottom to the marker barrel and the felt ink reservoir could be removed. This round sponge-like rod contained the ink for the marker. By turning the marker, bottom side down and giving a sharp tap in a firm surface, the felt reservoir would come out the bottom to the marker. It would be needed later so it was put in a sealed plastic bag to keep it from drying out. Also the colored cap was left on the marker tip to help keep it moist.

Now a long-stemmed cotton swab was soaked in alcohol and run down inside the empty plastic barrel to clean any residue of ink. Then a piece of 120 grit sandpaper about a half-inch wide was glued in a band around the end of a wooden dowel about the length and size around as a pencil, in fact a pencil could be used, but I preferred to use the wood dowel. This was used to roughen up the inside of the barrel in preparation for gluing. The only part of the barrel that needed to be glued was about half to three-quarters of an inch back from the the top of the marker near the tip. This was the area that the sandpaper was used to clean and prepare for the glue. By going back and forth, then around in

circles, I made a crisscross pattern inside the barrel. This was important for the glue to make a strong bond to the inside surface of the marker. Now a small plug was precisely hand cut out of a plastic soda bottle cap and inserted to a point about a half-inch from the far end, towards the felt tip. It needed to be just a little loose, but a good fit. Then taking out the plug and setting it on the table, I turned to the felt ink reservoir in the bag. I took this out and cut off a segment of felt rod about 3/8 inch long, then I reinserted it down the marker barrel, all the way to the felt tip. Now a fresh cotton swab was used to spread epoxy glue inside the barrel just above the felt reservoir. The small plastic plug was inserted and pressed down with the wooden dowel until it rested against the shortened reservoir. With the swab more epoxy was dabbed around the plastic plug where it sealed with the barrel. When it hardened, I had a marker that still worked, but with significantly reduced longevity. The rest of the marker barrel was now an empty cavity waiting to be filled with incendiaries.

The empty 2 1/2" of marker would now be filled with the potassium chlorate and magnesium powder mix. This mixture used a trace amount of sugar as a binder. A small amount of alcohol was added and the mix stirred into a paste. This was spooned into the barrel and then compacted with a larger wooden dowel just a little smaller than the inside diameter of the barrel. This close fitting dowel acted as a piston to force down and compact the paste into the marker. Only about a half inch of barrel was filled at a time with the paste, then the marker was set in a rack and the paste was allowed

time to dry out. The alcohol would evaporate quickly, leaving a hard solid. Then another layer of paste was added and compressed again in the same manner. This process was repeated until all but the last three-quarters of an inch of the marker was filled. The timer/ignitor would still need to be put in, then the end cap snapped back on to finish and seal the device. This last part would be done on location just before use. We now had a rainbow of destruction, and were only waiting for the right time to use them.

Next we needed to sight in the .50 cal. rifle in preparation for New York. After the Mall Of America, Rayhab and I would need to take out several large liquefied petroleum (LP) gas storage spheres near the ship harbor. Our range to target would be about a mile and a half, if I was going to hit anything, then the gun had to be zeroed in for range. A boresight and range chart would make the first adjustment to set the scope. We would set up for one shot a day. There were neighbors to think about, and going out to shoot a .50 cal. could attract unwelcome attention.

The back window of the farmhouse overlooked fields that went on unobstructed for half a mile. Then there were some trees, a creek, and then a hill that rose just above the treetops at about 1900 yards. That was a little bit over one mile range; it would be close enough. A large target of plywood painted white with an orange one-foot circle in the middle was propped up at a half mile in the back yard. The back window of the house was opened wide and a makeshift shooting bench set eight feet back from the window. The house would muffle some of the terrific noise generated by the

fifty. The neighbors were some ways away, but it was still a good idea to be discreet. Only one shot a day was taken, because it would be difficult for the human ear to determine the point of origin. Besides, in a poor county where people make do as best they can, an occasional deer taken out of season would be considered normal. One shot a day would hardly be noticed.

It took seven days to get centered onto the plywood and three more days to zero in on the one-foot bullseye. Now for the long range of 1900 yards. The plywood target was doubled in size and set upon the hill. Anywhere on the target would be considered good. I wasn't even sure where the first few shots hit, so I used tracers and a videocamera on the next couple of shots and then watched the playback. Rayhab and I also walked the line to look downrange and see if we could find any points of impact. We found a nicked tree here and a shattered rock there, we were getting closer. It took a while and a few more shots but we finally figured where the rounds were going each time. Ten days for the half-mile and another twenty three days for the 1900-yard target, but we did it, we were on target. The LP gas spheres where huge, much larger than the plywood targets. If I could hit wood then I could hit gas.

For some reason I never did like Christmas. I think it was all that fake stuff about it that turned me off. I mean, first off, it's not his birthday. The Bible doesn't say exactly when the Messiah was born, but by a little reverse analysis, historians are very certain it was not in December. It was either in the spring, like March-April, or the fall

around August. I have read both versions and some of the proofs for both sides, but it is pretty much unanimous that it was definitely not winter. The origins of Christmas have nothing whatsoever to do with Christian faith, but everything to do with ancient pagan practices going back to Babylon and maybe even farther. It was a festival in honor of the return of the sun god. December 21 was the original date for the winter solstice, when the days start to get longer again. Thus the return of the sun. It was a combination death and fertility festival. Winter being death and coming spring the renewal of life and procreation. The evergreen tree was liked by Druids and others because it did not lose its green needles during winter. It was a symbol of promise that the sun would return and bring new life. The first century Christians never celebrated Christmas, it was later on that the Roman state church stole the pagan's holiday and renamed it for themselves. The names of the old gods were changed to Christian ones, the reasons for the festival were changed to those on a Christian theme. But at heart it was still a pagan holiday.

Back in the days of the puritans, you know, like when the Mayflower ship brought pilgrim settlers to America, they were the ones who settled and eventually made the U.S.A. They were called puritans for a reason. They believed in pure practice and doctrine of their faith. Back home in England they were persecuted for this, so they took ship for a new land where they could worship in freedom. Of course, as a side thought, as soon as they got here they started to kill the natives and burn witches at the stake. But that's a

different story. Anyhow, back to the puritans: they outlawed Christmas in America from the 1600's to the early 1800's. One could be fined or jailed for observing the heathen pagan festival. It was also outlawed in some areas of Europe during that time. During the time of forced conversion, the Druids got killed for observing the rituals of the winter solstice. That was a long time ago, so let's go to more modern years.

Drunken mobs would roam the streets and force their way into rich people's houses and demand more drink, food, or whatever they wanted. This was Christmastime in mid-1800's America. The merchants were not happy about this, so they started a campaign to commercialize Christmas--to bring it off the streets and into the stores. Shops were decorated for the holidays and singers were hired to sing in costumes for crowds. Song writers were paid to write songs and laws were passed to ban public drunkenness during the holidays.

A Dutch writer wrote some short stories about a benevolent burglar who left gifts for children. These writings were not popular in their native land, but they were translated into English and published in New York. There they found a receptive public, and have since passed into history and tradition as the legend of Santa Claus. This fictional character, the product of a writer's imagination, has achieved the status of a sacred icon of Christmas. Some people will actually put up their fist and fight for Santa Claus. Hollywood helped to complete this illusion with movie after movie containing Christmas or Santa themes. After one generation, the tradition had been established. It was difficult and sometimes impossible for people to think

outside the box of tradition. They did it and their parents did it so it must be reasonable that it has always been done and always will be. To think otherwise would be heresy. I guess that makes me a heretic to some, but then again I don't really care what other people think.

Fifty percent of a store's yearly sales could be expected to be made during the Thanksgiving-New Years holiday season. The biggest of these would be Christmas. The Mall Of America was the biggest mall in the country, and it would be packed with merchandise in the weeks leading up to Christmas. There were over 500 stores in the mall. There were theaters, ice rinks and an indoor water park with slides and everything. This multistoried cathedral to the deity of consumerism, greed, and wastefulness, would burn very nicely. The ELF attained legendary status after the Mall Of America; this is how we did it.

Rayhab and I drove with our supplies to Minnesota around the first of December to pay Green a visit. He was happy to see us and even happier to get another cash donation to the cause. He shared with us the story of the great ELF forest mining. All of this was told in third person of course, as if someone else had done it. We all knew better, but the story was still interesting. Horses were used to carry the mines into the forest, then they were taken on foot to be planted. A map was made with the locations of every mine. If it ever became necessary to go to ground one could possibly hide out in the forest, as long as one knew where the mines were. Green gave us a copy of the map; the only other copies in existence belonged to those who had

volunteered to set the mines. After looking the maps over we changed subjects and Green listened with growing interest.

He loved the plan and would be happy to help. We didn't actually need the extra help, but he had proven himself trustworthy. Besides, we wanted to make sure the place would burn to the ground. We would start in the morning, but we were all so excited, that there was little sleeping that night. First we had to do some reconnaissance of the target area.

We drove out together with our supplies and went shopping. Our interest was in the toy and clothing stores. The toy stores had so many boxes of highly flammable plastic toys, stacked high upon the shelves, that fire would be assured to burn hot and fast there. It was still early for Christmas, but in another week the inventory would be even greater. Toys have lots of thin plastic parts and lots of surface area. The surface area would be important for fast combustion. Think of a solid log of wood; now try to burn it. The low surface area and high internal mass make it difficult to burn a log unless a good fire is already going and the log is thrown on top of it. But getting that log burning on its own will require more than a match and some crumpled up newspaper. If, however, one takes an axe and splits the log into many thin long strips and piles them in staggered vertical rows with plenty of area for air to circulate through them, then a little paper and a match at the bottom will get a good fire started quick. The same log and wood, but expressed in two different ways. The toys in their boxes stacked high on shelves would provide an excellent source of

fuel to start the inferno.

Clothing stores provided much the same: highly flammable material with high surface area, hanging vertically from racks. Many clothes were made of synthetic materials. These materials were petroleum based, and mostly made of hydrocarbons. Even natural cotton burned very well. But one thing that did not burn well was wool. We would stay away from the wools because they are hard to get burning and tend to go out on their own. To make maximum use of floor space, the stores had multi-level racks along the walls full of clothes, plus islands of hanging garments throughout the store. By setting incendiaries into the hanging garments along the wall and corners the fire would climb vertically. This would quickly cause the layer of air along the ceiling to become superheated and ignite the entire ceiling. Even the radiant heat of this would begin to set fires everywhere in the room. Within a minute or two the store would be a raging inferno.

Each of us would have ten colored markers to carry and set. Rayhab and I, Green and his girlfriend, that made forty different points of ignition in a mall with over 500 stores. The markers would be placed on different levels and spread out into different zones of the building.

The mall had a fire suppression system that mostly relied upon sprinklers and steel fire doors that would close in case of fire. These doors were there to contain and isolate the area on fire. These doors could not completely stop the fire, but they would slow down its spread and give a chance for fire fighters to respond. In a building so large,

there are many miles of air ducts, electrical conduits, and a wide variety of utility access passages. Much of the mall's internal construction was made of sub-walls that could be reconfigured as needed. All those things would make containment of the fire next to impossible. The Mall Of America was a place of commerce, not a fortress.

There were several thousand people employed at the mall, not all of whom worked cash registers. The security force of the mall would easily dwarf the police departments of most small towns. Not only were there a substantial number of uniformed armed guards, but also there were plain-clothed undercover detectives for the mall and individual stores. The larger stores would have a small army of detectives just for themselves. The level of security had gone up substantially after 9/11, but even more upgrades had happened after the Looters' Rebellion. Minnesota had not suffered to badly during the rebellion. Being a far northern state, there were fewer minorities of the looting variety. Most disturbances had been localized and self-contained. The mall had been protected by security forces and no harm had come to it. When the power was out, the mall had diesel generators and hydrogen fuel cells to rely on for backup electricity. There were maintenance personnel who kept things fixed and running, and janitors to clean up everyone's mess. There were some firemen for the mall, but they were just there as first responders. The main force would come from the city fire department in case of a real emergency.

As part of the security upgrades the entrances and exits had been separated into one-way-only thoroughfares.

Leaving the building was not as much a problem as getting in. The mall had gone to airport-style screening with the exception that not everyone got checked. It was more of a random pull-over to go through the metal detectors and have your personal effects inspected. There were too many people to check everyone, so profiling was used to select individuals for closer scrutiny. After the rebellion, minorities were often looked at with suspicion and anger. Images of the looting had been widely broadcast. The sheer numbers of those who looted were obvious from the pictures taken of street after street full of looters. It was hard not to look into the face of a minority and not see a looter. Most of the people who got stopped by security were either an ethnic minority or a teenager. Those who worked at the mall had employee I.D. cards which gave them a fast pass through security. Even with all this maybe one in ten got stopped for inspection; there was no practical way to do more.

This was a private sector business, although there were some connections to city and state government. Customers could refuse to be searched, but they could be forced to leave if they did refuse. There is only a certain amount of inconvenience that people will tolerate before choosing to go elsewhere to shop. It was more difficult for security to feel up pretty women at the mall than at the airport. At the airport you could get raped by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and they would charge you with disturbing them in the performance of their duties. Someone lays a hand on you at the mall and they could be sued. However that is not to say that mall security didn't have a

few tricks of their own.

They had ways of lying and intimidating people into giving their consent for searches. Many of the security guards were trained professional liars. They were police officers moonlighting on their spare time for private hire. Some of their tactics included making up bogus laws or misrepresenting real laws so as to make someone think that they had to comply. They also added threats about what could happen to a person if they refused to comply. The real story at the time, however, was a bit different than they would like you to think. Outside the shopping mall there was little to nothing they could do. They could not search your car, your person, or detain you. They could not even force you to identify yourself. They could however tell you to leave, and if you didn't, then they could arrest you for trespassing on mall property. Their only trump card was if they witnessed a crime in progress. Then they could do something like running you down and making an arrest, but otherwise there was little they could do.

There were some gray areas in law about public safety and weapons searches. If probable cause existed to believe that a person was unlawfully armed and a danger to others then the rent-a-cops could forcibly search someone. The other reason was if a person was being arrested for a crime, like shoplifting. Then a weapons search would be done for officer safety. Otherwise a person could not be detained or questioned.

I had a security guard try me years back before we torched the mall. He tried the tough guy routine; it didn't

work. I told him to leave me alone and go away; instead he continued to run his mouth at me. So I told him that unless I was being arrested for something, I would be leaving, and I left. He kept on threatening and playing games with me all the way out of the store. This rent-a-cop could have taken things farther, but that would require him arresting me. If he made and arrest without cause, then he could be held liable, and the store as well. He wasn't prepared to go that far, so all his words were nothing but hot air. But if one is going to call their bluff, then one also needs to realise that sometimes you can get hurt.

Occasionally there happens to be a security guard with an attitude, who likes to mess with people. These ones might beat someone senseless then turn around and press charges against the victim in order to cover themselves. These good-for-nothing men are usually police officers working a second job as security, bold and arrogant with knowing they can cover up any little thing they need to. The police, like a gang, protect their own, right or wrong.

All of this had to do with actively laying hands on someone. New technology made passive searches possible without the person even knowing. In this area people had no right to privacy any more. New cameras with electronic sensors could see into a previously unused spectrum in the millimeter wavelength, just below infrared. These were passive cameras that used the natural energy emitted by things. They could see through a person's clothes and detect any weapons a person might try concealing. Those cameras did not have lenses; they worked in the radio spectrum. A

person's face could only be seen as a fleshy, glowing blob, but the body type could be discerned. Tall or short, fat or thin, male or female; these cameras left nothing to the imagination. A weapon would have a distinct shape and look to it that would trigger a response from the image recognition software. However this system was not foolproof.

A weapon could be disassembled and the components hidden in different items so as to trick the software. Another factor was distance; these cameras did not have the ability to focus and were therefore restricted to an effective range of maybe ten to forty-five feet. Shopping malls also had high densities of people which made seeing the center person of a cluster difficult or impossible. For this reason the mall had been retrofitted with bottlenecks here and there along corridors so as to force traffic to break up into single file.

Other security devices included bomb sniffers that could detect chemicals like RDX and TNT, both being high power military type explosives. These sniffers tested the air for faint traces given off from a bomb. However there were significant problems with false positives. Many other chemicals and solvents could trigger these detectors. The mall could not be evacuated every time a false alarm went off. On the same page as the bomb sniffers were the bio-hazard detectors, which were supposed to warn about anthrax, smallpox, or other bacterial/viral pathogens.

These things were so useless that they were turned off most of the time. These high tech detectors were put in at the request of Homeland Security and the insurance

companies. Dangerous germs and pathogens could be detected accurately, but so could chicken pox and strep throat. People got sick and these devices could not always differentiate between smallpox and chicken pox. Even when the detectors had a 99.99% accuracy rate for finding the bad stuff, there were still false positives. This was a problem that just could not be gotten around. Customers want to feel safe and secure, not scared and confused, and that's what would happen if every day a false alarm caused the mall to be quarantined and decontaminated.

For the most part, peace and security are an illusion used by those in power to calm the masses. Control must be maintained, and if control is not possible, then the appearance of control would have to suffice. For our purpose, all of this would be irrelevant. We knew with certainty that we could walk right in, do what we needed to, and walk right back out; unlike now, when security just shoots you and moves on. Setting the fires would not be a problem; keeping them going, though, would be more complicated.

Water sprinklers would be the first line of defence against the fire. These would deploy from the ceiling and spray massive amounts of water onto the fire while it was still small and vulnerable. It was critical for the fire to be allowed to grow in the first few minutes into an inferno. After that point the fire would be nearly unstoppable. With so much security in the mall it would not be possible to sabotage the sprinkler system from within. So we would have to do it from outside.

All of the water for the mall and its sprinkler

system came from large water mains buried underground. These were part of the city water system. Here and there the water mains had valves which could be used to shut off the flow. This would need to be done to repair a ruptured main pipe or perform other maintenance. These valves were located underground with street level access by a manhole cover. They were usually around intersections of streets and the entrances were often along or near the sidewalks. This was all very nice to know, but snow was on the ground and we didn't want to wrestle with frozen manhole covers along public streets. So we needed a different method to disrupt the water.

In far northern states like Minnesota, or Alaska where I grew up, the temperatures in winter can get as low as -20 F or colder. Because of these extra-cold temperatures, fire hydrants can freeze solid. That's not good when the fire truck shows up and trys to get water out of a frozen hydrant. So to address this problem, fire hydrants in cold-weather states have valves that go down a dozen or so feet underground to the water main. Even in winter the ground will retain some heat at that depth and the valve will be prevented from freezing. This is different from warm states, which have valves at ground level on their hydrants. In a cold-weather state, if you unscrew the side cap on a fire hydrant, you have a nice size hole that runs into the hydrant body and makes a 90 degree turn down the empty pipe all the way to the water main. This vertical pipe from the main to the surface is kept dry so that it will not freeze.

Keeping these pipes dry can become a chore in winter

when youthful pranksters turn the valves on. Kids who like to make ice rinks out of roads, will sometimes open up a hydrant. When this happens the fire department has to come out and shut off the valve, then pump dry the vertical feeder pipe from the buried main. If this is not done quickly enough the water left in the feeder pipe can freeze solid. Then the fire department has to use steam wands fed down the hydrant to thaw the ice and pump out the water. This is an expensive nuisance that firemen do not like having to do, but it's necessary in order to have a functional hydrant in case of an emergency. These hydrants were to be our means of accessing the water mains. We would put small explosive charges with digital timers into the hydrants and down the pipe to the water main. But first we would need to do some prep work.

Rayhab and I had walked leisurely down the street holding hands like the lovers we were. We stopped now and then to kiss by a fire hydrant--that is all anyone would notice if they even bothered to look at the ordinary couple walking down the street. Under our heavy winter coats we carried cans of break-free with long plastic applicators. This product was ordinarily used for rusted nuts and bolts or any other thing that didn't want to come loose. The spray can shoot out a mixture of penetrating oil and solvents which would soak into the threads on the main side cap of the hydrants. Rayhab and I walked to the north and east of the mall, while Green and his honey took to the south and west. We kept about two blocks away from the mall itself. We established a perimeter around the mall; one way or another the water mains had to pass by us to get there.

With a little logic and research it was easy to figure out where to place a charge. Only one charge per main would be necessary to disrupt the flow. We were able to find ten large mains and several dozen smaller branches; we only cared about the big ones. With this information we were able to select ten strategically located fire hydrants along with alternates in case we were unable to open the first choices. Each night for three nights we took our romantic moonlight walks. Each night we used up a can of break-free. On the fourth night we carried a wrench; the caps on the hydrants turned stiffly at first, then easier. The threads on these caps have a slight taper to them. Once loosened up they could be unscrewed by hand. We left these hydrants hand-tight and gave them one last shot of penetrating oil. Now it was time to get busy. There was about one more week to Christmas and we had some shopping to do. Green and I played the part of prosperous citizens, in suits, ties and overcoats. The ladies wore skirts and leg warmers, coats, hats and scarfs. Rayhab wore pink just for me. Their handbags contained ten markers each and we guys carried our markers in our inside overcoat pockets. Everyone knew timing was crucial; each thing would need to be done in sequence to pull it off properly.

We set the digital timers to go off on the one-pound water main charges, thirty minutes after the mall closed for the night. These charges were loaded into the fire hydrants the day before. The explosives and timers were put in double-sealed plastic bags with a single band of gray duct tape around the middle. These elongated packages fit inside the hydrants with room to spare and fell down the vertical feeder

pipe connected to the water main below. When these charges of plastic explosive went off, the blast would shatter the cast iron valve and water main. The pressurized water would rise to the surface like a fountain. Seeking the path of least resistance, it would spew from the ruptured pipe and cause the pressure down-line to drop substantially, if not completely. This violently rushing water would quickly undermine sidewalks and open gaping holes in the ground.

We had rendezvoused in the parking lot and then casually gone into the mall, security never even gave us a second look. There was still some time before we needed to activate our chemically timed incendiaries, so Rayhab went shopping and got some hot stuff to model for me later that night. One hour before the mall closed we went to the restrooms and activated the timers. This required some dexterity and speed. We had all practiced sitting on a toilet with markers on our lap and gelatin capsules in hand, going through the steps that would be required. We could make no mistakes; one drop of acid in the wrong spot would light up a small fire storm in the restroom stall.

I went to the restroom one hour and ten minutes before closing time and started preparing the markers by removing all the bottom end caps. I used the toilet paper holder as a mini shelf for the gelatin capsules as I separated the halves and lined them up in rows. At one hour to closing, I was ready to start my assembly line. Three drops of acid, seal, three drops of acid, seal--it went like that ten in a row. Then the second gelatin capsules were added around to the first, this took seven minutes. Gelatin

capsule into marker, then a little dusting of potassium chlorate and powdered sugar, then marker end cap pressed back on and sealed. Ten were done one after another. Then lastly small bands of adhesive-backed Velcro (barbed) were wrapped around the tops of the markers. This was to make them cling to clothes hanging from the racks. All that took another five minutes. By the time I had four markers in my inner overcoat pocket and three more up each sleeve and walking out of the restroom, there was forty-five minutes left to closing time.

There was no last minute rendezvous to say good luck. This was a huge mall, and we were already separated into our target areas. Each knew what to do, so we did it. Seven of my targets were in the fifth floor and three in the forth floor; I worked my way from the top down. There was little time to linger at each store. I strode confidently into the toy store with a list in hand and went strait to a wide aisle of toys right in the middle of the store amongst a cluster of shoppers. I knelt down to the second rack, reached back and slipped with one hand out of my sleeve a single blue marker and wedged it into the seam of the toy rack between opposing shelfs. One down, nine to go. Next was a clothing store.

As I went from target to target with shopping list in hand, I must have looked a bit haggard by the increasing frequency of warnings on the mall speakers. Thirty minutes to closing time! The panic was evident on most shopper's faces; a lone man going quickly from store to store would mean nothing.

Shoving my hand deep into the bottom row of sweaters and giving a twist of the wrist stuck a velcroed green marker

to the sweater. Security had no way of seeing what was happening. Under my coat sleeve I had slipped an elastic sweatband over my wrist. Three markers at a time would snugly fit around each wrist. When one forearm was depleted, I simply reached into my inside pocket while walking to the next store and reloaded.

My time was running out and I couldn't make my last two targets, so I just threw the remaining markers into random stores that had already closed and had the metal mesh screens down over their entrances. One was a music store; the black marker landed on the floor and came to rest at the base of a rack of CD's. The second was a bookstore with a red marker landing in the self-help and better living section. Rayhab had beat me back to the car, and with the smile on her face I could tell she had made all her targets.

We were not to see Green or his girl again, that night or any other night. They had done their part and were now on their way home. They were going to make sure that ELF got credit by posting notices on the Internet and giving instructions as to how their fellow ELF'ers could replicate the feat in their areas.

Rayhab and I had gotten a hotel room with a view about one and a half miles away earlier in the day. Returning to our suite we opened the champagne about the same time the water mains all blew apart. We didn't hear or see any of that, of course. By that time I was more interested in Rayhab anyway, as she did a slow dance and strip for me. The new silk lingerie was very naughty, but not as naughty as Rayhab--nothing could compare to my Rayhab.

Water pressure dropped downline from the ruptures. The mall lost most of the pressure going in, but it did have several large internal water tanks that could be drawn from. Emergency pumps started up to boost the pressure to keep the lines filled. But each time someone flushed a toilet or ran the water, the pressure dropped a little more and the level in the internal tanks fell. Within five minutes the mall utility people would be making calls to find out what was happening, and in ten minutes they would be notified of a serious problem.

A few blocks away police had responded to the new water fountains shooting twenty feet into the air. As the water ran down the streets, it was already starting to ice over in the near-zero night air. Mall security was fast--faster than I had expected. They realized immediately that the mall was under attack and started evacuating it before the first incendiary lit up. We don't know how many of our offspring worked that night, but we do know this: The Mall Of America burned, gloriously.

The news stories later recounted the events told by those in the mall's fire department. How at first the sprinklers worked but then dropped to a trickle on the upper floors as the pressure fell. The lower floors still had some water, but that only seamed to drain the water from above. The call to city fire houses had been made before the first flame burst forth from a marker. It was all part of security contingencies designed to protect the mall. However fast they got there, there was little they could do with low water pressure and forty fires started nearly simultaneously. One

fireman told of getting to an upper floor and seeing a wall of fire down the whole length of the mall. The fire fighters tried heroically to save the cathedral of commerce, but in the end the fire won the night, and the next day too. That night Rayhab and I shared the passion of life together, our pleasures gently illuminated by a billion dollar candle.

As a postscript to The Mall Of America and other mega-malls across the nation. The ELF took responsibility and broadcast the plans for the incendiary design used, as well as variations thereof. In the months that followed several other mega-malls got burned by unknown persons. In response, mall security got so extreme that customers stopped going to them. Like a sinking ship, merchants fled from the malls and soon they could not operate profitably. One after another went bankrupt and closed their doors for good. The mom and pop independent retailers, however, saw a return of customers and life went on. The ELF became both loved and hated by many. The government declared them a terrorist threat right up there next to Al-Queda. But that did not stop the movement; if anything it motivated more to action. People talked more about environmental issues and ate more vegetarian meals. Customers started demanding natural fibers like cotton and hemp. Parents started to spend more time with their children rather than just throwing a new toy at them. In memory of the power outages, lovers would spend romantic evenings together by natural candlelight, and leave the electric ones off. In many little ways a sense of Earth-Consciousness entered people's lives. Gardens were planted and trash recycled. Even fat people started to eat less and