

Murder of the Civilized

by Mallory Wuornos



that we must do everything to forget. They are human responses, maybe one of the last meaningful human actions we can observe, which is perhaps what terrifies people so much. As Fuchs observes, “Deep down in every one of us there is a ruthless primal killer inside. Perhaps this is the fundamental truth from which all censors, moralists and inveterate optimists flee in panic.” Let us not flee in panic from our own impulses, but learn from them and come face to face with society, its warts and all.

children is transgressed. Everything must be palatable to the masses. Nothing is more sacred to the masses than children, who represent hope for the future of the human race. But that future will no doubt be as horrific in its banality as the world now. An article in Newsweek summarized Adam's motivations (adding of course that this way of thinking is deranged):

"children were indoctrinated from a very young age to become part of a sick machine that was self-perpetuating. They were manipulated to live unhealthy lives. In Adam's deranged world-view, they were already doomed to live in a joyless world that would use and abuse them. By killing them, he'd be saving them from the hell he was enduring."

Both Frazier and Lanza's messages were clear to those who understand, but mystified everyone else: humans have, to their detriment, completely removed themselves from nature and through the ways of civilization we have all been imprisoned. Frazier's fury came from a transcendent moment where he saw the obscenity of materialism that we are bound to while Lanza saw how we are shaped from birth to accept this fate and enjoy being caged. Like warriors before them they refused to see humans as more valuable than other life on earth and had no moral qualms about extinguishing lives no matter how young and innocent. In fact, they may be seen as having acted from a place of kindness, as suggested by Adam Lanza's very personal killing of his mother before he left for the school. In his mind he wasn't deranged; he had been pacing his cage his whole life, until he could pace no more. Then he pounced. We are all capable of nurturing and compassion, but we are also capable of the most horrific brutality, given the right conditions. These instances of cruelty, whether from long ago or in our lifetime, shouldn't be swept under the rug. They are not horrible abominations

"The Indians who rose up against the New England colonies in 1675 had been exposed to the merciless concepts of European total warfare and had the improved technology and tactics to inflict heavy losses on the white populace. In their desperate attempt to save their culture and to take back their lands, the Indians abandoned most of the self-imposed restraints that had limited the death and destruction in their traditional patterns of warfare."

—Patrick Malore, *The Skulking Way of War*

" 'Man,' whatever people think of him, is never anything more than a temporary bourgeois compromise."

—Herman Hesse, *Steppenwolf*

"The lesser the motive, the better the murder."

—Answer Me! Motto

There is a never-ending debate among anarchists of the left regarding what constitutes violence, what revolutionary violence is acceptable, and whether or not it will motivate the working class to rise against its oppressors. Nowhere in these banal conversations do people take the position that interpersonal violence is inevitable, or even desirable, as it is part of our nature. It puts into question social projects aimed at bettering the world. The Homo Sapien has always been a bad lot, there is no denying that. The earliest skulls dug up have shown evidence of blunt force trauma. Even if every person on earth (currently over 7 billion people) had all our needs met, we would still find reasons to bludgeon one another. There is no rescuing humanity from itself. Illusions of a peaceful and safe world come at a huge price. You merely need to look at the prosperity and peace (mislabeled freedom) of the West, compared to the constant battle for survival in exploited countries.

My obsession with cruelty among humans began at a young age. I grew up in a European country with a much longer history of empire building than the US, but of course that brutality was not in our school's curriculum (which centered around religious studies). I wouldn't learn about what empires and colonization meant until I was much older. What was etched in my mind were the endless horrors of the Monarchy, sadistic methods of torture, how to instill fear of all manners of deviance, and the equally cruel methods of execution (which attracted huge crowds to see the gory spectacles of beheadings, hangings, and—most horrific of all—the burnings). Along with these nightmarish tales came stories of the misery of peasant life and the diseases that spread quickly in cities that grew more and more populated and filthy. I was fascinated by the black plague and other diseases that came with industrialization. Along with these gruesome history lessons came the implication that our society has progressed, materially and spiritually. And again, no mention of the

He left no manifestos and has been essentially erased, probably due to his immorality. While Zerzan said little to nothing about the nature of the shooting, society (including anarchists!) as usual in their desperate search for answers zeroed in on the easily digestible explanations of access to guns and mental health care. When tragedies occur, the liberal mask of many anarchists' politics reveals itself as they also cry for the safety of answers. Lanza had demonstrated his interest in anti-civ ideas, not only wrestling with the ideas, but putting those thoughts into terrible action, yet people still seem mystified as to why anybody would do what he did.

People who cared to read what he wrote, knew exactly where Adam was coming from when he opened fire in that classroom. He couldn't have been any clearer about his motivation. He was the embodiment of Travis the Chimp, Tyke the Elephant, and other beasts who viciously cast off their shackles, their violent rebellion ending with their own deaths. Like skirmishes in wars long forgotten, there is mass cultural amnesia surrounding these acts of hostility toward the civilized. The town of the elementary school destroyed the school (building a new one over it), and also razed the house that Lanza had grown up in. Apparently unsavory people had begun showing up at the site. Perhaps some of those people listened to Zerzan's show and were making a pilgrimage to pay their respects. The erasure of Lanza extends to his Wikipedia page, which redirects to the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting page. This is true of personal wikis for many other school shooters as well.

Attacking innocents is incredibly taboo. Even to admit you understand, much less are sympathetic to, the actions of people like Frazier or Lanza, will cause you to be shunned. This is especially true when the taboo against the killing of

violence. It seems like Travis would be a poster-chimp of his philosophy.” [added emphasis] In his call to John Zerzan’s weekly radio show, Adam Lanza, who Zerzan described as being very articulate, discussed the effect domestication had on Travis the Chimp, who after ripping a woman’s face off in 2009 went on a violent rampage that only ended after the police unloaded their fire power on him:

“Travis wasn’t an untamed monster at all. Um, he wasn’t just feigning domestication, he was civilized. Um, he was able to integrate into society, he was a chimp actor when he was younger, and his owner drove him around the city frequently in association with her towing business, where he met many different people, and got along with everyone. If Travis had been some nasty monster all his life, it would have been widely reported, but to the contrary, it seems like everyone who knew him said how shocked they were that Travis had been so savage, because they knew him as a sweet child. And there were two isolated incidents early in his life when he acted aggressively, but summarizing them would take too long, so basically I’ll just say that he didn’t act really any differently than a human child would, and the people who would use that as an indictment against having chimps live as humans do wouldn’t apply the same thing to humans, so it’s just kind of irrelevant.”

A year later, Lanza’s crime sent shock waves through the nation. Zerzan had little to say about the incident. It was of course portrayed as another tragedy of civilization, and not as a natural response to an unnatural way of existing in the world. Like Travis, we were raised to be something we are not. Also like Travis, some humans escape the world of the civilized through acts of uncontrollable violence.

brutal subjugation of and robbery from people in far away lands.

Most anarchists believe monsters are a product of society, rather than a uniquely human problem that no utopia, no matter how well prefigured, could ever banish. Anarchists shy away from being called terrorists when we should be accepting that label with open arms. Instilling fear in your enemies when they are much bigger and more powerful is an age-old military tactic for a reason. But lately there has been a reaction against any notion of individual power and the incomprehensible violence it can sometimes take the form of.

“Edgelord” is now a common denigration by leftists and others who desire a social revolution for those who talk about the human impulse towards violence and cruelty and what that means for those who believe in a social revolution. In the words of author Christian Fuchs, “the exclusion of killers from humanity makes our world a phoney planet where every serious discussion of violence is repressed.” This is especially true in times where there is a real fear of terrorism and power-hungry authoritarians.

“We are all murderers to a greater or lesser extent.”

—Octave Mirbeau

We live in a world saturated by violence, but for most people it is distant and mediated. Despite all the evidence to the contrary—live-streamed suicides and murders on social media, police killings shot on body cameras or civilian cell phones, or the various acts of anti-social violence experienced in the cities and towns—the civilized want to deny that they themselves are capable of cruelty. Those who do violence are the barbarian others, beyond the gates, on the other side of the tracks. Most of the physical violence inflicted on people

won't be seen or felt by those living in prosperity (barring a natural disaster or painful death), who are as removed from this violence as the drone operator sitting safely in a container in Nevada. It's as invisible to them as the cancer growing in a child's lung from the choking industrial smog in far away places and as the violence perpetrated within a stone's throw of Hollywood against those on Skid Row (to those who never have a need to go there).

Like alchemists, anarchists think they can turn shit into gold if only enough people will rise up. The people will revolt and bring on the socialist utopia. Anarchists might envision this magical leap happening through violent actions but the nitty gritty of political violence isn't clear. How will people be targeted? Who will be up against the wall? How do you eliminate a global capitalist system that so many humans now rely upon to eke out a miserly existence, without increasing suffering? Would anybody be capable of dropping the blade of the guillotine in this age? It's very messy. Those who take the war against society seriously will be denounced by the very same people who believe in the overthrow of the ruling classes, as if a spiritual awakening will bring about their new world. Remember, utopian attempts have notoriously had effects opposed to what their dreamers envisioned.

The belief that humans are inherently peaceful creatures, enlightened through our reason, is still a tightly-held belief, even for anarchists. There are far too many who would have us also forget those who bombed, assassinated, and plundered until their deaths. A common question among revolutionary anarchists is, why are anarchists so weak? Despite the revolutionary platitudes glorifying violence against the ruling class, the cops, the state, fascists, and every other form our enemies can take, the threats ring

lighting the mansion ablaze. The note would be found under the windshield wiper of one of the cars.

"Halloween, 1970. Today World War will begin, as brought to you by the People of the Free Universe. From this day forward, anyone and/or everyone or company of persons who misuses the natural environment or destroys same will suffer the penalty of death by the People of the Free Universe. I and my comrades from this day forth will fight until death or freedom against anyone who does not support natural life on this planet. Materialism must die, or Mankind will stop."

-Knight of Wands, Knight of Cups, Night [sic] of Pentacles and Knight of Swords.

In the end it was the local hippies who squealed on Frazier, who—even while locked up—continued to make people uneasy, showing up to court with half his hair, half his beard, and one eyebrow shaved off. Despite his odd behavior and bizarre crime, he was declared competent to stand trial and received the death penalty. After California put its executions on hold, his sentence was commuted to life in prison. He was found hanging in his cell on August 13, 2009.

A more contemporary ecological murderer is Adam Lanza. I know that to even mention him is a cardinal sin among morally righteous anarchists. He is the person who killed multiple people, most of them children, at his former elementary school. On December 10, 2011 he wrote on a forum he frequented: "I should call in on John Zerzan's radio program about Travis. I'm really surprised that I haven't been able to find anything he's written or said about the incident, considering how often he brings up random acts of

by decades Ted Kaczynski's similar retreat from society) not far from a prominent ophthalmologist, Dr. Victor Ohta.

Dr. Ohta had also not ingratiated himself with the local hippie milieu. He flaunted his wealth: a Rolls Royce and a Lincoln Continental, expensive clothes and jewelry, sons enlisted in the best private schools, an opulent mansion designed by a student of Frank Lloyd Wright.

On the 19th of October, 1970, it burned to the ground.

As the firefighters made their way up the two dirt roads leading to the property, they found both blocked by Ohta's vehicles. After they had cleared the obstacles and reached the house they made a horrifying discovery: floating in the swimming pool were the bodies of Dr. Ohta, his wife, and their two sons, aged and 12. The doctor's secretary (a wife and mother of two herself) and the family cat were not spared either. They had all been shot execution style, one bullet each, with the exception of the Doctor, who received four.

Frazier had entered the mansion and found Dr. Ohta's wife Virginia alone. Holding her at gunpoint with her own .38, he bound her with one of her colorful scarves and waited. One by one the rest of the family along with Ohta's secretary were taken hostage and bound with the same luxurious scarves. Moving them outside next to the pool, the doctor was given an ultimatum: burn your house to the ground and renounce your materialism, or die. The doctor couldn't part with his worldly goods, and like an avenger for the forest that had once lived where he was standing, Frazier executed them all and tossed them in the pool. In the midst of the bloody carnage, Frazier sat down at the doctor's typewriter before

hollow for all but a few. Pointing out the brutality that would be necessary to accomplish this task is not macho posturing, it is an observation of the failures and excesses of revolutions. This is why the actions of the lone wolf will always, despite their vileness, be important: they aren't waiting for a critical mass of "power from below." They take power in their own hands. Sometimes this looks very ugly but at its core is always a desire for freedom.

Like a lion in a zoo, our freedom only extends to a concrete fence, making whatever small patch of grass she has to stretch out on seem even more pitiful. Being wild and free in the midst of mass society looks more like attacking anything and everything in the most vicious way possible. To seek freedom means making people, including ourselves, uncomfortable through attacking long-held beliefs, such as those telling us we deserve to be safe and that human life is more important than anything else.

What I call ecologically-motivated murder is more likely to be equated with fascist ideology (the volkisch movement has been researched extensively) than are "lone wolves" who have no clear ideology to explain their disturbing actions. These loners can only be degenerates. Society, including many anarchists, would rather forget its demons, but lately it seems that pessimism could be making a comeback, much to the chagrin of those doing positive social work. Few accept those existing on the fringes who are likely to be more apolitical and morally objectionable to a majority of people, but whose actions reverberate through society in a powerful way.

Cruel and violent people who transgress civilized boundaries, such as the rules of war, are not marketable to the masses, making them irrelevant to anyone who wants to brand anarchism as a cure-all for society's ills. There is a notion that

the viciousness of society is a side effect of civilization, rather than something innate in humans. Those who want to keep anarchy palatable to broader society quickly distance themselves from acts of savagery, and severely compromise anarchist principles (for example working with nationalists). Yet it takes savagery to successfully attack a much larger and stronger force, to instill fear, and to become offensive rather than reactive. Like George Bataille, I also believe we need a thought which does not fall apart in the face of horror.

One of the only Amazonian tribes to successfully fight off the Spaniards knew they had to match the ferocity of the invaders. And match them they did, by using the Spaniards' own torturous method of execution. In the jungle the Shuar were used to moving to avoid conflict, but a man named Quirruba had a better idea. He gained followers who swore secrecy and ordered them to seek out as much gold as possible.

When the Governor of Logrono arrived in their area, they stealthily approached at midnight. One account reports that an army of over 20,000 Shuar surrounded and conquered the settlement, slaughtering the Spaniards in their homes before they could come together. Quirruba entered with troops carrying the gold they had amassed and the tools needed to melt it down. After everybody besides the Governor had been killed, they told him to prepare to receive the tax he had prepared:

“They stripped him completely naked, tied his hands and feet; and while some amused themselves with him, delivering a thousand castigations and jests, the others set up a large forge in the courtyard, where they melted the gold. When it was ready in the

crucibles, they opened his mouth with a bone, saying that they wanted to see if for once he had enough gold. They poured it little by little, and then forced it down with another bone; and bursting his bowels with the torture, they all raised a clamor and laughter.”

It would be amazing to see earth shoved down the throats of mining executives, or hot oil poured down the gullets of oil executives, giving them only a small taste of the excruciating pain they have caused so many others. Unfortunately we don't live in the time or the world of the Shuar's fierceness. We are taught from an early age not to solve problems with violence (unless, of course, you are a nation), and history likes to portray all “social progress” as a more or less peaceful expansion of the enlightened civilization of the West. But there are still Quirrubas in the world who disregard the rules of engagement and fight on their own terms.

John Linley Frazier was a typical middle-class American in the late 1960s. He had a wife and good solid work as a mechanic until he discovered drugs and the hippie subculture. Along with his new lifestyle, he also got interested in ecology. Suddenly, on orders from the Almighty, the mechanic stopped driving and quit his job, explaining that he would no longer contribute to the death cycle of the planet. As you can imagine, his new found love of Nature put a strain on his marriage. He left his wife and moved to a hippie commune, where he proceeded to scare the fuck out of his fellow hippies. They saw him as paranoid and volatile, something that, post-Manson, most in the counterculture were desperately trying to distance themselves from. Wandering from commune to commune Frazier began living what one article described as the lifestyle of an Aquarian Age hermit, and moved into a six-foot-square shack in the woods, (predating