Plain Words is a website and publication that focuses on spreading news and developing analyses of struggles in and around Bloomington, Indiana. As anarchists, we approach these struggles from an anti-state, anti-capitalist perspective. However, we aren’t interested in developing a specific party line—even an anarchist one—and instead value the diverse forms resistance can take. Our anarchism is vibrant, undogmatic, and finds common cause with all others who fight for a world without the state, capital, and all structures of domination.

All texts and images in Plain Words are taken from the internet or submitted to us by others. We are not an organization or specific group, but simply a vehicle for spreading words and actions of resistance in Bloomington. As such, we actively seek collaboration. If you have news, images, reportbacks of actions and demonstrations, communiqués, event information, analyses of local trends and situations, updates on projects and campaigns, or anything else coming from an anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist perspective, please get in touch.

If you have comments on or critiques of anything we’ve printed that you’d like us to publish, feel free to send them our way.

Everything in Plain Words that is not explicitly attributed to its editors is either taken from the internet or anonymously submitted to us online. All content is presented for educational purposes only. The editors of this project have no connection to anonymous content beyond transmitting it for others to read.

CRITICS ARE GOING WILD FOR PLAIN WORDS

“I LIKE IT. I LIKE IT A LOT.”

Jeremy “J-Ho” Hogan, photographer, The Herald Times
**CHRONOLOGY & UPCOMING EVENTS**

**December 6, 2017**
Hangover strike victory for political prisoner Shaka Shakur

After 12 days of refusing meals, Shakur's demands to be moved to a different area of the prison, to have the majority of his property returned, and have in-person (though still through glass) visitation restored were finally met by the administration. Shakur's strike was bolstered by support on the outside including call-ins and banner drops in four Indiana cities. However, Shakur's battle is a long one and still continues.

Find out more at IDOCWatch.org

**December 31, 2017**

NYE Jail Demo at Monroe County Jail

December 31, 2017

Find out more at

**January 1, 2018**

DIY all-ages show space closer after two years

The Void was home to many beneﬁt shows, movie challenges, and other events and a favorite stop for touring bands.

The Void is its side.

**January 7, 2018**

Bloomington was Boxcar Books and Community Center close its storefront after 16 years. See more at BoxcarBooks.org

**February 4, 2018**

Inaugurate the Revolution 2017-2018

Organizations from last year’s ITR as well as new groups and collectives shared updates on projects they’ve been working on in the last year and what they have planned for the future.

**February 15, 2018**

Racial Profiling by IUPD

Bloomington residents Amensha and Elijah, who have been working with Bloomington Solidarity Network, were targeted for completely unfounded “suspicious activity” outside of the School of Music, resulting in police harassment and a ban from campus, where Amensha studies law and her son practices music. Amensha has said, “That’s Really Sad. This Is Racism & I’ve Had Enough! This Is Discrimination At It’s Finest! I’m Livid! I’m Disappointed!”

Follow Bloomington Solidarity Network on Facebook for ways to support the family.

**February 16, 2018**

Mysterious somnambulist throws mysterious objects at a Bloomington police vehicle, striking the driver’s side rear door. The attacker remains at large at the time of publication.

**February 17, 2018**

BPD Uses School Shooting Panic to Harass and Arrest Black Residents

After two boys, 11 and 12 years old, allegedly posed with what were soon determined to be BB guns on social media, police arrested them both. Two adults and a 17-year-old were also arrested, potential in response to some attempting to assert their rights in the face of the police raid. The three minors remain in custody.

**March 2, 2018**

Walk-Out at Elliott Abrams talk at IU

Students, faculty, and others walked out of Abrams’s talk with pictures of victims of the Guatemalan genocide he facilitated, and gathering outside in the hall to speak to experiences of racism at IU. Abrams, who was invited by the same Toqueville Institute that hosted Charles Murray last year, was protested for his decades of involvement in neoliberal violence and genocide across the globe in the name of “democracy,” most notably the Iran-Contra affair, the Guatemalan genocide of 1981-83, and the Iraq war.

**March 6, 2018**

Mysterious somnambulist throws mysterious objects at a Bloomington police vehicle, striking the driver’s side rear door. The attacker remains at large at the time of publication.

**One Year Of Plain Words**

**This issue of Plain Words marks the one-year anniversary of the project, and I want to open space for reflection on the challenges, successes, failures, and complications we’ve had in the past year. These words are only my own — the thoughts of one person involved in writing, designing, printing, and distributing this publication — and don’t necessarily reflect the multifaceted and diverse ideas of others involved. With that said, let’s begin...**

**Political Rackets & Ideology**

As a project, we have chosen to operate with the understanding that there is no need for large political organizations, formal groupings, or leadership — forms of organization which separate us from our ability to think through the problems of our lives and act in unmediated ways. This includes an indictment of the slimy language of politics which often hides behind seemingly “anti-capitalist” or “anti-imperialist” or “anarchist” groups. We want to expose, ridicule, and sabotage every attempt by political managers to control revolt and remove it toward their own ends. We seek to attack any effort to pull human beings into political rackets and want to be little the petty mafioso who operate these groups. We favor free association rather than coercive structures; informal groupings based on friendship rather than formal membership organizations; individual initiative rather than bureaucracy; trust of one’s own desires rather than morality; honesty rather than hiding intentions in hopes of gaining adherents; open conversation rather than political manipulation. Despite criticisms from some quarters accusing Plain Words of being “ideological” for calling itself anarchist, we have always refused to abide by any party line or book-thump for any orthodoxy. We call our publication anarchist because anarchism continues to be a point of reference for us and a guiding compass for our lives: nothing more, nothing less. It is not “ideological” or “subcultural” to refuse to disguise the fact that we will fight for a world free of domination and submission. We have, from the very beginning, refused to play games of obfuscation, misrepresentation, and dishonesty, preferring unpopular intragenerational to the fake smile of the politician.

**Propaganda vs. Communication**

Despite success in avoiding political dogma, one major criticism I have of the initial focus of this project is its propensity for viewing itself as propaganda. If we truly wish to refuse the dead words of politics, we should think critically about how we engage with the media we create. Should an anarchist publication see its task as “spreading anarchist ideas” to the world in the hope of creating more anarchists? I think not, unless we seek to be missionaries of a secular cult. This is where the insistence on “propaganda” by many anarchists opens itself up for the worst forms of political manipulation.

What I want from this project is to communicate, to express my ideas (in visuals, words, deeds) and to put them in conversation with the ideas and actions of others with whom I may have afﬁnity. If I make deﬁnitive statements against authoritativeness, I would also like to open up questions about that authority and its possible destruction. Without reducing everything to the stupidity of democratic dialogue, I want to argue, contest, debate, and discuss with others my thoughts and dreams. I will leave propaganda to militaries, advertising executives, television news stations, and electoral campaigns. I wish to speak like a human being, not a bullhorn.

**Learning Curves**

If we are to believe the internet, there are many new people coming to a point of conﬂict with state authority and capitalistic domination. While we laugh with every...
Against the techno-nightmare

Much of the content in Plain Words has furthered a critique of technological alienation and the mutilation of human life by digital technology. I try, as much as possible, to put this into practice in my life and in this project. Yes, we use computers to design each issue and maintain our website. But despite some initial desire to be a hub of “counter-information” on the internet, we have focused most of our energy on creating a widely-distributed print publication. While we post a digital copy of every issue on our website, what matters most to me is that one cannot walk around downtown Bloomington without passing numerous places offering free copies of the latest issue. In a time where more and more writing is migrating to a purely-digital sphere (and is subsequently deadened by the medium and the information sickness it creates), we have chosen to prioritize the quiet reflection made possible by reading a material publication. It is this I am most proud of. However, there are challenges...

IS ANYONE READING?

One of the difficulties in publishing an anonymous periodical is that we rarely know what anyone feels about what we write; what disagreement, outrage, or inspiration our little paper stirs in others. Aside from knowing that people take copies from the places we leave them, or limited commentary on its contents from friends, we don’t even know how widely Plain Words is being read. We try to encourage response and contribution, but few take us up on this offer. I hope this isn’t because the act of writing — not social media outlets or inane meme production, but actual letters on paper — isn’t appealing. I would like this publication to be a mosaic of voices exploring together what a world without coercion, work, alienation, and authority could look like — and how to get there. I am happy to do the work of carefully designing, prolifically printing, and methodically distributing this paper, but hope for others to join in creating what truly matters: dialogue between and expression by human beings, without political fetters or commercial logic, free in every way.

So please consider writing an essay, sending some commentary about your sense of vandalism, sharing your inspired poetry, or responding to something we wrote.

We will continue, with modest but active hearts and hands, to put this rag into the world, with the belief that the urge to create is also a destructive urge.

For human community & wild exuberance, margot v.

No Mas Muertes

In the face of neoliberal deterioration of living standards, malcontent people have taken to the streets of Iran starting December 28, 2017. Healthcare, workplace security, and employment have declined in recent years, forcing people into short-term contracted jobs or unemployment. After the state did not provide funding to repair damages from an earthquake in November and the cost of living was continuing to rise, demonstrations started in Mashhad and quickly spread to over 100 cities in days.

People flooded the streets, clashed with police, attacked government buildings, went on strike, and set fires. Women in highly publicized images removed their hijabs, which the government forces them to wear. Cop cars were overturned, chants calling for “Death to the Revolutionary Guards” and “Death to Khameni” were popular. The motivations of demonstrators seemed varied, in addition to opposition to neoliberalism, there were both supporters of jailed opposition leaders and reactionaries present in the streets. After a few weeks the demonstrations were largely over, with over 5,700 people arrested and dozens killed, though it seems there are still occasional protests or mass actions being taken.

Iranian Uprising

In Italy, the state continues its attacks on anarchist projects and individuals as part of Operation Scritta Manent. The repression began in September 2016 with raids on 30 houses and the arrest of five individuals. The state is attempting to hold seven individuals (the five arrested, plus two others already in prison for shooting a police executive in the kneecaps) responsible for over a decade of direct actions claimed by the Informal Anarchist Federation (FAI). The FAI is a decentralized tendency, not a formal organization; a name that has been attached to bombings, incendiary attacks, and other actions worldwide. Part of the state’s strategy has been to try to divide the Italian anarchist movement along ideological lines, attempting to distinguish between the “good,” “peaceful” social anarchism and the “violent,” “anti-social” insurrectionary anarchism. Additionally, the state has targeted those offering solidarity to the Scripta Manent prisoners, including the anarchist counter-information websites RadioAzione and Anarbih.info and the Croce Nera Anarcia (Anarchic Black Cross).

Despite the state’s attempts to isolate them by restricting communications, the comrades remain intransigent and dignified. For more information, visit anarbih.info.
decision and that public documents were not accessible enough. The only difference between an armored vehicle approved by Mayor Hamilton and Chief Diekhoff alone versus one approved by the full council is the illusion of legitimacy via a democratic process. We mustn’t let a small tweaking in the process shift the perception of the BearCat purchase and militarization of the police from illegitimate to legitimate.

The refusal to allow the BPD to militarize without a fight is a solid position. However, the distinction between a military vehicle and a different vehicle — say, a re-purposed Britsk truck — used for the same purposes, seems to be largely symbolic, though that symbolism is not entirely unimportant. As Viehlo puts out in an interview with WFHB’s “Bring It On,” there is data to suggest that police departments obtaining and using armored vehicles like the Lenco Bearcat make both police officers and local residents less safe. It’s been suggested that a military vehicle can change the orientation of a police force to act more explicitly as an occupying force. And we’ve seen in places like Ferguson and Standing Rock what militarized police forces can do. Apparently the Bloomington City Council has taken a position against police militarization at least in its most obvious forms, barring BPD from purchasing equipment from the Military Surplus program that sells military-style weapons and vehicles to local police departments across the country. The main difference between a BearCat and some other armored vehicle seems to be the ease with which it could transform from just armored to armed: the BearCat is set up for installations of weapons, although the BPD has not included any in its current order. One concern is what the vehicle could become in the future, what it will be used for when it’s readily available. Data shows that while most departments request these vehicles for such things as hostage situations and searches, they often end up using them for drug busts and executions of search warrants. And we all know how racist drug laws and enforce- ment are. There is a real concern about what the acquisition of this vehicle would mean for those living in Bloomington, particularly people of color, people who have mental illnesses. This is even more concerning given the new study that shows that Bloomington, along with several other cities in Indiana, has higher racial disparities concerning given the new study that shows.

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ing the poverty of Bloomington’s progressive identity. Bloomington – like every city – relies on a police force that uses violence to enforce a specific set of relations. The police uphold interoperating systems of white supremacy and property relations that criminalize and target specific sections of the population. Policing exists to enforce these relations and control popula rions. Armed vehicle or not, the police will always act in this capacity.

The progressive/liberal concept of policing offers no opportunity for meaningfully engaging. The entire debate around the Lenco Bearcat shows the lim it of politics and civil discourse. While the City might not be enthusiastic about the Mayor’s speech being disrupted, it is rel atively easy for them to absorb it and use it to bolster Bloomington’s liberal identity. It gives the illusion of a kind of chaotic de mocracy in which even extreme dissenters have a “voice.” However, this absorption is an act of control. Modern democracies ex crent control by giving us the illusion that we have a “voice” or a place in the process. The “conversation” is always prioritized to the point where we get lost in an endless deluge of commentary. The City of Bloomington is more than happy to “debate” and “listen” in response to the Bearcat controversy and no doubt hopes that most critics will be satisfied that their voice was heard and that our enlightened representatives can then continue on with both the purchase and maintaining the city’s liberal facade.

Similarly, the question of “trans parency” — so often invoked in the Bearcat debate — is another liberal diversion. It allows the politicians an easy path out of the controversy. They can feign outrage and whine about how they were excluded from the decision. They perform this role in the media, Olsonizing both the liberal bona fides and that of Bloomington as a whole. Somewhere we are supposed to believe that had a handful of Bloomington politicians been included, this would have somehow been a “just” decision. But that’s just a smoke-screen and hides the fact that these politicians are bought every day and are working together to build a city that will always be – and in fact cannot be – anything other than unjust.

Liberal identity serves as a distrac tion — and like all forms of control — must be destroyed, post haste. The following is a critique we received of the article “Good TV as a Roadblock to Becoming Ungovernable, or Anything Vile Ready” in the Winter 2018 edition of Plain Words. It is followed by a response from the author of the original article.

Notes

[1] See “Study: Blacks Arrested Disproportionately in Johnson County, Carmel” at IndyStar.com

... The Liberal Trap

.Maybe we should have this thing painted pink,” local business owner Jeanne Smith suggested, adding the paint color could help offset feelings of aggression and warfare the truck evokes for some.

“That’s actually a really good idea. Having it be something friendly,” Monroe County Commissioner Amanda Barge agreed. “Let’s make it Bloomington. Let’s make it weird. Let’s make it punky. I’m seri ous.”

These quotes — published in the Herald-Times during the public debate over the police department’s decision to pur chase an armored vehicle — are representa tive of the liberal project in Bloomington. There’s an almost imperceptible facade of liberalism that covers the everyday violence of gentrification, policing, racism, etc. — the institutionalized systems of oppression that liberal capitalism exist just as much in Bloomington as anywhere else. Maybe it’s a bit more hidden and easy for some people — particularly the liberal class — to ignore, but it’s there. Moreover, as develop ment accelerates — it is increasing.

The debate around the Lenco Bearcat illuminates the poverty of Bloomington’s progressive identity. Bloomington – like every city – relies on a police force that uses violence to enforce a specific set of relations. The police uphold interoperating systems of white supremacy and property relations that criminalize and target specific sections of the population. Policing exists to enforce these relations and control populations. Armed vehicle or not, the police will always act in this capacity.

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Liberal identity serves as a distraction — and like all forms of control — must be destroyed, post haste.

With some exceptions, anarchists these days don’t do a very good job of dealing with art and beauty. These are huge and important parts of human life, but we don’t have much to say about them. What we do have to say is usually about how these things are enslaving us and alienating us and “stymieing revolt.” Like we’d all be smashing-out Starbucks windows and killing our bosses if it weren’t for TV.

Of course it’s true. Of course TV pacifies us and of course it isolates us. It fits conveniently into a life of alienation under late capitalism. For sure, I’m not arguing for or against “good TV.”

But it could be that people are watching some of these “good TV” shows because they are beautiful. Because, in the best cases, they are feats of human creativity and artistic expression that deserve attention. The studies of light and color, of film and of storytelling, of beauty and sensuality, of power and aggression and suffering. You write that when watching TV “we are set in receiving mode while being flooded with images, archetypes, and stories.” But setting yourself in “receiving mode” to watch intricately-crafted images, full of archetypes that speak to core elements of our humanity is a tradition with roots far deeper than late capitalism. If you’re gonna “rave” that “to the ground” it makes me worry what other core elements of human culture you’ve got on the chopping block.

The images Michelangelo painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel were commissioned by Pope Julius II. From one perspective, these images are depicting a creation myth of the most oppressive reli gion humans have ever created, funded by an authoritarian cultural leader of that reli gion as a monument to its hegemony. Perhaps in, too, should be razed to the ground? Anarchist analysis must expand.

If we can’t find ways of speaking and relating to the way the eroticism and sensuality of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel each your breath and, like all great art and literature “make us go out of control” as Leslie
A response by the author

T

hs for your thoughtful and non-dogmatic response. I wrote, I appreciate the critical thought apparent throughout the letter, it is unfortunately a rare commodity these days, so thank you for putting your ideas out to express and attempt to realize our visions for a better world.

When we embrace this reality, we place ourselves on the receiving end of a rich tradition stretching back tens of thousands of years of humans struggling with our place in the universe. I bet we’ll have some cool things to contribute to that conversation. And I think it’s important to see that there, we build a solid foundation on which to express and attempt to realize our visions of a better world. That’s why I created and curated this forum and for putting your ideas out there. Can’t wait to see what comes next.

even among anarchists. I found some of the critiques you made useful, and disagreed with others.

First, I want to clarify what I was getting at with the “Good TV” essay. As you point out, I wrote, “TV is both bad and somehow bad for us. TV watching is a habit, not the most interesting.” This is where there’s confusion because you say, “I think you’re mistaken about TV being a meaningful activity.” I think you’re mistaken.

I’m having a hard time understanding your use of the ideas “our human- ity” and “the human condition.” I’m not sure how you research into the latter, and it seems to be an idea produced in the 20th century in the first-world. I am skeptical that something that society could have anything close to a meaningful and conclusive understanding of what it would mean to be human. There is knowledge about what it means to be human, knowledge about how TV is always been read as being situated in the time and place they come from. So instead of the “human condition,” I read it as “the 20th/21st century first-world condition.”

I like what you say about “rich tradition stretching back tens of thousands of years” around our “radical” and social justice circles there was that some TV shows were a socially positive force, aka “woke,” while others that didn’t promote love, gender, and social justice were “full of archetypes that speak to core elements of our humanity.” I just don’t know Fiedler put it, then we are going to continue to speak only to ourselves. Anyone not already thoroughly indoctrinated by our ideology can see that we’re missing something big here.

On a different note, there seems to be an assumption floating around in the background of this article (and in much anarchist discourse) that TV and the system that created it are the source of all of our problems. We are presented with an image (literally and figuratively) of a solitary person, miserable and alone in front of the television. Our analysis of the ways capitalism and the state encourage the worst parts of ourselves and exponentially increase their impact are apt and interesting them and their classmate, but it’s naïve the way we anarchists see others. It seems like the institutions and value systems of society are dying, but I don’t see experiments in communalism or new ideas or interesting social phenomena popping up. While I don’t mean to blame tech toys for ALL the world’s issues, I can’t help but see them as contributing to these specific problems.

You say, “of course TV pacifies us and of course it isolates us,” but I don’t think we should be taking for granted. When I was younger, I heard the phrase “idiot box,” but I never hear sentiments like that. I’m afraid to say that I’m more interested in how TV is being something bad, or something that could be judged in its own right.

I’m not going to deny that there are TV shows that are “full of human creativity and artistic expression.” I agree with you there. But I don’t think that’s why people watch TV. TV watching is a habit, formed because it is the easiest alternative to basically every other activity available to us.

You wrote, “I wrote more about that in the original essay, so I won’t re-explain it here. I think people watch TV, and occasionally one of the shows they watch contains some kind of ‘special meaning or heart. That’s been my experience at least. Sure I watched The Wire, but when it was over I qued up the newest season of Avatar. Like phones and computers, it occupies the time in between work and other necessary social roles.

But then one student spoke up, and said, “of course TV pacifies us and of course it isolates us,” but I don’t think we should be taking for granted. When I was younger, I heard the phrase “idiot box,” but I never hear sentiments like that. I’m afraid to say that I’m more interested in how TV is being something bad, or something that could be judged in its own right.

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Campaign against BPD’s Armored Vehicle

In early February, the City announced that in the spring of 2018 Bloomington Police Department will be purchasing a Lenox BearCat for the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT), which also includes officers from IUPD and the Monroe County Sheriff’s Department. The name BearCat stands for ballistic engineered armored response counter attack truck. By February 15th some activists with Black Lives Matter Bloomington kicked off resistance to the purchase of the armored vehicle by calling for others to join them at Mayor Hamilton’s State of the City address at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater.

It was a scene unfamiliar to Bloomington in the last few years. With minutes of starting his speech, Hamilton mentioned the purchase of the BearCat, seemingly in an attempt to preempt any disruption, as he knew activists were planning to show up. The attempt, however, failed, as activists, led by BLM organizes Vauhxx and Jack, soon began to question Hamilton from the audience. A good portion of the audience joined in, with 50 to 60 people cheering on the disruption. It continued for several minutes, with various City Council members, and even one man who “matched with King” (a trope that would play out repeatedly in response to BearCat protests), trying to placate the crowd before Vauhxx pulled out a megaphone and a 15-minute recess was called. During the recess, many tried to shame protagonists into “civility” and letting the mayor continue. As soon as he did, however, a crowd had gathered next to the stage and the shouting and disruption continued. A few minutes later Hamilton gave up and left the building. One notable example of the night’s events was the failure of the city administration’s often-successful counter-unrest tactics of preempting and limiting dissent by calls for dialogue and civility. But whatever was in charge of refreshments was nice enough to still put out two large cakes which protesters and others enjoyed while continuing to mingle and make sure everyone was getting out safe.

In the following days the mayor gave his speech in private while setting up three “listening” sessions offered as the proper channels through which to bring grievances. A “CIRT Vehicle Discussion” hosted by BPD two days prior to the State of the City address was an attempt to pacify dissent before it had really begun. However, it turned out just to be cops trying to tell everyone how important it was for them to have an armored vehicle, and failed to achieve its goal. So the city had to change its tactic from talking to listening. Three town hall style events were held in the week following in which member was able to speak for three minutes about their position on purchase of the BearCat.

Criticism of the decision to purchase the BearCat primarily comes from two places: transparency and police militarization, though some are also noting that the $225,000 could probably be better spent in many ways. The argument for transpar- ency is essentially one of process, as explained in Councilmember Steve Volan’s open letter to mayor Tallie Stein is值得注意 for attempting to engage with activists since at least 2011 during Occupy Bloomington, to little success, and for being caught on video saying that everyone who comes to public comment at city council meetings is “insane.” While he was seen trying to talk down protesters at mayor’s speech, by the following Tuesday, he released a letter com- plaining about how the mayor had not consulted him and the rest of the council on the
George DeBaptiste, a member of the Baptist congregation to which nearly all of them belonged, recalled, “Firearms were carved into churches, revolt- ers sometimes falling from the coat pockets as Deacons rose from prayer.”

From Bond for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America by Fergus M. Bordewich

He always declared, with what one imagines must have been a carefully calibrated chuck- le and a serious tone, that he only wished that he was “smart enough to steal the nig- gers, and he would stole all there was in Old Kentuck.”

DeBaptiste estimated that in the course of eight years in Madison, he personal- ly assisted 188 fugitives to freedom, and went some time that number indirectly. He sometimes crossed into Kentucky him- self to make arrangements for their escape. [After receiving coded messages about the whereabouts of fugitives], DeBaptiste and one or two friends would go down to an agreed-upon point on the river after dark and lie at the water’s edge, sometimes for half the night, listening for the sound of muffled oars. Most often, DeBaptiste, An- derson, or one of the others took fugitives to Lancaster, twelve miles north of Mas- son, a town inhabited by fiercely abolitionist immigrants from Vermont and Maine, who in 1839 had formed the first antislavery so- ciety in southern Indiana.

In 1846 Kentucky slave owners and their local allies launched an effort to destroy the underground in Madison. White mobs invaded the homes of blacks and nearly beat to death those who dared to re- sist. One of DeBaptiste’s conductors, Grif- fin Booth, was almost drowned by proslav- ery men in the Ohio River. Elijah Anderson abruptly moved upriver to Lawrenceburg before something similar happened to him. DeBaptiste himself fled to Detroit, fear- ing exposure and arrest. Outside Madison, gangs of proslavery hoodlums terrorized white abolitionists. The stress on under- ground families was extreme. The son of John Carr, a white farmer, remembered how he had slept on a trundle bed in his parents’ room and was frequently wakened in the night by his mother sobbing and his father stealthily slipping out of the room: “My curiosity, then awakened, was not wholly satisfied for a year or more, during which time the, to me, mysterious events recurred. My parents were devout Baptists, members of the church nearly, and I attended reg- ularly the meetings and Sunday school. I heard much of wicked men, thieves, rob- bers, and murderers, and began to fear that my father must be engaged in some such wicked work, and I used to cry to myself when I heard poor mother crying and be- cause, I thought, she was grieving over my father’s wickedness.” Finally, one morning, after a year of this, the boy discovered that his father was hiding fugitives in the hayloft, where he found three men, a woman, and a baby hidden concealed in the hay. “Father then explained the whole history, caution- ing secrecy. Thus warning that some of the pro-slavery men might kill him, or burn his barn and other outbuildings.”

The system that DeBaptiste and his collaborators built continued to flourish, despite attacks by white vigilantes and the flight of several key leaders. New men con- tinued to step forward to fill the breach. The kind of repression that a generation earlier would have been sufficient to destroy the underground had little lasting effect. If any- thing, it stiffened resistance to intimidation. The Yankee farmers in Lancaster made it known to all that if they were attacked by proslavery forces they would fight back, even on Sunday. Remembrance Williams, how anyone can know about “core ele- ments of our humanity,” and I tend to read these kinds of claims as those which al- ways camouflages human-constructed ideas as nature.

The nearest I’ve seen a TV show speaking to any kind of deep meaning, situ- ated in the time and place it came from, is The Sopranos, but only because at every turn the characters failed to grasp any under- standing of themselves, each other, and the world around them. A striking example of the 20th/21st century first-world condition if you ask me!

Does great art and literature really make you go out of control? I’m jealous if as. When reading most literature, my mind quickly wanders after reading a few pag- es, and I end up flipping to the end of the chapter to see how much I have left before I can put the book down. I blame this at- tention deficiency on the hours I spent ev- ery day as a kid playing video games and watching TV. When I think of great art, I remember viewing Tumblr or Instagram on my phone. No matter how beautiful some image was, I’d scroll down to the next one within a second. If anything, I’d say that if you really value great art and literature then you should be especially hostile to all these tech toys, which reduce beauty in prefer- ence to amusement.

“I do have a critique of art, one shared by many artists such as the surrealists, Dadaists, Situationists, and others throughout the last century. Cre- ativity can and should exist in all aspects of life, not just frozen in a product, or “work of art.” Should only a painting or a sculpt- ture, but not a relationship between caring friends who come to deep understandings of each other, be considered art? What about a life lived with dignity and through a veil of guilt, in constant combat with a society always trying to stifle both? That sounds, and would feel, pretty beautiful to me. Nonetheless, I still like works of beauty, like paintings and music. Critics aren’t al- ways meant to be demolishing, they are of- ten meant to be expansive, to rip open the walls of definition.

I agree with you that dissatisfac- tion, isolation, anxiety, cruelty, despair, and misery were not created by capitalism, but I suspect that many of these feelings/in- flictions have been exacerbated by it. Or, at least, some people at certain contexts within the past 300 years of capitalism ex- perience those feelings more than others in different contexts. For example, precarity in late-stage capitalism contributes to anx- iety, as does debt. Again, neither created by capitalism in itself, than the fear of being people at specific era. I agree with your sentiment that we shouldn’t expect a hy- pothetical future anarchist society to solve every human existential crisis, as Christians view heaven. But capitalism, especially with assistance with information technology, has deeply inliterate minute aspects of our daily lives. That these intrusive systems of control and mediations, which serve the purposes of varied inhuman institutions and distract forces like capital, wouldn’t contribute to our dissatisfaction, isolation, anxiety, despair, and misery seems unlikely to me. Either that, or us humans are incred- ibly flexible in what we desire and will tol- erate. Given how unhappy everyone is, how terrible a shape the world is in, and how neurotic and unfail we are to ourselves and each other, I doubt this is true.

I want for us to contribute some- thing to the rich tradition of finding our place in the universe. But I think people come to find us being learned from and through each other, hence artist/literary/critical/theoretical work, scientific journals, etc. If TV is keeping us isolated, then it’s a direct obsta- cle to us coming to any of those ideas.

George DeBaptiste

**UPDATES ON J20 TRUMP INAUGURATION ARRESTES**

On Inauguration Day in 2017 over 200 people were kentled and arrest- ed for alleged involvement in an anti-capitalist, anti-fascist march in Wash- ington DC. Almost everyone was initially charged with felony rioting, before later be- ing reclassified with eight felonies punishable by up to 75 years in prison. The state was — and still is — attempting to use conspiracy charges to hold everyone who was arrested responsible for the property destruction that happened on Inauguration Day. With only a handful of people accepting plea dea- l, most defendants held out for col- lective defense and solidarity. The first six defendants, including a few street medics, went to trial in November of last year. After a few days of deliberation all were acquitted on all charges. In the face of their acquittal, about a year after the initial arrests, and fol- lowing a Day of Solidarity with J20 Resis- tance, the prosecution dropped all charges against 129 people, leaving 59 still facing charges. (It’s important to note, too, that the charges were dropped “without prejudice” leaving the door open for charges to be re- filed in the future). Among those whose charges were dropped are all three former defendants currently residing in Indiana. So with some of the local pressure off, we must throw our full support behind the re- maining defendants. The next trial is set to begin on April 17, 2018, with subsequent trials ongoing continuously throughout the year. We’ve got a lot of work in front of us to keep up the pressure and the support for everyone going to trial from now until No- vember.

Keep an eye on DefendJ20Resis- tance.org and ItsGoingDown.org for trial updates.

And don’t forget we also have one defendant from Bloomington’s local inau- guration day march last year. Look out for calls for solidarity as the case continues.

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Bloomington is increasingly becoming a place meant for rich and middle class people. In order for that to happen, the city government is cracking down on the presence of poor people downtown, while real estate developers are building luxury and market-rate housing developments that drive up rent across the city. Cops, cameras, and condominiums complement each other in guiding the city towards becoming a place inhospitable to poor or uncontrollable people.

The Bloomington Police Department expanded its downtown presence last year and finally removed the homeless population from People's Park. This came after Mayor John Hamilton unveiled his Safe & Civil Cities initiative in August 2016, which aims to make downtown safer for middle-class and rich people, including privileged students and their visiting parents.

To accomplish this, the BPD is in stalling and monitoring four or five surveillance cameras downtown, an addition to the six added in 2016 located along the B-Line, in People's Park, and in Seminary Square. Regarding this technology, Steve Kallams with the Bloomington Police Department said: “The criminal out there sees the cameras — we are hoping they take their criminal offense somewhere else.”

In many of the river communities, underground work was carried out almost entirely by African Americans. One of the most effective networks of all was based in the port of Madison, Indiana, about eighty miles downstream from Cincinnati. With a few exceptions, it is difficult to form a sharp picture of the men who formed this cell. None of them left memoirs or diaries. Their activities remain visible at all only as they have been refracted through the anecdotes of white abolitionists, often long after the fact, and in a handful of nineteenth-century newspaper articles that omit more than they reveal. It is clear that at the cell’s center in the early 1840s was the freedman Virginian George DeBaptiste, whose picturesque career suggests that he had much more than the average share of charm and nerve. A natural mule, he would not have been out of place in the shadowy world of twentieth-century espionage. Born in Fredericksville, Virginia, in 1814, he was trained as a barber, and by the age of eighteen had become the body servant of a profession gambler, with whom he traveled widely around the country, including the Deep South. In 1838 DeBaptiste had settled in Madison, and his barbershop at the corner of Second and Walnut soon became the underground’s local headquarters.

As late as 1940, Madison was the most famous around town for having a sign that’s been tagged at least twice.

There are 26 units in this complex, and they are going for $249,900 – $869,000, so if you live nearby, prepare for an influx of rich people into your neighborhood later this year when the project is complete.
On the night of Ricky’s murder, what else motivates or guides one’s general and uncontrollable revolt like participating in protests of police violence and hope for reform, what hopes might they have for their lives and the less we’ll have to worry about the cops would still be in our lives, but if nonsense they come up with. Obviously, we’re a long way from that, but our efforts will lead to any particular change is slow and even extra meaningful. We can build from there.

Respondent 3: The more we pay attention, to take on serious engagement and educate ourselves, the more we can replace the need for these institutions in our daily lives. We only have spirit and numbers on our side.

Respondent 2: In a context like Evansville, it seems unlikely that we can expect a response that resembles even a scaled-back version of what happened in Ferguson or Baltimore. Therefore, it’s necessary to think about what is possible in our context and not try to replicate those events in a context where they don’t apply. Small disturbances do seem possible in Evansville and the more of a ruckus we can create, the more effective we will be. That being said, even small gestures such as the vigil we held have a huge impact on the way we consider what is and is not possible in a place and can build our capacity in ways we can’t fully predict. I think for a lot of people seeing a diverse crowd of people acknowledging that someone was murdered and standing up to his murderners even in small ways was very meaningful. We can build from there. In my opinion, change is slow and even extra meaningful. We can build our capacity in ways we can’t fully predict. I think for a lot of people seeing a diverse crowd of people acknowledging that someone was murdered and standing up to his murderers even in small ways was very meaningful. We can build from there.

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Urban Stations

It’s been there for a bit now, but Urban Station Apartments on Walnut Street near Barbara Marri are renting our one-bed-

P r o s t a t e  c a n c e r  a n d  o t h e r  c a n c e r s  a r e  d e a d l y  i l l n e s e s  t h a t  a f f e c t  m a n y  o f  o u r  p e o p l e .  W e  w a n t  t o  h e l p  e v e r y o n e  l e a r n  a b o u t  t h e  s y m p t o m s  a n d  h o w  t o  g e t  t h e  b e s t  c a r e  f o r  t h e m .  T h e  U S A  C a n c e r  C o a l i t i o n  h a s  m a n y  w e b s i t e s  a n d  r e s o u r c e s .  P l e a s e  v i s i t  w w w .  u s a c a n c e r . o r g  f o r  m o r e  i n f o r m a t i o n .

We thank these respondents for sharing their thoughts and experience with us, appreciate everyone who showed up in the wake of Ricky’s murder, and send our beat to Ricky’s family and friends. Check out Where the Water Flows for more on this story and many others: wherethericfews.com

Respondent 2: On the night of Ricky’s murder, many of us who went down to the federal building sent texts out to most of our friends in town asking them to come. One of the most inspiring responses came from a friend who was running a Dungeons and Dragons campaign that night who convinced his whole group to cancel whatever kind of dragon slaying they were up to and come down to the vigil.
The day after Trump was elected President, news reports circulated images of young people at college campuses gathering to cry and mourn together. At these “cry-ins” or “self-care events,” students reportedly colored in coloring books, played with play-doh, met with therapy dogs, drank hot chocolate, and of course, cried together. These stories were met with ridicule, supposedly showcasing the over-sensitive millennial generation as a bunch of snowflakes who can’t handle the world. But just like how to Disneyland, the existence of the uber-commercialized and artificial Disneyland gives cover to the rest of society pretending not to be both already, these spectacular stories of human coping hide the fact that society is already coping all the time.

Coping with our minds

Mindfulness is a Buddhist practice that has recently become popular within the field of psychology. It involves adopting a quasi-meditative mindset throughout daily life to non-judgmentally notice toxic thoughts. Seeing these thoughts for what they are supposedly lessens their ability to exacerbate neurosis and anxiety. Mindfulness never aims to “cure”, but rather offers an ongoing strategy for producing a mental health facility proposal is the city’s response.

Coping through drugs

The number of people addicted to opioids have increased drastically in the last decade, including over double the amount of heroin users in the US from 2002 to 2016. The Opioid Crisis is largely a result of over-prescription of painkillers for severe and chronic pain. These painkillers are addictive, and 21 to 29 percent of Americans report using them for non-medical purposes. Painkillers like oxycodone and hydrocodone have been prescribed at alarming rates, with nearly 1 of 4 adults in the US receiving at least one opioid prescription in 2001, compared to 1 of 3 in 2012. Using these drugs recreationally can lead to dependence and addiction, with many users transitioning to illegal opioids like heroin and fentanyl. The Opioid Crisis is a complex issue with no easy solution, but one thing is clear: we need to do more to prevent and treat opioid addiction.

Andre Green, Mack Long, and Christopher Goodlow in 2015; Aaron Bailey in June 2017. Bradley King, who, according to his family, had schizophrenia, was killed by a Hendricks County Sheriff’s deputy in 2016. Rarely are there any consequences for the officers or departments responsible. How could we be working together across the state for a stronger response?

Respondent 2: In September 2016, police executed a homeless man named Daniel Wooten after he jammed in an unattended police cruiser and drove off. Previous arrest records indicate that he probably suffered from severe mental illness. In October 2016, Evansville police brutally beat a handcuffed homeless drug addict, Mark Healy, after a cop stuck himself on a syringe in Healy’s pocket. The issue evoked controversy after body camera footage proved the cops had concocted a bullshit story together for the police report. In August, Ricky Ard was murdered despite obviously needing mental health intervention and when de-escalation abilities to get word out about these events, encouraging and supporting each other could be steps toward higher consequences for police who kill people.

Respondent 2: I would like to see greater contact and collaboration between people in this region in hopes of establishing more complex networks that could, among other things, be relied upon to facilitate a rapid response to a police murder. In these moments, it’s useful if we can act fast and respond in large numbers. If those who were interested in pushing back against police violence were in touch with each other throughout the region, we could go to each other’s towns and create a significant disturbance in these moments. I think the only way we are ever going to stop police violence is if we make it clear that our towns and cities aren’t going to function if the cops keep killing people. Creating major disturbances that shut down freeways, close businesses, cause damage to state and corporate property and otherwise make sure we all just go about our day, takes large numbers of people. If we help each other we increase our chances of achieving that. In the moments when there isn’t a heightened conflict, we can use these networks to build, share resources, and attempt to improve our lives and the lives of those around us.

The calls for officers to be fired or have criminal charges brought against them almost always end in cruel disappointment. With so many strategies failing to hold police accountable, what thoughts do you have about novel ways to address police violence?

Respondent 3: Not shielding their actions as a police officers from their daily lives — their neighbors, pastors, families, etc. — might be effective. The security guard’s name still hasn’t been released. He clocks in and one knows who this person is.

Respondent 2: I addressed this question in my answer above, but I’d like to add that if we can get together with those around us and build up the strength of our neighborhood and communities so that more and more we are turning to each other to solve problems and mediate conflict, the police and other powerful actors in society will
Nonetheless, as indicated above, the federal courts were unable to exercise the authority to conduct the construction of I-69 being a notable exception). In general, we are still trying to figure out what a response to police murder (for example) looks like here and how we could work together to make that happen. Ricky Ard’s murder was the first recent case to use the body camera footage was released. I’m afraid that sent a message that we were still facing the same kind of “blue” police force; I wish we would have continued to try to actually make something happen in some way.

One of the most heartbreaking aspects of police murders is seeing the families of the victims on what has to be one of the worst days of their lives. How did you approach the family and navigate building those relationships?

Respondent 3: Our interactions with the family were pretty minimal. At the vigil on the night of the murder, a woman who attended said she was in touch with the family and I approached her and asked if she would pass on my number. A couple days later she later sent me a message. Ricky Ard’s niece, and we arranged to talk. It was hard to balance my desire for her and her family to take certain positions — such as condemning police violence or calling for protest — with the obvious need to put their grieving process first. It took an effort to put our shared disappointment before my ideology. I made myself available for more connection, invited her to collaborate on an interview to be published on Where the River Frowns, and asked about the possibility of more public protests. She seemed interested in these things, but was kind and thankful for the vigil. She said that she appreciated how “diverse” the vigil had been — highlighting the number of both Black and white people in attendance. That was the only real contact we had with her until she sent us and the mainstream media her interview to be published on Where the River Frowns. I wish that more relationship building had been possible, but it didn’t seem to be in the cards.

A statement from Ricky’s niece, Shannon, talks about Ricky’s history of mental illness. Here in Bloomington, data from the BPD shows that most situations in which officers drew weapons were Wellness Checks, indicating that those struggling with mental health are some of the most at-risk for police tactics. Can you talk about how you see mental illness factoring in to the danger that police pose? How has that thread been woven into the local response?

Respondent 3: I see mental illness used by cent of patients prescribed them admit to misusing them. When the prescription runs out, or when a tolerance is built up to the drug’s effects, many begin using heroin or other illegal opioids. Chronic means “continuous or occurring again and again for a long time.” yielding that it probably won’t be going away permanently. Taking pill killers then is a way of coping, of constantly battling a condition that isn’t being fixed for whatever reason.

The most common reported type of chronic pain is low back pain, which has a number of different causes. But it’s likely that the prevalence of this kind of pain has actually increased over time. A study done in California shows that the proportion of people suffering from long-term, low back pain has more than doubled between the early ‘90s and 2009. Clearly something about this society and form of life is causing people to feel more chronic pain, which they then cope with by taking painkillers.

Habitual use of any drug can be read as a coping mechanism. 55 million people in the US used weed within the last year, and 35 million do on a monthly basis. 52% who used marijuana came from the millennial generation. Weed lowers your standards, it makes boring things fun. A tip show on Netflix becomes entertaining, the toxic parts of a relationship are de-emphasized over the presence of a warm body and a place to put your head. The drug’s effects, many begin using heroin or other illegal opioids. Chronic means “continuous or occurring again and again for a long time.” yielding that it probably won’t be going away permanently. Taking pill killers then is a way of coping, of constantly battling a condition that isn’t being fixed for whatever reason.

The most common type of drug that is considered to be a prescription drug is Oxycodone. This drug is often prescribed for chronic pain, but it can also be used for pain relief in people who are experiencing acute pain. There are many other types of prescription drugs that can be used to treat pain, and each one has its own set of potential benefits and risks. Some of the most common prescription painkillers include:

- Codeine
- Hydrocodone
- Morphine
- Oxycodone
- Vicodin

While prescription painkillers can be effective in managing pain, they can also cause serious side effects. These side effects can include:

- Drowsiness
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Constipation
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Delirium
- Seizures
- Overdose

It is important to talk to your doctor about the potential risks and benefits of prescription painkillers. They can help you decide whether prescription painkillers are right for you and how to use them safely.
Eric King is an anarchist serving 10 years in federal prison for an attempt to attack on a Kansas City, Missouri government official’s office.

In September 2014, Eric threw a hammer and two lit Molotov cocktails through the window of Missouri congressman Emanuel Cleaver’s (unoccupied) office. Both incendiary devices failed to ignite.

On March 3, 2016, Eric accepted a non-cooperating plea agreement for one count of using “explosive materials to commit arson of property used in or affecting interstate commerce.” Eric was sentenced to ten years, the statutory minimum and the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. If suicide is related to coping, is it linked to a failure to cope, or is it actually a rejection of coping as a way of living? Random mass shootings are also on the rise. These seemingly arbitrary acts are hard to understand, but the absence of empathy points to a lack of connection with people, and the suicidal intentions behind them demonstrates a feeling of hopelessness.

Conclusion

It would be stupid, insensitive, and unhelpful to suggest that people “stop coping,” as if that were possible or even desirable. Instead, I seek to uncover a trend in the hope of allowing us to better understand this off-changing and complex society we have been forced into. If you know what your enemy has been up to, wouldn’t that help you plot against them?

For more & citations, visit plainwordsbloomington.org

RESPONDING TO THE POLICE MURDER OF RICKY ARD
AN INTERVIEW WITH EVANSVILLE COMRADES

In August of 2017 Evansville, Indiana resident Ricky Ard was gunned down in an EUPD officer and a federal security guard outside of the federal courthouse in downtown Evansville. We spoke with three people involved in the response to Ricky’s death.

Why did you join the gathering at the Federal Building?

Respondent 1: The federal building where the police and the property lines of the building were and parking across from the building and on all sides. They made no contact with us at the vigil. At a small rally the next day, a Federal Officer verbally reinforced where the property lines of the building were and instructed that any trespass would end in arrest. When a protester asked about the public sidewalk the officer rushed into his face and physically flexed up, telling the protester not to challenge him. When cameras were brought out he backed down and shielded his face.

Respondent 2: In general, our collective response to Ricky Ard’s murder was not powerful enough to elicit much of a response. On the night of his murder, we held a candlelight vigil and the next day we gathered on a public sidewalk outside of the federal building where the police and press outnumbered us by a significant margin. This is not to say that these moments were not powerful for those involved and for the Ard family viewing them from afar, nor that they weren’t a powerful gesture in context. But it does seem important to point out that it is too soon to make accurate calculations about how repressive forces like cops and the criminal justice system would respond to a powerful counter-force.