

I Don't Bash Back I Shoot First

On Queer Gangs

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BE GAY DO CRIME

The following essay was anonymously circulated amidst queer/anarchist circles in the Pacific Northwest. It is reproduced here in its entirety. Its initial circulation sparked much controversy among its readers. Here's hoping for more!

First, let's clear a few things up: Bash Back! is dead—old history. We're all still fucking its corpse, totally disinterested while the filthy body falls apart, starting to smell. Whatever. Here's the real point: if at the moment of BB!'s disappearance this queer virus fails to spread, if we aren't proliferating terribly, then we're kidding ourselves, calling what we experienced a death (despite our nihilist woo-woo-insurrecto fantasy's)—if this is our case, then what we chose was to survive things as they are, making our peace~ even with our noted bad attitude. Doing-Being Assimilation, by other means. And that's cool, right? Jay/ kay~<3lulz<3~Fuck You, Fuck That Shit. If you're making your peace, we were enemies from the start—Get fucked. For whoever is still insatiable: your glee, hatred and friends are waiting; so get your shit together and begin again. Crazy insurrecta-bitches had it right— but once or twice “affinity groups” are cheap shit—let's get it constant. Some of us were stepping to that shit before the first convergence, and some of us have been rolling hard since, licking our lips at that “War” in Social War. Here are a few of our notes.

INSTEAD OF A THEORY:

1 . FIND EACH OTHER

We think that survival, fighting back and fucking shit up should be step one; getting food, fending shelter to live in, starting fights, staying fly, making people hurriedly cross the street, keeping het's mouths shut, scamming hormones, networks to get the benefits of your crime where it should go, names of who needs to get smacked down, looking out for each other when we're out escorting, taking from anyone in our way. Actively not giving a fuck means starting right in the thick of conflict, daily life, rather than going through the tired tradition of looking to meet people with a bunch of activists, keeping calm, teaching the poor unknowing queers and good citizens what they really need. This is about doing what we want right from the start—building the means to our autonomy for ourselves. Here's the last argument anyone needs: Wouldn't you have rather started your intro to anarchism-in-action off with a fly ass gang of queer criminals who've got your back, instead of charity activists? Yeah, we fucking thought so.

Forming a crew is a splitting off—it's giving up the entire feel better, join the milieu, talk to hearts and minds, radical offsetting bullshit that the rest of anarchism is obsessed with. Learning to act means a coming together—fucking shit up, endlessly. But our splitting off

always seems to begin our contact with other people who seem a little more like us, outside the anarchist circuit.

So. First things first, find some wild ass queers who just wanna run amok—alternatively, queers who are sick of everything and full of cynicism. Simple enough—you're almost certainly friends with a few of these, but assuming you don't just look up and say "oh, right, there's my crew" don't fret, it's not like it's hard to find queers who can't wait for a way to get back at the world. Plenty of us are getting fucked over constantly, and the only things people come to look forward to is their group-therapy meeting. Uuuugh. Something as simple as being those loud queer kids brings people from unexpected places.

Learn each other's strengths and interests by hanging out together. Go everywhere with each other. Dance/sex parties like every week. Share your shit. Free time spent and carved out with each other might be the most important element in starting to speak to each other. Egg each other on, and support your friends—slowly, you will grow comfortable acting with each other, and responding to each other's needs quickly—speaking means a few minutes till acting. Our coming together looks fly, and builds a common feeling along our sense of moving through this world. It's this endearment to each other that builds trust, that teaches us how to say what we need, and get angry enough to go get it. Our bonds put us out of the grasp of people wanting to direct us away from each other, away from our needs and wants, trying to manage, regulate and make useful our hatred for everything. Instead, this bond puts us in a position to build our own power and autonomy.

Crew logic is different from everyday logic. You start stepping with an eye to how everything around you can be put to use for you and yours. Building your power is its own end, self justifying—all the other political shit offered just get annoying, engaging with it, boring. Fostering in common the ability to meet our needs and bring the conflict on our terms will always remain obscured to our enemies and their confusion only fuels us on. Laughing hyena queerz. If you hate everything, fuck everything up. Hit back, make them hurt. Pointing out that people are attracted to you when you bring force and win is anarchist heresy, apparently, but that's soooo useless. Cause enough waves and they'll come to you, or better by far, imitate you. "Affinity groups" only wish they could be as hot as us.

2 . TAKE SPACE (& EVERYTHING)

Open hostility is the name of the game. When it's you, and your friends, it only takes one person to make things hectic. Those first nights out will be difficult, painful, and uncertain. Then things get interesting. Push come to shove, just start walking around in groups ~ you're bound to find trouble. No snub should go unanswered, pushing your bonds harder and harder, getting into conflict that offers you no way out—Not the least of its virtues. You might be nervous, you might get furious and wild out; either way, your crew will grow, your togetherness change, and you'll be (more) ready for whatever.

A part of this will be the many ways you begin taking up space—with the outside world and with each other. We don't pretend to know your situation or the best way for you to attack; so what we offer is a look at some key things distilled from our experience we think might

be of use to you. So before going anywhere else with this writing, know that we respond to our situations primarily out of sense and intuition; there were plots, plans, and some ideas, but we didn't know where any of them would go, how they would play out: neither do you. Everything happens differently in different contexts, be ready to shift.

That said, here is what we think is useful in any context: Liberals exist, have money, and frequently want our hot social capital to legitimize their enterprises, socially or business wise – in most cases, both. So feel free to turn, exploit, corrupt, use and dispose of them to the ends of attacking domination and building your power.

Squats are incredibly useful—as shelter, safe houses, or simply free space. Becoming a known spot for queer/trans people to stay safely can fill up a space quick—one of the houses we were holding had up to 40 people at one point. We just spread mats out, and covered the floor. And we often find ourselves houseless or almost so, or barely able to cover rent, or know other queer/trans people in abusive situations—it's good to be able to give someone (or ourselves) a way out. Creating a strategic network of spaces around your city opens up crazy possibilities, and if one spot gets raided, shut down, evicted or whatever, you will already know another few places to go. Even if you're not going to use a spot, someone else might. Getting into a place is pretty easy with a little practice (one memorable night we got into 12 empty houses before sunrise without any prior planning,) and after you've opened a space you can spread the word out about where and how to get in to who needs it.

Also, Bump Keys. Important enough to get their own line. If you're not familiar with them, look them up. They give you very quick access to a lot of places.

The way your crew attacks together will likely have a distinct character to it, one reflecting different strategies put into play ~ there are many different ways to practice/ spread/live war. Here are some examples: they are reflections of our practice and lives, not a program. Simplifying, different approaches could be said to be between open and visible forms, and closed and obscure forms. Again the best way to know what works for your context is to go by conversation, experience through experimentation, intuition, and your sense of what would work.

Open ties are visible. Take group strolls, pick fights, write up on walls, vandalize everything—especially people. Jump people, Start parties, talk about how cops suck scams you know, and how boring straight cis people are; jump people in to the conflict between sex in squats and wild dance parties. Be loud, obnoxious and annoying. Being seen from a block or two away—a similar style of dress may be adopted, or not. A way of fagging what your down for might come into play—one group tied a pink bandanna over a black one to single that they were down to ride on someone. Walk into stores in groups of 10, fill your bags, make a mess and leave, dominate clubs and bars. Take over street corners, or wherever people can still congregate near you; enforce your spot as you please. Act wild, because you can—whatever is a rush. Live a presence built over time. When others see you, encourage them to set up their own group and support other sets.

Closed forms are much more obtuse and opaque. This doesn't mean any less conflict, crime, corruption or any of that good shit, nor cutting off your ability to act with other people against a common enemy, simply quieter forms, and very distinct in-group/out group divides.

Of course, this entails talking about your criminal shit in private only, learning to signal ever so subtly, and having a lot more planned out attacks and goals setting. Generally, this looked two different ways—on the one hand, you could just be that group of queer/trans people hanging out all the time, no one having any clue about what you're up to when they don't see you. On the other hand, no one has to be aware that they are surrounded by a hateful queer squad with plans for them. Our enemies always know how to lay out just the strategies to undo them, if you listen just the right way.

We've got one of the best tactics around, the secret potential of the closets. Some thing we used. You could appear to all the world as just isolated, normative cis-hetero people, and they will never see it coming—looking like a fucking queer later can throw off any description cops have when they come looking.

Mixing up open and closed formulations created a powerful dynamic for conflict. Being open ended allowed us to slip between different situations and approaches and take whatever form exploited our enemies and allowed us to keep on the attack. For infiltration, blackmail, targeted attacks against rapists and pimps, and working together to rip off our jobs, the closed form was indispensable. For open conflict, intimidation, creating space, inspiring other angry queer/trans kids to link up and grab a weapon, the open form was key. Walking between forms can (and should) be as quick as a stroll from one block to the next.

On the question of leadership: lots of gangs have leadership roles. Obviously, we've found this useless: chains of command are the quickest way for one person to try and 'calm down' or rally up everyone else for their personal benefit. So yeah, not interested. However, this doesn't mean that there can't be different levels of "in" in your crew—but this is formed on the basis of who's shown themselves comfortable with what. This is mostly an issue for more open formulations; some people are down, but only by degrees. You might collectively trust some people more or some less than others. Some people you might trust, but you've yet to act together~especially on risky shit. It's important that everyone know that not everyone needs to know everything. Also, some people are liberals, and they really don't need to know shit—unless that tranzqueer swagger you got gets them hot, then *shrug* maybe they have potential.

3 . SHARE THE GIFT OF YOUR VIOLENCE

“Friendship, Vengeance and Contempt—these are the only guides worth following”

The lived reality of the participants in a riot/black bloc/situation where you and everyone around you is just out to fuck shit up, then you've felt that maniacal pull towards smashing anything your sick of. You've felt how the only act worth anything in those moments is multiplying that sense of power. This sensation is the sensation of the gang—the embedded relation between you and your friends, making it your daily context, the medium you talk and live through. There is no program for friends bonded between each other; goals become apparent relative to the force and corruption you can wager. With each other, with anything in your way—share the gift of your violence.

Our “theory” is really simple: self protection and exploding social war by communalizing violence—to multiply, not exhaust our terror. Build a material social force by living together with relationships between us that build our autonomy and destroys theirs. Start the fight, bring the bashing first; attack and hit back and find others already fighting and build bonds between you—the anarchist scene, outside of the bonds we already share, is mostly a husk to be shrugged off. It’s not like our enemies are hard to come by; neither then are accomplices. Of course, generalized social war is our goal in writing you these sweet things, sooo... nothing resembles our desire so much as an endless irritation.

We knew this was his house. We knew he was inside, and after a week of watching, strolling by every couple hours looking dirty and forgettable, we knew he was alone. This rapist fuck was a known scum bag, but after raping one of our own a few years back, this little shit went and bragged about it and other times he’d fucked people after they said stop to his bro’s a bit too loudly—and one of us overheard, because you never know who your friends are. Honestly, we didn’t even know he’d made it back into town, but whatever, his loss. We’d been sitting on this alley block opening to the street, waiting around for our friend to hit us up on whether the coast was clear, got that yes and we just rolled—hoods up, pink masks on walked right up to the front door while two of us went into his back yard with the back door (ya know he kept it unlocked) and like that we busted out the lock, kicked in the door, ran up on his screaming ass from both sides and dazed him with a piece of plywood. We dragged him to the back of the house, taped his mouth shut, tied his hands and feet to a chair, handed a bat to the survivor and laughed while they knee-capped him—it took a couple of swings, but I don’t think hospitals can fix that. After that we put a few cuts on his face and someone sprayed bright pink spray paint into his face and eyes.

Some people like to make themselves into a message to show the dumb queer proles the way. We’d rather skip the years of anarcho-activism and get to open conflict—invite only orgies might help speed things along. Some people like to say all of what they are going to do, sprayed up on the walls. Broken bones sends a better message. “Safe space” is a practice of war, or else the concept is worthless. Something that looks like going on the offensive wherever; not pacified, brief back room group therapy. With each other, acting together—against anything that makes themselves a target.

Nothing burns like getting tricked by a trick and after one too many times I was ready to quit sex work but how the fuck was I going to get money? Rich chaser fuckers all married with kids and cars and shit getting uppity and treating a girl like shit—I know they hate loud trannys except when they wanna fuck me so after talking with a few people we got an idea—so you know, after a couple days of scheming up craigslist I had more work lined up for the weekend, but things went a little different this times—I’d already let everyone know where I was going, so when he brought me into his big nice house in his nice neighborhood, I left the door open, snapped his picture, and put a small gun to his head. Then all my grrrls rushed in and took what shit was ours—the trick just looking helpless and he knew we had blackmail so kept his trap shut. Once everyone was done we thanked him for helping a girl out and left him pistol whipped n bleeding. The next time, knocking the trick out was just how it started. THEY HAVE A LOT MORE MONEY WHEN YOU TAKE WHAT YOU DECIDE YOU’RE WORTH LOL!

These “actions” will become casual, normal—and writing a communiqué about all your criminal ultra-queer-violence and destruction might feel out of place. Who else do you know who could really do with a hit squad with analysis? Playing fair means just playing. Sell shit to your enemies—Later, someone else from your crew robs them of what they

were just sold. Repeat on and on and on. Throw the driver out of fancy cars, sell the parts. When things are awry—cops concentrated in one area, power outages, storms, house fires, whatever—is an opportunity to run wild~ maybe you can provoke them. Break into a con do, party, and burn it down. Knock some asshole out when their alone and leave them on their friends doorstep.

Three of us were just walking around for about 2 hours on some business after a party, just venting to each other when this fashy white SUV pulls up alongside us. Now we always look good, and he want to know how much we was, we asked “all together?” and he was like “yeah” so we got into his car and it was just something about how this motherfucker talked that I don’t really know how but we knew what just what we wanted to do with this guy so we put the knife to his throat and robbed his ass clean then slapped his head on the steering wheel till he passed out. Then it was just a free car so what else would we do but ride till the tank was empty?

Anarchists have this bad tendency to shy away from power—mostly because they really want to keep themselves useless~ something about vested class interests and trace liberalism. Rebel’s for play. For us, as we get worse, our hunger only grows. I WANT all the dumbass queer haters to start shit. Sometimes, you get tired of waiting around, and just start throwing things first because fuck em’. You get all urgent and relentless, and just want to explode tensions and push things beyond their breaking point so you can laugh together afterwards and do it again. And that’s when things get good.

Fight everywhere, stay in the thick of it, get tight with your crew.

NO CONCLUSIONS

We were serious when we said BB! should die and be reborn as a hella vicious street gang. Really, we’ve been veering towards this from day one.

It’s what all the anarcho-managers have been wringing their hands trying to stave off.

A couple of us already went there, we just didn’t write the communiqués because this shit got normal. Of course, none of this means you suddenly isolate yourself into crews and crew only, never speaking with anyone else, we hang out with whoever all the time. But you might find that the more your crew makes the war visible, the more it will resonate with other people you might not have expected; excitement is the medium of social war generalized.

Also, don’t act like a preacher. Go ahead and start raising money now for when you or someone you know gets arrested. Not everyone knows the anarcho-lingo, and while some words are worth going to war over, most language politics are middle-class preoccupations.

A final clarification: When we say “anarchist” we mean living in conflict with capital, and all the social relations created therein. Until class society is ended, we want nothing but eternal war.

If you're still doing that anarcho-activist manager thing, whether in its liberal or the recent reactionary insurrectionist version: go die.

Further reading:

**Towards the Queerest insurrection*
**Vengeance 1–3* **Interview with the Class Warriors*
**The Coming insurrection*
**Cabal, Argot*
**Catechism of a Revolutionist*
**Not Yr Cister press*
**Enemies We Know*

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