

The Writings of an Arsonist

Parts 1 & 2 (With Critical Response)

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Part 1

I've committed arson twice in my life. Once in May of this year when I torched Joe Shekarchi's law office, and again this July when I set fire to eviction attorney Steve Conti's office. And I have no plans on stopping.

But I might as well start at the beginning. I'm from Rhode Island, the smallest of these so-called "United States", and when COVID hit I, like many others, tried to do something to help my community. I pitched in, delivered food, supplies, and did whatever needed to be done to help those less fortunate than myself. And then, COVID got worse due to the government prioritizing business interests over the people, and I began to see just how much of a sick fucking joke Amerikkka is.

The working class is forced into wage slavery to serve the capitalist scum that denies them their rights, and then bleeds them dry by "providing" these same rights for a price. Food, water, housing, healthcare, electricity, land, these bloodsuckers provide nothing, merely hoard what belongs to all of us. They'll work you to death just so you can have a warm place to sleep at night, and then expect you to thank them for it. It's nothing less than extortion.

Once I realized this, there wasn't anything else to do but act. That's how we can help our communities. "Progressive" politicians won't be able to save you, at best they're naive and think they'll be able to change the system from the inside (and as a result accomplish practically nothing), and at worst they're just power hungry and think that pretending to be a progressive is the best way to go about it.

Fuck em.

Action is the only thing that gets results. Joe Shekarchi and Steve Conti are lawyers who make big bucks kicking people out onto the streets. I wonder how well that's going for them now that their nice offices are charred to shit. There are plenty of other attorneys like them in Rhode Island, and throughout the country, but they're not the only ones who need handling. The housing developers, the landlords, the banks, the corporations, the business owners, and the politicians who lick their boots need to be dealt with. Squat "their" property, rob them of their precious capital, grow your own food (or expropriate it from their bougie supermarkets) and share it with your community, and take care of one another (it's what the capitalists fear most, that we'll make them obsolete).

When they come to evict you, barricade yourselves into your homes, and if the parasitic landlords and their pig lackeys force you out, turn right around and burn down their homes. Make them feel the fear. Steal back everything they've ripped away from you, and become the inferno that destroys the Amerikkkan plantation once and for all.

Part 2

This one is for the doers. Wherever you are, I hope you get away with it.

I usually wouldn't write a communique without actually acting first, but the city of Providence, at the behest of its corporate developer overlords, bulldozed another homeless encampment. So, I decided to write this for those of you who want to get your well deserved revenge. In my last writing I wrote about why I do what I do, and in this one, I'll teach you how to get away with it.

First things first, a disclaimer: arson is incredibly dangerous, I can't think of a much worse way to go than being burned to death. Not only is it dangerous, it also has no statute of limitations in any of the 50 states (if you aren't from the U.S. be sure to research the laws in your region so you have full knowledge of the risks). After you do this, you and anyone else in your crew will never be able to talk about it, ever. That means no bragging, and no reminiscing. You take this shit to your grave, or the State will make sure you go to yours early. Now that you're fully aware of what's at stake, let's get started.

I'm certainly not an expert, and I've made plenty of mistakes, some of which I'll outline here. I'm just telling you what worked for me, and techniques and tactics I've learned to help you have the highest chance of getting away with this action. Also, shout out to Earth First and the ALF for their direct action guides, without them, none of this would be possible.

1. Choosing a target.

Your targets are everywhere. The cops, government building, corporate offices, courthouses, and anywhere else you can think of where capitalists and their lackeys prey on our friends and neighbors. If it's flammable, it should be in your sights. Pay attention to the news, social, media, and the word on the streets, all of these provide valuable intel on potential targets. Practically all of your targets will have an internet presence, exploit this to gain more information about them, just make sure you do it safely and take the proper precautions to cover your tracks. You can also use the internet for some primary recon. Satellite images will give you a general survey of the land, and what to expect when you begin boots on the ground recon.

In person reconnaissance allows you to study the best points of entry and exit, security measures such as cameras and alarm systems, the angles witnesses are most likely to spot you, and the best time to attack. If a target seems like it's too much for you to handle, or you gut just tells you that attacking it is a bad idea, there is no shame in walking away. There are plenty of other targets that are just as deserving.

2. The materials.

Your goal should always be total destruction, but what's the best way to ensure that? The Molotov cocktail? It's certainly a tried and tested tool of any revolutionary, but it's also messy, reeks of gasoline, and there's no guarantee it'll break when thrown. Bombs? Absolutely not. Unless you truly know what you're doing, put bombs out of your mind. They are difficult to make, the materials are easily traceable, and, most importantly in my opinion, it'd be embarrassing as hell to blow yourself up.

All you need to burn a building to the ground is the humble 5 gallon bucket, a secure lid for transport, and windproof matches. You can find these buckets and their lids in any hardware store (or just on the side of the road or typically behind buildings), buy them with cash or steal them, and you're golden. For the gasoline, fill a red gas can up at a pump (be sure to do this at least a few weeks before the action), or siphon it from another car. You could also just fill your car up at the pump and then siphon it into your bucket later that day.

Acquiring the gas and filling the bucket can be tricky to do without raising suspicion depending on your living situation, but just take your time and pick your moments to fill it up and you'll be

ready to go in no time. Stash your now filled bucket somewhere secure. Not your car, home, or in your backyard.

There are plenty of detailed guides online on how to build mechanical or electrical times for your ignition device, but these are out of this scope of this writing. They require a lot of specific parts and technical skill, and there is no guarantee they'll go off after you leave which means you just left a ton of evidence at a crime scene. I prefer windproof matches to get the party started for a few reasons: they are very easy to steal from Walmart, you can toss them into the bucket from a safe distance away without worrying about them going out, and they don't create a spark. I would not recommend using a lighter.

When I torched Steve Conti's law office, I had to place my device outside, so I decided to use a stolen zippo to light it to save me a few seconds so I could escape faster. Bad idea. One of my gloves had some gas on it that I didn't notice, a spark hit it, and my glove went up in a second. It was easy to remove my gloves and toss them into the burning bucket, but imagine if it had been my pants! Imagine trying to explain that to the cops if you get pulled over on the way home.

Wear nondescript clothing, shoes, and gloves that you don't mind ditching after the action. The State will use any shred of evidence they can to nail you to the wall. Do not give them the chance.

I also recommend a tool to bust open windows, preferably something concealable, and a flashlight. You'll likely be working at night, so better to be safe than sorry. Use the light only as a last resort though, it can give your position away.

3. Transport.

Now that you have all the materials, you're ready. Make sure you space out your recon, material collection, and the actual action by at least a few weeks to stay under the radar. The more experienced you get, the shorter this time frame may get. My first arson took me 6 months to plan and then commit, the second one only took me about 2. Regardless of the timeframe, do not cut any corners, check and double check everything, and don't get cocky.

There are only 2 kinds of people who underestimate the cops: the ones behind bars, and the ones in the ground. I'm neither, because I'm thorough, you should be too.

Commit the route to and from the target to memory. Do not bring your phone, GPS, E-ZPass, or any other goddamn piece of plastic bullshit that broadcasts your location. If you are taking a car to the site, clean it out beforehand, just to be sure. I would not recommend stealing a car for the action. It takes a lot of skill, and it is a felony. Stealing license plates off of another car is much easier, and the penalty isn't as steep, just make sure the registration tags aren't expired.

The drive to the site is easily the worst part of this dangerous, illegal ordeal. You'll be tense, nervous, there'll be an ignition device in your trunk, stolen plates on your car, and you'll have plenty of time to think about just how fuckin wild what you're about to do really is. That's okay. Just turn on the radio, focus on your breathing, and keep your eyes peeled for cameras and cops. Go the speed limit, use your turn signals, and don't run any red lights. Pull your mask up at any cameras you marked during the recon phase on the way there and back.

The drive home is much easier, just focus on the same rules that got you there in one piece, and breath a little easier knowing your device is burning away in some asshole's office, and not sitting in your car waiting to be discovered.

I wouldn't recommend picking a target so close you can walk to it, but if you live near a target you believe needs to be destroyed for the good of you, your family, and your neighborhood, then I say good luck and be careful.

4. The action.

Committing arson is extremely easy, it's the buildup and preparation that is difficult. Enter the structure the way you planned during recon, set your device up in the corner of a room against where two walls meet, light it, and get the hell out of there. You ideally want to set it up in a corner that connects to other interior walls, not walls the only lead outside. This allows for most of the heat and fire to be concentrated into this corner, and up to the ceiling and other rooms, causing the most destruction.

Don't splash gasoline all over the floor or any of that shit you see on TV, that'll just spread it out and prevent it from burning longer. There will be about 4.5 gallons of gasoline in your bucket, and by sticking it in a corner you ensure that all that fuel will keep burning for hours against the interior of the building.

If you can't gain access to the inside, you can stick your device against an exterior corner, or better yet, in an exterior corner under an awning or porch. Heat rises, so you'll cause the most destruction by placing your device under something. Placing your device outside isn't ideal, the building will take longer to truly catch fire, and it will likely be discovered and put out before destroying the entire structure. If you need to leave the scene fast though, it is still a viable option and will still send a message.

Once your device is lit, get the hell out of there. You should only be at the scene for 5-10 minutes max. Gasoline is an incredibly powerful fuel, and if you did everything right the entire building will likely be in flames in under an hour.

Joe Shekarchi's law firm was in a huge building that the firm shared with other businesses, and I burned the building to the ground with only about 4.5 gallons of gas. So, not loitering.

5. Afterwards.

Do not return to the scene of the crime, that's criminal 101 c'mon. I get the temptation, oh believe me, I get it, but do not do it. Scratch the itch with the news stories. And if that doesn't work? Suck it the fuck up, buttercup. What was the point of all that preparation and planning if you're just gonna piss it all down the drain by making a rookie mistake. You committed a crime and got away with it, be satisfied with that.

You could leave a sign at the scene that explains your motive, but that's evidence so make sure it is thoroughly cleaned, and written with your non-dominant hand. Even then though, it still might not survive the fire.

At Shekarchi's firm, I wrote a big sign that said "Free Housing For All", and left it outside of the building. And you know what happened? I underestimated how big the fire would be, and when the building collapsed, it crushed my sign, preventing anyone from finding it.

At Conti's law office, I placed a new sign with the same message much further away from the fire, and that time my message was found. So just make sure you plan accordingly if you plan on leaving any physical materials at the scene, and weigh the risks and benefits.

I also made a mistake with the report back after the Shekarchi action. The next day, I used a burner on public Wi-Fi a few towns over, and reported my actions to a local news station. Well, they didn't report on the message I sent them, so I had to save up money to buy a new burner, write a new report back, get back on the shitty public Wi-Fi, and report it to more news stations and anarchist publications. By that point, there was already doubt if the fire was actually arson, so just keep in mind to plan ahead for your report backs as well. You want to get the word out to as many people as possible, as soon after the action as you can. I did it the right way after my next action, but that's why I like leaving a sign, so my actions can't be interpreted as anything other than arson.

Keep in mind that you could still do all of this right, and your actions still may not be accurately reported on. This might make you feel as if your actions did not have any impact, and you might begin to feel that the only way to bring any attention to your actions is to turn yourself in to the police, to let the world know your story and the cause you are fighting for. Do not do this. Ever. The State will grind you under its heel, lock you in a hole so deep and dark you'll start to wonder if you ever even existed at all, and then it will forget about you. Because it's got plenty of holes, and plenty more people to lock up.

Don't succumb to these feelings of despair if your action does not seem to have any impact. I can assure you it did. Not only did you become ungovernable, and spit in the face of this system that destroys people's lives for profit, but your actions have even more tangible consequences too. Every eviction lawyer's office you burn down delays evictions, and keeps people in their homes. Every "development" company's office you torch slows gentrification, and saves neighborhoods. Every corporate and government building you burn down halts the meat grinder of capitalism, even for just a little bit, and strikes fear into the hearts of the people in power. Your actions will inspire more people, just as the actions of the people before me inspired mine, and the more people we inspire, the closer we are to becoming free.

Conclusion

So that is pretty much the sum total of my knowledge of arson, and how to commit it. Like I said before, I'm no expert, and I've made more than a few mistakes. Take what you've learned from this guide, and guides our other comrades have put out, and use what works for you. I'll leave you with two final thoughts:

First, if you feel the weight of capitalism crushing you and it looks like there is no escape, if you are so angry at this system of extortion and coercion we are forced to live in that you can barely breath anymore, or if you can hardly stand to look at yourself in the mirror because you regret so much of what you have done, there is only one solution I can offer you. Act. You will feel a weight lift off of your shoulders that you never even knew was there.

And lastly, ArsonWatch is currently offering a \$5000 reward for information that leads to my arrest.

Bet you can't top that >:p

Critical Response (An Anonymous Critique)

Hi,

I'm writing to you because you have published the text "How it's Done" [part 2 of Writings of an Arsonist] on your platform recently.

The author outlines "I'm certainly not an expert, and I've made plenty of mistakes, some of which I'll outline here." Unfortunately there are several significant problems in the recommendations, to the extent that I think it needs to have, at minimum, an editorial or introductory note addressing them, if it is going to be safe for distribution.

It's an unfortunate reality that the guides the author references are outdated from the 90s, and in the English language there aren't many better ones, so it's not surprising. So to be clear, I don't blame the author for these oversights but rather the culture of not transmitting this knowledge in a better way in the anglophone insurrectionary space.

I appreciate what Fenrir has to say about this:
"On anonymity, claims and reproducibility of actions"

I'm sharing this critical feedback of this anonymous submission, and the decision to republish it unedited, because I think the motivation of the text is great, and appreciate all of your projects a lot ☒

I should add there is a lot of great advice too, if the blindspots were addressed.

1. Cars

"Pull your mask up at any cameras you marked during the recon phase on the way there and back."

Wearing a mask while you are driving will do nothing to address the make and model of your car (which is assumed to be your personal car given the way it is written, and is still a whole lot of evidence regardless of license plate changes) being brought into the spotlight – if anything wearing a mask while drive will bring attention to this vehicle by being suspicious if recorded on CCTV.

Nothing is said about parking a minimum distance away, so I could imagine people reading this pulling up quite close to the target. The threat model of human witnesses is overlooked in this regard.

It also doesn't talk about cars being vulnerable to tracking devices for individuals being investigated.

The german guide [prisma \(militanz.blackblogs.org/42\)](http://militanz.blackblogs.org/42) has a lot to say about using bikes whenever possible and the risks of car use.

This [mtl guide](http://mtlcounterinfo.org/a-recipe-for-nocturnal-direct-actions) briefly addresses it as well:
mtlcounterinfo.org/a-recipe-for-nocturnal-direct-actions

"It's best to avoid using cars if possible – a license plate is far easier to identify than a hooded figure on a bike. But if you must because the location is too difficult to get to otherwise, be careful. You could park a bike-ride away in an area that's not on camera. Be dressed totally normally when entering the car. Take back roads and know your way around. Don't use cars that may be already known to police, in case they have been tagged with a GPS surveillance device, and don't use a rental (in part why Roger Clement got caught for arsoning an RBC branch against the Vancouver Olympics)."

2. DNA

This is probably the main thing that has changed since the 90s – DNA is one of the main way that comrades have been caught in the last decade, internationally.

Again, not a lot exists in English, but a great compilation of relevant materials are at:
[csrc.link](#)

Filter the the topic DNA on the left.

In particular I'd recommend:

[csrc.link/#att-forsoka-halla-snuten-pa-avstand](#)

These aren't in English but deepl machine translation isn't the worst:

[csrc.link/#tracce-sulle-tracce-di-dna](#)

[www.csrc.link/#blabladn](#)

Also briefly addressed in a footnote of the mtl guide linked above.

The idea of leaving a sign is a bad bad idea in this regard. One cannot clean DNA after contamination, as one can for finger prints – it would just lead to further contamination. Nothing is said about DNA on door handles / any other surfaces engaged with as well. In short, DNA isn't considered, which is a huge blindspot.

3. Claims

I imagine “burner” is what the author means when they say “burning”, but it sounds like they didn't use Tor or Tails, which is bad news. The idea of claiming something not using Tails should be considered very unsafe. [mtlcounterinfo.org/how-to-safely-submit-communiques-to-mtlcounter-info-org](#)

“You want to get the word out to as many people as possible, as soon after the action as you can. ”

Roger clement mentioned above got caught in part because he claimed the next day, while under intensive surveillance.

4. Traces

A 5 gallon bucket filled 4.5 gallons full with gasoline will leak. This is addressed (in the full PDF) here:

[csrc.link/#creating-a-clean-room](#)

– Greetings and solidarity!

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