

"Many blame queers for the decline of this society—we take pride in this. Some believe that we intend to shred-to-bits this civilization and it's moral fabric—they couldn't be more accurate. We're often described as depraved, decadent and revolting—but oh, they ain't seen nothing yet."

**Be Gay Do Crime ; Reclaim Your Queer Fucking Life
Criminal Intimacy ; Interview with Nary Mardini Gang
Nary Mardini - Profile of a Milwaukee Anarchist
Relevant Queer Mythology ; The Whore Theory**

Be Gay Do Crime

Mary Nardini Gang

For Quincy Brinker, who, by disrupting the talk of yet another washed-up academic trying to write Marsha and Sylvia out of Stonewall, reminded us that not even the dead will be safe if our enemy is victorious.

For Feral Pines, last seen by some of her friends throwing rocks at police, by others in an assembly plotting psychic warfare against the fascists, and by others dancing and then defacing some fascist insignia in the moments before her death.

For Chris Chitty, who would surely use this opportunity to insult the insulters while transmitting some brilliant insight about where we have been and where we are going.

For Ravin Myking, whose beauty caused the pastor of a homophobic megachurch to froth at the mouth and declare the arri-

val of wolves to hunt his sheep, and caused the sheep to fall to the ground, speaking in tongues and praying for their absent god.

For Scout and the fires of memory. For Vlad, ai ferri corti!

For all our friends on the other side, we present these reflections.

Ten years ago, we were seized by a frenzied spirit and, in a trance-like state, received a set of ten weapons for a war we were only just finding the words to describe. We were a cabal of teenage runaways, ne'er-do-wells, what Genet called criminal children, coming ex nihilo, from and with nothing but each other. We experienced the whole social order as inimical to freedom, desire, and our preferred relations, but suspected we were not alone in our visceral hatred for this world. So we encoded these tools — visions of excess and otherness — into a slim zine and sent it to the ends of the earth. For a decade we've followed it, across borders linguistic and militarized, to find the comrades (in a sense inalienable from, as Chris Chitty argued, the word's originary homoerotic implications) who received this same transmission: queer insurrection.

During that time, we stole away on trains with forged documents, on fraudulent flights, and in the cars of strangers who picked us up en route to one encounter after another. We found each other in forest encamp-

ments, communes at the center of cities, at blockades against the storm called progress, and in revelry within the hollowed out shells of deindustrialization. We fought enemies minute and gargantuan on streets and in alleyways. We were there when cities were burned, buildings occupied, boutiques looted, ports blockaded, wanna-be bashers humiliated, nazis punched. We delivered an empty coffin to the doorsteps of a killer cop, threw fire into the home of a john who killed a trans woman, and more through bank windows in the name of those imprisoned for refusing a similar fate. We instigated the wildest queer riots in a generation outside the gates of summits of the global elite, and again when an apologist for fascism emerged as a "dangerous faggot" in the hallowed halls of the intelligentsia.

We found our way into reading groups and meetings, waited for the men to stop speaking, and spoke only to be misunderstood. Misunderstood except by our friends, for whom we stockpiled pepperspray and stunguns because we wanted them alive,

turned tricks to pay bail because we wanted them free, walked out of grocery stores because we wanted them fed, scammed universities to bring them to our cities, sold our time at strategic institutions so we could give them everything, got really good at showing specific forms of care (so good we found better hustles), waited with cigarettes and blankets outside the jails because we hated the idea of them in there alone, prepared for attacks like we would for a night with lovers, dedicated books to each other and our beloved dead because these words mean nothing outside of the relationships which give them traction. We swore oaths to keep each others' secrets and keep each other alive. To hold fiercely to that brilliant intimacy we shared in moments of which we can never speak, to never speak our names either, to always speak sideways in handwritten letters on the sides of buildings, delivered by hand between traveling friends, or mailed innocuously under the eyes of guards and censors.

In the long tradition of queer criminality, we've expropriated

literally everything we could. We wrote anthems and journals of exegesis, tended archives and prison distros, scammed pages by the thousands. We filled parcels with stolen fineries and sent them with love notes to distant friends. We determined each other deserving of the ten thousand things. We've fumbled through learning a thousand techniques of healing our broken bodies and spirits. We mastered the art of the *dérive*, wandering by instinct alone through the darkened streets of the varied metropolises seeking some ineffability we still can't name. We've experimented with every permutation of drugs and hormones to find the alchemy that opens us up to the world. We developed addictions chasing highs between one uprising and the next, and later helped one another find other ways. We experimented badly with dozens of models for new relations, but continued even at our worst, because we learned the hard way that disposability isn't an option. Eventually, aching flesh and the plant kingdoms revealed their secret languages. We learned love languages too: the inimitable joy of

gifts and quiet declarations and eternities of now-time spent in affinity and in affection.

Now-time: a hard-won concept we only learned by way of a sequence of loss. We've hurt each other and had to learn to pick up the pieces of shattered relations. We've been betrayed too, but are disinclined to spill much ink on sellouts and turncoats. We've run away and we've returned humbled. Our friends and lovers have been taken from us, locked in cages, suicided by cops, burned up in dance parties at the margins of gentrifying cities. We know that our time with each other is fleeting, so we fight for every moment of interdependence and complicity.

This spring, along with the flowers, an image bloomed within some small nodes of the world wide web. A skeleton, dressed as a pirate, bearing a torch named 'anarchy,' with 'communes' emblazoned upon her chest, 'round bombs' around her hat and 'free love' on a pin. A sword hangs from her belt and she bears a scroll proclaiming "be gay! do crime!" The skeleton is frenzied.

At the bottom of the page run the lines: "Many blame queers for the decline of this society

— we take pride in this. Some believe that we intend to shred-to-bits this civilization and its moral fabric — they couldn't be more accurate. We're often described as depraved, decadent and revolting — but oh they ain't seen nothing yet."

Here at the foundation of the image, we found words which rang familiar. After a slight slip-page in time, we remembered the feeling of those words and having written them. They were initially published as a communique issued by a criminal queer association in an underground periodical published by anarchists in Milwaukee called Total Destroy.

Both the gang-form known as Bash Back! and this publication were expressions of a milieu based in Riverwest, a discreet (and at times not so discreet) anarchist neighborhood since the end of World War II. After the war, the nascent bohemian anarchist subculture that had

been developing in the war resister camps among writers and art freaks, and some christians, splintered in a diaspora that bore the newly freed mystics to New York and San Francisco. A small enclave ended up in Riverwest and stayed, joining the Galleanist anarchist lineage rooted in the city. The neighborhood remained a constant site of struggle, sometimes armed, with the forces of law and order. In the neighborhood one can find a certain crossroads at which a variety of struggles have intersected: queer struggles, struggles against racism and fascism, against the police, for the liberation of foodways, along with a dense layering of underground cultures. Distinct anarchist currents consistently cohabitated that neighborhood, debating positions and ways. Around the time of the Nardini Gang communiques, insurrectionaries, queers, race traitors, and eco-extremists came together under the roof of an anarchist space. This particular infoshop (the Cream City Collectives) was one of the many anarchist spaces that had stood at that exact intersection going back decades.

This is the place where we found ourselves when, a few months after the initial publication of "Toward the Queerest Insurrection," emissaries from the future spoke through fires set across the seas. Insurrection broke out. Not in Milwaukee, but in Greece. Civilization died within the bounds of the nation-state mythologized as the epicenter of its birth. The police executed a teenage anarchist named Alexis Grigoropoulos in another long-term anarchist neighborhood, Exarcheia (ex-, out of; -archeia, rulership). Exarcheia is a place where anarchy, the Beautiful Idea, had never gone quiet, and so when a cop murdered a youth — an encounter so devastatingly routine in the US — there at the crossroads which is now Alexis' hero-shrine, the whole world caught fire. The insurrection had come.

The fires that burned there for seventeen nights sent embers to the far corners of the world, and these found places where the flame could catch. That flame caught in our obscure neighborhood wrapped in rivers, and it changed everything for us. Those

seventeen days opened up a narrow gate such as Walter Benjamin proposed existed in each moment. That gate opened up in the bizarre, internationalist, mycelial web woven by anarchists across the globe. All throughout the anarchist galaxy, the messiah came. We bore witness. We saw the river flow backwards. We saw the Event, the Open. The fires lit in Greece spread across the globe as metropolises and suburbs and unceded territories all throughout the world in a non-linear, expanding and evolving polyvalent front, a border between an old world decaying and a new one emerging.

For many, the realization was brought by disaster or insurgency in response to the hidden daily disaster of policing. In the US, the idea spread through the infrastructure of the various nodes created by the insurrectionary anarchists of the preceding decade. The first real encounter with the fire itself, on this continent, occurred in the opening days of 2009 when the city of Oakland burned in response to the police murder of Oscar Grant. By way of solidarity actions and the sto-

ries of travelers, anarchists who were present for that opening of the door on the west coast of this accursed nation, spread word that the insurrection had come and everyone should act accordingly.

Bash Back! was one of many currents which took that message to heart. In the context of the network's emergent praxis, a proposal surfaced which insisted on a new form of life: criminal, queer, anarchist. In short, devotion to the new world emerging, indifference to the social order dying, and war with those who would defend its memory or attempt to reanimate its corpse. We realized that time and identity are fictions, but that we are bound to our ancestors and can only heal from the violences by addressing generations of trauma. We realized that the moment was always immanent, and that we simply needed to shift perspectives to access it. Anarchy had always been there beneath the paving stones. And we saw it, and were forever changed, and now had to live according, not in the time that remains, but in the time after. The

distribution of the anonymous text "Desert" through green anarchist nodes put forward the proposal that the world would not end in one single gesture of revolution or collapse, but would die as a patchwork, and from that humus would rise new worlds, plural.

In the clash with the alt-right we are encountering another of those worlds. Diane di Prima said it best in her revolutionary letters:

And it seems to me the struggle has to be waged on a number of different levels: they have computers to cast the I Ching for them but we have yarrow stalks and the stars it is a battle of energies, of force-fields, what the newspapers call a battle of ideas

Since the moment when the Bash Back! network encountered the clash of the new world breaking into existence, we've experimented in ways to live in this new world with which we're bound up in some divine act of co-creation. We, and these words, have gone to the corners of the world, announcing, as

the frenzied skeleton above, our magic: Be Gay! Do Crime!

This development of means of living and fighting in this new world has looked different for each of us. We have suffered unimaginable losses and learned a thousand ways of healing. We studied to become specialized practitioners of these varied modalities. We built networks of care to support each other through betrayals, repression, and the death of our friends. We learned to care for each others' wounds and cover each others' rents. Many of us work with spirits and ancestors. Some people got into publishing. Some moved to the wilds and are learning its mysteries. We have abolitionist fanatics. We have antifascist researchers who've committed their lives to documenting the movement of our ancestral enemy. We've learned to fight, to attack, to hold space afterwards. We have been at every uprising in the last decade and have shared understandings by way of them. Those of us who continued the path of sex work are now struggling against the State's deployment of new repressive

and cybernetic techniques. Some people have gone entirely underground. Some have learned the sacred methods of altering the body. As we speak, people are studying the stars to find their way. Some messengers are still wandering, many have stayed put and are now deepening their animistic relationship to place (yes, in the cities too). We have among us practitioners of sado-masochism, queer performance, afro-futurism, chaos magic, “public health,” herbalism, diasporic traditions, long-form prisoner correspondence, poetry.

This panoply could be looked at as a set of tactical discussions, but this view must be turned on its head. These are not methods to bring about the new world, these are ways of living that assume its immanent being. We have continued from the proposal published ten years ago in “Criminal Intimacy” that our relationships are our strength and that those relationships were forged in the moments we found each other while the doors stood open. Strategy does not precede the moment but emerges in its aftermath. Insurrection is the messiah and it has already come.

The question since has been how to proceed. It is no surprise that anarchists who turn toward mysticism (Fredy Perlman, Ursula Le Guin, or Diane di Prima) at some point come to study the Tao — the way.

We proceeded, despite the end of the world, seeking joy everywhere we could. Our communiques took the ruins for granted and we insisted upon dancing amid them. Sex parties, dance parties, street parties, reading parties — partying emerged as a central form in that frenzied moment. Our later inquiries into the sacred nature of the revel — into the bacchanals and nighttime sabbats — revealed an intrinsic relationship between partying and the world-making arts. In our parties, we opened onto connection with each other, onto other realms and other gestures.

The realization of the insurrectionary dimension of the party proved dangerous precisely for its potential to be reified as the party of insurrection. By way of the circulation of a small blue book,¹ some who reveled in flames alongside us became fixated on the proposed re-emer-

gence of the party form, the very structure of synthesis that had dominated the revolutionary imaginations of lost generations. Where we came to understand the party as spiritual, they desired a political party. Where we sought forms of connection, they submitted to an apparatus based first and foremost upon separation. The party as proposed by those who penned the little blue book was to be invisible and thereby avoid the failure of the past century's party form. We remain unconvinced. We had already experienced the death of the party, and had already dealt with the authoritarian cult tendencies that followed from it. When the formal dimension of the Bash Back! network had run its course, we quickly analyzed the moment so as to move beyond it. Following an excerpt from "Criminal Intimacy," a section of the conclusion to *Queer Ultra-violence* titled "On the Party" put it this way:

In describing those participants in Bash Back! as a form-of-life, I'm making an effort to discard a whole range of concepts and ways of thinking that should be entirely useless to us moving

forward. In particular, I want to totally be done with the notions of identity politics and identity activism. BB! shouldn't be understood as a sequence of activist endeavors, nor as an articulation of a militant identity politic (to the extent that it can, it was a failure). BB! was never about queer issues or queer politics. Instead, the project took as its issue the lives of its participants. Rather than the motifs of victimization and charity regurgitated ad nauseam in activist circles, the BB! tendency took as its starting point queer life itself. Those within the tendency organized a space within which they could genuinely live, and a network by which to defend that space. I experienced BB! as an amalgamation of desires, dispositions, acts, processes, gestures, and complicities. BB! is as much wrapped up in sexual practice as in criminal act, as much in strategy as in style. The process of BB! and the emergence of its corresponding form-of-life demands to be read less as a what or a who but instead as a how. This how, is the how of organization, but also as much of survival, of violence, of love, of life itself. And so, whatever the limitations

of what Bash Back! was, it is the how (the way) that truly demonstrates the insurrectionary potential that I celebrate.

We took life itself as our project. Whatever rhetoric it may employ, no Party can say the same. The very function of the Party is to expand its own operation by vampirizing the life energy of all subsumed within it. We took that organizationalist dead end as a point of departure and had already begun other experiments. Sadly, by this point the straight comrades already stopped paying attention to that process of clarification.

We've learned a great deal in the last decade, most of which can be summarized by simply saying that we did not know what we were doing. Finding ourselves now in this position to speak across time, having an opportunity to reissue these words to some who might find them for the first, we have a responsibility to clarify: These initial words are not political; they are magical.

The most studied practitioners of magic will tell you something

remarkably similar to the life-long insurrectionaries: the secret is really to begin. Between the inquiries of the chaos magicians and the shared reflections of insurrection oriented anarchists, a whole host of techniques emerge in common: the means to choose a story and make it real by applying energy, the invocation of the dead, queer ancestral working, necromantic visits to Emma Goldman's grave, the reproduction of apocryphal texts, conjuration by way of magical language, the necessity of abundant sacrifice, fires set to purify, rendezvous below the moon's fullness and attacks carried out beneath its dark, rites of mourning & revenge, raising hell at the pulpits of the false priests, the interpretation of dreams and omens, the secret names of our beloveds and their encrypted sigils scrawled across city walls, the visionary states of jouissance and spirit-contact by way of dance, the decentering of the self and the openness to the other, the pacts made at the crossroads — these are keys to an otherworldly litany, a grammar of worldmaking by way of ritual action.

Worldmaking, because we actually effect the web of power — experientially and reciprocally — by way of our engagement. You see, the world really did end for us in December of 2012 when we lost Ravin. While the world waited out the clock to see if the machines would self-sabotage, we scrawled ‘No Future’ as epitaph for this world we were leaving, not as an effort to preemptively snuff out our light, but rather to light up another world which was already in germinating, there beneath the skin. We needed skillsets to engage our friends among the dead, and they in turn gestured toward an animist worldview, toward the enspirited world. We live in a world haunted by all the ghosts of a genocidal leviathan, where the land is full of bones screaming out for vengeance and the very architecture of these cities filled by all the dead who built it, where every spectacle of inclusion is wracked by the evil eye cast by the excluded. We’ve learned to be in relation, that any space has only been taken back for enchantment and reciprocity in co-creation with these spirits.

When we look at the transmutations which the anarchist galaxy has undergone in the dreamtime of the past decade, it is undeniably other than the heteronormative, boring void into which we first issued these enchantments. Strong, varied and dynamic queer currents course through our space, tracing previously unimaginable constellations of thought and lives. All the best and all the worst of what we wrote, all our illuminations and our omissions, came true. The most dismissible and petty conflicts in our little world have been elevated to a global and even cosmic stage. The locks we picked opened doors we could barely imagine in strong hearts wherever they lay. If only we had already internalized Diane di Prima’s insistence that “you can have whatever you ask for” so “ask for everything.”

Because these are magical words, and because our accomplices hear them and respond even beyond the veil of death, we cannot afford to miscommunicate. Let’s hold a mirror up to our ten weapons and supply them with their necessary cave-

ats. These ten, taken together, form a sort of minor arcana:

Queerness in its negative sense

Normalcy

Social war

Queerness as conflict

The other, the excluded

Repression, force relations

Attack!

A subterranean riotous inheritance

Space, terrain, excess

Refusal, the self-described anarchist

In furtherance of this tarot, we present the reversals:

X

Hold onto that moment when you first called yourself an anarchist. Whatever your story, surely it was a refusal, a preference not to, saying “no.” You may not realize it, but this is the first time in your life you set a boundary with a world that attempts to erode your capacity to do so. Find that moment and that affect and hold firmly to it. Whatever else may be taken from you, they cannot take this. Let’s dispen-

se with the tired conversation about the individual and the collective. We need each other and still each of us needs recourse to that intimately personal affect.

Can we leave it at that? In the trying times, when we feel alone against the world, we will always have that initiating refusal. If we tend that little candle, we can always find our way, back to each other if necessary. The anarchist tension adapts to whatever comes next.

IX

We received and will do our best to transmit this mystery: queer criminality. This is an ancestral current, a we, inherited from a long and varied line of rioters, thieves, writers, hustlers, mystics, ranters, freaks, and artists. Like the descendants of any ancestral line, we are the currently incarnated members of that spirit house. Nothing began with us: we are simply the present bearers of that weak messianic potential to make it whole again, to redeem all our dead, by way of heaven on earth. In all that we do, we are in co-creation with these spirits. Let’s learn to do it well. When we try to take

space — or more realistically, to hold onto it against the annihilating flows of progress — it is for these reciprocal relationships between each other and all of our ghosts. We are fighting for the survival of a way of life: one criminal, queer, anarchic, mystic, other. Each of these predicates a source of strength, a lineage, a collection of techniques for the survival of people this world has tried thoroughly to destroy. This is why we strive for excellence and excess in all that we do. It has always been about queer forms of life. Beware those who speak about other lives but not of the corpses in their mouth, or of the screaming bones upon which they walk.

VIII

The critique of assimilation is still only understood halfway. The dominant line within the radical queer corners of the professional activist world and the school-to-publishing pipeline holds that it is enough to simply take the right political positions. So long as one speaks the right language, ethical (here meaning happy) life exists within Leviathan. The impulse to critique assimilation,

in its first instance, refuses this acquiescence. Be wary of any who remind too quickly that we all make sacrifices under capitalism. That is true, of course, but remember that to sacrifice is to make something sacred, to give it up for the spirits. This world conditions us to lose things easily because it is always taking them away. We choose to take back power over what we give up, for whom, and why. You'll recognize your true friends by the way they answer these three questions. There is a subtle difference between careerist and conspirator-within-a-given-institution. One way or another, those with nothing to lose but each other, and by extension a whole world to gain, remember one another and act accordingly. It's a matter of priority: this dead world, or the ones we are cultivating.

VII

Attack! Because it is always available, and because it is the real marker of the boundaries of our little propulsive heterotopias — worlds plural. World-making gives us the ability to move our

prefer-not-to into a sideways gesture, a preferring differently, otherworldly. The question of opacity (the closet, passing) is an old one for us. The queers who came before us navigated with several strategies, and it's up to us to look critically at all of them. It's all drag: a mask on our emergent world. The mask conceals the real in order to make attack possible. Realness is always a game played with normalcy. Those who haven't realized this are dangerous indeed. An attack of whatever intensity is a small door through which the real and its world enters. Its world is animistic — take this into account when choosing your target. All the cosmos is alive and watching and actually matters. If you've followed us this far into the labyrinth, you can always call to presence the energy for even the smallest attack. Let that possibility be Ariadne's thread as we go further. Let these rituals signal to conspirators, embodied and not.

VI

Repression is the attempt on the part of a decaying world to smother new ones in their infancy. We've withstood them

all. The Holocaust and the aids crisis respectively destroyed two moments in the preceding century when our world outgrew their comfort for it. In both cases the revolutionaries and the otherwise marginalized died first. Entire generations of our elders have been stolen from us. Remember this when you forget who you are. Remind your friends, too, if they forget. The state has soft means at its disposal. The criminalization of public parks goes hand in hand with the proliferation of cybernetic cruising apps. The benevolent campaigns of "trafficking reformers" keep sex workers on the streets or worse. The wealthy will afford their prep while people with aids continue to die on their doorsteps. The circulation of the images of particular bodies through social media numbs us with blue light and distracts from the systematic execution of those same excluded bodies. We've only made it this far by fighting repression in all its forms. Pay attention to those worlds that are fighting it differently. Learn from those who fought it before. We'll need all the various techniques

against our shared enemy. We need the healing techniques too. We've inherited so much trauma from these failed attempts. But we can choose to heal in these lifetimes, to not pass the shit on.

V

The core of our world is an otherness, and so each of us liminally navigates the other worlds. We stand between, always a little extra, too much for any world but the one we're building between us. Pay attention to where you feel other and whom you feel at home with. This is affinity: knowledge of another, and of their desires and capacities. This isn't deterministic; ancestral traumas can be overcome, but only by those committed to that overcoming. This is a matter of hospitality, of the response of a world to the other at its gates. Never separate any concept of reconciliation — for example, tikkun olam — from its spiritual grounding in the vision of a living world, of an enchanted materialism. Resist the impulse for homogeneity. Circulate through whatever worlds will have us. Jailbreak the others.

IV

To recognize queerness in conflict means to address the residue of a dead world within us — trauma in our bodies, possession by egregores, lies on our tongues. Be humble; know that you are addressing wounds inflicted upon countless generations. Be gentle with yourself and each other in these matters, but remember that healers often have the bloodiest hands.

III

Social war, understood as a movement to expand upon this or that limited conception of struggle, gestures welcomingly to the other, includes the stories of resilience and subversion which disorder any tendency toward a scientific (read: systematized) fetish on the part of militants.

II

We do this because we remember that Normalcy is itself our enemy. Avoid those who read the backs of Foucault books while gleefully flaunting their normalizing impulses. In any insurrectionary space, attend to the freaks. The Norm arms itself with terror, because some

truly believe in it. The devotees of Normalcy — in its psychic, libidinal, affective, disciplinary or ideological forms — will be cops when the insurrection dies.

I
'Q' then, will never be a coherent letter tacked as a bridge on some list of identities. The past decade shows the poverty or ruin of every attempt to do so. We've said already that these words are magic. We might add that they are *wyrd* — the Old English for fate and all the other invisible and nonlinear causalities we are woven into and which gives us the modern word 'weird'. The queerest insurrection demands the weirdest, the most enmeshed in the unseen, the most in relationship with all that teems just beyond the normative filter we are still fighting to unlearn. Find those who straddle that filter, a foot in each world. Share your methods, share what you've learned, share the stories of your dead. The dead we hold in common make us family — some other form of kinship than the Norm and its terror. We need each other today more than ever. We want to

win this time, to win all the time, and the dead want that too.

O

Here. Now. In this place and time. The mirror of our current inquiry faces the mirror that this project always carried within itself. Mirrors upon mirrors; we are not strangers here. Our enemies have always mobilized the myth of Narcissus against the criminal and queer. These inquisitors and specialists in torture can only do this by subtracting this myth from the enchanted worldview whence it emerges, a view wherein other worlds exist, there are windows between them, and true communication is possible. In the notes to his translation of *The True Grimoire*, the faggot sorcerer Jake Stratton-Kent suggests that this story is in fact an early encryption of scrying — the magical technique in which one uses a mirror to communicate with other spirits and places. Narcissus gazed too long at the underworld and was immortalized as a delicate flower with such a fixed gaze. This is the sign of the immortality of the vegetable world, of the cycle between life and death, of the

infinite. Each is slightly other, each a different variation on the story. We possess the freedom of discernment, choice. Theorists of games refer to the magic circle — the boundary within which the players agree upon the objectives and the rules. Zero: the magic circle. Zero: the space of all potential. Be careful what you say in this space; have your wits about you. What happens here extends to all levels. Zero: from nothing and returning to it. Zero: always the Fool, a stranger entering seemingly from nowhere. Who are you? Where are you from and where are you going?

The skeleton has been here, frenzied, before. The meme described above detoured a bit of propaganda from California dating back to the 1880s that vilifies the queer and anarchist currents then present on these shores. The skeleton has never left. She remains present along the diasporic threads which have always undermined the southern border. She is the Holy Death. The patron of criminals and queers, of exiles from worlds. She wears other robes but she insists as the constant remin-

der of our own mortality and of those we've already lost. If the messianic currents within western magical traditions are true — and that the final judgment is the return of the dead — then the passing of that moment means our dead are among us, the ancestors have returned and they are insisting that we have a chance to make it all whole again. The task remains to put our ways in common.

Reclaim Your Queer Fucking Life!

*Anonymous from Reclaim Pride
Brighton*

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“Many blame queers for the decline of this society — we take pride in this. Some believe that we intend to shred-to-bits this civilization and it’s moral fabric — they couldn’t be more accurate. We’re often described as depraved, decadent and revolting — but oh, they haven’t seen nothing yet.” — Mary Nardini Gang (2009)

Existence Is Resistance

We are Queer. This is not synonymous with any of LGBTQIA+ in isolation, or any single, stable constrictive identity. Queer is never a singularity, it is fluid and shifting and growing. It rises and

falls with the ocean, spits and flickers with the flames, screams and turns with the wind: it’s more than the sum of its parts. As an umbrella term for the individual letters in the acronym, queer, note the lowercase, has found popularity. Our definition of Queer however, note the upper case, is that of an oppositional force, forged in the fire of a war being waged on anything that challenges normalcy. Normalcy is white supremacist, is capitalist, is allocisheteronormative, is patriarchal, is monogamous, is able-bodied. Queer, is everything else.

“Queer is a territory of tension, defined against the dominant narrative of white hetero monogamous patriarchy, but also by an affinity with all who are marginalized, otherized and oppressed. Queer is the abnormal, the strange, the dangerous. Queer involves our sexuality and our gender, but so much more. It is our desire and fantasies and more still. Queer is the cohesion of everything in conflict with the heterosexual capitalist world. Queer is a total rejection of the regime of the Normal.” — Mary Nardini Gang (2014)

This isn't breaking news. Queers before us have lived, loved, dreamt, fought and died on these ideas. But words are words. The reason why we choose the anarchist, utopian, militant and decadent Queer politic is because we've always inherently been in a hopeless conflict with the alternative. We've lived it. What does neoliberal acceptance do for queer sex-workers, or teenage trannies sleeping in the streets, or fag-bashing survivors, dyke addicts, punks with AIDS, fat drag queens, genderless prisoners? Pride-themed adverts won't stop us freezing to death when we can't afford to pay the bills, and can't get a job because we dropped out of school when our abusive homophobic families kicked us out. Brighton's rainbow police cars will still arrest you for illegally distributing free HRT, for daring to challenge the normalcy that demands years of suffering and begging and compromise and sacrifice before finally the normalcy agrees to expand and exploit you all the same. Queer people are made an underclass by design. Creating an underclass out of anyone that isn't white, able-bodied, neurotypi-

cal, allocishet, monogamous is the entire mission statement of the capitalist nation-state. Our restricted access to housing, healthcare, money, safety, etc, isn't accidentally lacking, it's artificially restricted, made conditional on terms structured by the normalcy, with the threat of marginalisation, impoverishment and death hanging over us like the sword of fucking Damocles. It's the same deal with the devil that whispers in our ears, "wait for things to get better..." — because what in the fucking world would make that happen?

"The first lesson a Revolutionary must learn is that he is a doomed man." — Huey P. Newton (1973)

As Queer people we live inside of a society which is intent on killing us. The tension between Queer and normalcy began before any of our first screams, but it's our autonomy in force that creates: Queer as an oppositional force to a world that wants us dead. And more of us have been killed than my heart could possibly bear. Through malice, negligence, spite, ignorance,

integration, apathy, people that would have been our parents, siblings, grandparents, teachers, idols, heroes, mentors, lovers, children, died decades before the utopia they were dedicated to even stood a chance. To just say that we carry their legacy with them doesn't feel like enough, it's literally our history. As Queers it is our duty and our honour to burn the white supremacist, capitalist, allocisheteronormative, patriarchal, monogamous world to the ground, take the names of the hundreds, thousands, millions and etch them into the foreheads of dead cops with a knife. Plant trees and paint art and love each other in their names. The tension that requires the oppositional force is historic as much as it is economic, ideological and social. We are Queer because we have no other choice, and never have done. We exist, therefore we resist. It's not a slogan, or a mantra, it's a fucking battle cry.

The Fucking State of Things

There are essentially the two mechanisms that a society of normalcy uses to oppress Queer people and communities: elimination and assimilation.

Elimination is the cruel, snarling, sharp edge of the sword. It's fascistic and genocidal, enforced by the state or another entity with a monopoly on violence. It's almost a decade of waiting for life saving medication. It's letting countless die from disease. It's laws against faggots fucking or crossdressing. It's Section 28. It's the WHRC declaration. It's TERFs and "gender-critical feminists" being conspiratorial fascists. It's everyone who's ever demanded details about your genitals, deadname, sexuality with entitlement and aggression. It's putting trans people in gendered prisons, burying them under the wrong pronouns and filling the silence of mourning with their deadname. It's deportations to countries where these things are colonial exports. To be Queer, to defy the normalcy, is to provoke reaction

that will attempt to eliminate you. Some- times you're murdered in the street, sometimes you're not allowed to adopt a child. Either way, they're fucking terrified of you having your own family, legacy, community, for fear of the ideas and principles that may live on past your time. Our bodies face the brunt of the violence, our self-defence punishable with prison time — both methods of stripping you bare and attempting to eradicate your Queerness in whatever form it takes and through whichever method it takes. We're burned, stabbed, shot, starved and then thrown in unmarked graves, for the sake of profit and hierarchy. The mission is the ultimate denial of your autonomy and safety, the ultimate denial of your Queerness.

"WAKE UP! Modern societies are founded upon a scapegoat mechanism and we are unwittingly cultivating ourselves as lambs for slaughter. We are and have always been the enemy! The pariahs! The outcasts! Don't think for a second we won't be targeted again when the shit hits the fan! OUR LIVES ARE NOT

DISPOSABLE" — SPIT! (2017)

Assimilation on the other hand, turns our own against us. Normalcy, on the occasion it allows us to live, will require our Queerness to be conditional and policed and tamed and palatable to the sensibilities of eliminationists. Fuck their conditions. We are offered marriage rights, a chance to settle into monogamy and standard capitalist family structures. We are offered business opportunities, where if you're exploitable enough, and exploit others enough, you could emulate RuPaul's bastardisation of drag culture, and be propped up as a token for media companies and sponsors to profit from, and in your spare time oversee a fracking empire. We are offered the opportunity to be politicians, and follow Lloyd Russel-Moyle in enabling centrists that are burning down the planet. Or perhaps a community delegate for a NGO like Peter Tatchell, being paid by the boots that stamp us as he politely asks them to stop — gesture politics at it's fucking worst. We are offered the chance, as Kathleen Stock does, to try and divide the

Queers, pull the ladder up, assimilate a small group of cis lesbians and ally with the eliminationists. We are offered pronoun options on official documents, as long as you use the single binary options that they permit: they fucking dispise xie having car insurance. We are offered equal military service, to be an agent of imperialism, and this is a symbol of social acceptance. We are offered rainbow-washed corporatism, built by allocishets to profit off our symbols of struggle. The rainbows and pink triangles at Club and Bar Revenge mean nothing to every Queer that's been harrassed, groped, assaulted or spiked there. It means nothing to the minimum wage faggots who work there. Every fucking straggot that turns up to gawk at the faggots and trannies because "they know how to party" should be thrown off the pier. Every rainbow product of a ravenous pop culture is a parasite that keeps Queer labour, Queer personhood and Queer bodies conditional and subservient. We are offered state-supported, police escorted pride parades, as the state becomes the profiteers of our history,

policing our public expressions and dismantling our radical notions of collective autonomy. They recreate and emulate the normalcy that seeks to eliminate us. The nominally-queer ruling class becomes as much of a force for normalcy as any other element of normalcy, with the added stinger of pacifying radical social politics. Elections do not save us. Tolerance does not save us. Acceptance does not save us. Assimilation will not save us. It will surely, but slowly, eliminate us.

"Build an agenda based on the needs of queer minorities. Reject the politics of assimilation, stop begging for tolerance. Welcome the celebration of sexual and gender diversity. Demand the transformation of the system. Truly desacralize democracy and demoralise the judiciary. Define our emotional and sexual needs on our own terms. Value critical difference instead of false equality" — Carlos Motta (2011)

Society is intent on killing you. If it can't kill you, it will try to take away everything that defines you, it will try to erase

the history of liberation struggle, piss on the battlefield where our Elders died, it will try to hollow out your community. You will be chewed up and spat out into the culture of death and decay and hunger and loss. It will leave you worse than dead. Thus to be Queer is to fundamentally reject and resist both of these mechanisms, in you mind, soul, heart and body.

Queer Unity

“We need to rediscover our riotous inheritance as queer anarchists. We need to destroy constructions of normalcy, and create instead a position based in our alienation from this normalcy, and one capable of dismantling it. We must use these positions to instigate breaks, not just from the assimilationist mainstream, but from capitalism itself. These positions can become tools of a social force ready to create a complete rupture with this world. Our bodies have been born into conflict with this social order. We need to deepen that conflict and make it spread.”
— Mary Nardini Gang (2014)

Our weapon for bashing the fuck back? We call it Queer Uni-

ty. To stand as an agent of Queer resistance, of Queer insurrection, is the practice and principles of Queer Unity: issuing normalcy, and all of its hierarchies, a challenge: the “oppression, fuck off challenge”. It is the complete and total rejection of assimilation and the empowered self-defence against elimination, in all their forms. It is antifascism, anti-capitalism, anti-racism, militant feminism and abolition. It is embracing your affinity with individuals and communities who share your oppressors. It is every liberation struggle standing arm in arm, dismantling the borders on maps and borders in our minds: they are only weapons for normalcy to divide us. Through Queer Unity, no state, no pig, no fag-basher, no TERF, no fascist, no law can fucking touch us. The endless battle of attrition will not die through the mechanisms and structures that created and maintain it. It will be resolved through our affinity with the oppressed, our resistance to assimilation, non-violence, co-option, respectability. Queer Unity is the oppositional force required to dismantle the hierarchies that keep air from our

lungs and fire from our eyes.

“Our tactics are as varied as our genders, our activism as hot as our sex and our resistance as untethered as our desires. By detonating our interior colonies and struggling against all those who work towards our end we open new spaces of creativity and pleasure. Our love is a fugitive practice of destruction and deviance, liberation and difference. Love revolution, not State delusion, Homotopia.” — Homotopia (2006)

Queer Unity is a multi-purpose weapon for Queer liberation. It’s the brick that smashes a piggy car’s windscreen, and then is repurposed to build our homes, to build our communities, to build a new world. We share food, masks, bandages, hormones, to allow ourselves the space to collectively exist, while collectively resisting. We de-arrest and body block to protect each other, and then cook for each other. We take for ourselves the time and space to be nourished physically, emotionally, creatively, sexually, spiritually. And we need not require permission or

fulfil conditions for this. We will not be for profit. Our bodies will not be cogs in your machine. Our bodies will not fear the rage-fueled backlash of normalcy. Our culture, code, creativity, will not be a token. We will not beg, debate, sacrifice or compromise for this. Queer Unity is non-negotiable.

Queer Unity is the endless possibilities that fill our stomachs and awake us from sleep. In a world where we are liberated from normalcy and it’s chains, it’s everything our autonomy guides us towards. In the meantime, it’s acting as if we are already liberated, and embracing the conflict with those who deny us this. It’s an age of sin and criminality that we birth with our blood-stained hands. It’s burning down industrial sites to heat up our dinner. It’s breaking into Parliament to host an orgy. It’s swinging a nail-studded bat at everything that serves to strengthen the clutch that normalcy has on our throats. It’s revelling in the downfall of social order, of class structure, of the state and it’s little tin soldiers. It’s the voluntary association of

free individuals. It's smashing every narrative around sexual or gendered differences. It's making sexual health and boundaries of consent the baseline. It's writing to and standing up for incarcerated Queer people. It's walking someone home, it's running a mutual aid stand, defending each other, being unapologetic in your defiance of normalcy, it's unlocking your revolutionary consciousness, it's a lifelong union of love that isn't dependant on the fucking state or a single church, it's knowing our ongoing history of liberation struggle. It's Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, as Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, operating a radical mutual aid version of the "house culture" that kept black and brown queer communities alive in New York City in the 1970s. It's building horizontal Queer anti-capitalist spaces, refusing rigid structures, definitions and binaries, it's honouring the dead, it's not letting each other get caught, it's direct action, it's love for yourself, your community and your partner/s, it's living with hope for a world where normalcy has no power, and we are free. In doing this,

we are building a better world for ourselves and the people we love. One that isn't dependent on capitalist or respectability politics, and isn't conditional on reforms that ultimately accept exploitation and violence as insurmountable facts of life. It's going to be beautiful. Queer Unity is when I smash a fascist's teeth out, and my lover cleans the blood off my knuckles, while my friends' stole us dinner, and we toast to the future we know that we're fighting for. Fluid, flammable and ferocious: we will keep each other alive while we burn the world down.

"You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time." — Angela Davis (1972)

Reclamation

Reclaim Pride Brighton began as a gesture of solidarity amongst Queer communities. In Highbury Fields, London, the Reclaim Pride march offered up a space for a collective, unapologetically Queer protest. We attended as a gesture of solidarity from Bright-

on's Queer community, whilst we all expressed our solidarity with queer anti-fascists from Los Angeles who were being brutalized by the police and Proud Boys in the aftermath of the Wi Spa incident. Off the back of that, we did one ourselves, in Brighton. A demonstration of Queer Unity as best we could express it, by fucking some shit up as a large crowd of shouting Queers. We gave ourselves the power to speak fearlessly, walk uninhibited and exist autonomously. The influence of state and capital had no power over our expressions of resistance, as Pride historically was as an action, and should always be. The core cell was only about five, and with only a few weeks of organising we managed to create a space outside of the structures that had bastardised Pride into the assimilationist corporate event that everyone knew it as. We have no official leader, we invited no official organisations and have no affiliations. We're Brighton locals from all over the country, who have formed this community of love and resistance out of the necessities of our existence. No room for politici-

ans, no room for careerists, no room for reformists, no room for press. We refuse to play by anyone else's rules, because as soon as we do, our dreams of liberation are swallowed up and spat back out.

"This is a radical action! This is a protest! We are not here to politely ask for reforms: we are not here for the cops, the government, or for any company. What we are doing here today is reminding ourselves, not them, who we are. We are reconnecting with our community, because if we stand together like this every time we are abused, harassed, and humiliated, then no one can fucking touch us. [...]. That is what liberation means, and that is what pride means. So tell me what community

looks like! This is what community looks like!" — A speaker at the Reclaim Pride Brighton march (2021)

The euphoria of autonomy that was born from the Reclaim Pride march became what we have dedicated ourselves towards replicating in everyday life. Pride

isn't just a necessity for one afternoon of protesting or celebrating, it's a necessity for every aspect of our lives — for every day that we exist under allocis-heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and every other hierarchy that governs our lives. Pride is the manifestation of Queer Unity: the actions we take as part of our own liberation struggle. That's why we run a monthly mutual aid program to give out food, water, sanitary products, pronoun badges, literature, clothes and more. That's why we attend and organise counter-demonstrations to TERFs, fascists, state and capitalist institutions. That's why the city is plastered with our posters and stickers. That's why we're not going anywhere. And whilst all of these public actions are non-violent, Queer Unity as a practice does inherently require violence as a tool of self-defence and liberation. It's only just that a system built upon violence be dismantled and abolished through whatever means necessary. Pride is absolutely bashing the fuck back, against normalcy, the state, oppressive hierarchies, elimination and assimilation in all their

forms. But that doesn't mean that we'll incriminate ourselves publicly: plurality of tactics, opsec, and anonymity are important tools for any movement. In terms of where we stand in all of this, we aim for our actions and programs to build a consciousness and community that has the potential to grow into an insurrectionary liberation struggle. But we're still young, and far from perfect. This kind of project requires dedication, fluidity and engagement with criticism to fully blossom. We may be very far off now, but it gets us fucking excited to think about us, or whoever comes after us, getting there one day.

This isn't for allocishets "allies" to nod their heads and understand. This is for Queers, to everyone internationally who has been subjugated throughout history through violence that controls the autonomy of our bodies, emotions and social roles. This is a call out to your own tragic, deviant, fugitive history, to refuse to be sold, to refuse to bleed, to refuse to be governed by anyone but yourself, to reclaim fucking everything.

We are but one small group of
Queers. We are Queer Unity.
We are love, rage and solidarity.
We are bashing the fuck back.
We are reclaiming Pride. We
are loving and supporting each
other. We are actively working
towards the downfall of a society
that was built to oppress and kill.
And we are fucking proud of it.
We are dedicated to our princi-
ples and their implementation
through actions. We are just
getting started. And you should
get started too.

Other Work That Inspired Us:

SPIT! Manifesto Reader: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d40a0be-a6305d0001bc1663/t/5e71ae76539f-800fe98afc3f/1584508595297/SPIT%21Reader-2017.pdf>

Xenofeminism Manifesto: https://www.laboriacuboniks.net/20150612-xf_layout_web.pdf Gender Nihilism: <https://libcom.org/library/gender-nihilism-anti-manifesto> <https://alyesque.medium.com/beyond-negativity-what-comes-after-gender-nihilism-bbd80a5fc05d> Mary Nardini Gang: <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/mary-nardini-gang-be-gay-do-crime> <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/mary-nardini-gang-criminal-intimacy> <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/mary-nardini-gang-toward-the-queerest-insurrection>

Audre Lorde: https://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Lorde_The_Masters_Tools.pdf https://www.colorado.edu/odece/sites/default/files/attached-files/rba09-sb4converted_8.pdf

Queer/Trans Abolition: <http://www.dean-spade.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Building-an-Abolitionist-Trans-Queer-Movement-With-Everything-Weve-Got.pdf>

Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries: <https://untorellipress.noblogs.org/files/2011/12/STAR.pdf>

An Army Of Lovers Cannot Lose (ACT UP): <https://actupny.org/documents/QueersReadThis.pdf>

Kill The Cop In Your Head: <https://archive.iiww.org/history/library/Jackson/copi->

[nyourhead/](#)

Bash Back! Anthology: <https://libcom.org/files/Fray%20Baroque%20and%20Tegan%20Eanelli%20QueeeringAnarchism> https://libcom.org/files/Queeering_Anarchism_Addressing_and_Undre_Volcano_.pdf

Anarchism and The Black Revolution: <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/lorenzo-kom-borin-erwin-anarchism-and-the-black-revolution>

Abolishing The Police: <https://abolitionist-futures.com/abolishing-the-police-book>

Mutual Aid Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next): <https://www.versobooks.com/books/3713-mutual-aid>

Other Reading Lists:

Abolition: <https://abolitionistfutures.com/full-reading-list>

Indigenous Anarchism: <https://iaf-fai.org/2020/04/23/recommended-readings/>

Queer Anarchism: <https://anarchistarborist.medium.com/queer-anarchism-queer-theory-reading-list-9b07150bc3>

Works of Lucy Parsons: http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/lparsons/lparsonscw.html

Black Autonomy Network: <https://blackautonomynetwork.noblogs.org/library/>

The Anarchist Library Anti-Copyright

Criminal Intimacy

A Gang of Criminal Queers

2009

Because the night belongs to lovers. Because the night belongs to us. — Patti Smith

On Deadness

To live in this culture is to be dead, bare. Deadness is the affect and the aspiration of dominant social membership. It is the social relationship wherein life is reduced to exchange and capital. It is everywhere; in those walking the streets without ever meeting the eyes of another, in the exchanges of service work, in the aisles of a department stores and the pews of church. In capital, in heteronormativity, in law, in morality—everywhere it is the logic of death.

The unthinkability of our desires is reiterated over and again. Power and control are written on our bodies. What is passion? Desire? Adventure? Play? What,

but such catchy slogans for adverts. Our love and our appetites and our very bodies are inscribed with this culture. Capital is written on our bodies. We dare not dream. How could we conceivably want more than this?

And the agents and exertions of biopower—the boots of queer-bashers, the panoptical ever-present surveillance cameras with the flashing blue lights, the sirens and guns of the police, the campaigns for gay marriage and military service, the lingering pains of monogamy, and such shapely mannequins, ad nauseum—stand everywhere erected as checkpoints guaranteeing the impossibility of anything else. Life, stripped bare, is nothing more than raw survival—banal, cold, numbing. Could it be more clear? Hetero-capitalism, this culture, this totality: It is out to destroy us.

Taking and Sharing: On Getting What's Ours

The machinery of control has rendered our very existence illegal. We've endured the criminalization and crucifixion of our bodies, our sex, our unruly

genders. Raids, witch-hunts, burnings at the stake. We've occupied the space of deviants, of whores, of perverts, and abominations. This culture has rendered us criminal, and of course, in turn, we've committed our lives to crime. In the criminalization of our pleasures, we've found the pleasure to be had in crime! In being outlawed for who we are, we've discovered that we are indeed fucking outlaws!

Many blame queers for the decline of this society—we take pride in this. Some believe that we intend to shred-to-bits this civilization and its moral fabric—they couldn't be more accurate. We're often described as depraved, decadent, and revolting—but oh, they ain't seen nothing yet. Let's be explicit: We are criminal queer anarchists and this world is not and can never be enough for us. We want to annihilate bourgeois morality and make ruins of this world. We're here to destroy what is destroying us.

Let's be speaking of revolt. We are tracing the lineage of our queer criminality and charting

the demise of the social order. And oh the nectar from which we drink: lesbian pirates raging the seas, queer rioters setting cop cars ablaze, sex parties amidst the decay of industrialism, bank robbers wearing pink triangles, mutual aid networks among sex workers and thieves, gangs of trannyfags bashing-the-fuck-back. We've been assured that each day could be our last. As such we've chosen to live as if every day is. In turn, we promise that the existent's days are numbered. In our revolt, we are developing a form of play. These are our experiments with autonomy, power, and force. We haven't paid for anything we're wearing and we rarely pay for food. We steal from our jobs and turn tricks to get by. We fuck in public and have never come harder. We swap tips and scams amid gossip and foreplay. We've looted the shit out of places and delight in sharing the booty.

We wreck things at night and hold hands and skip all the way home. We are ever growing our informal support structures and we'll always have each other's backs. In our orgies, riots, and

heists, we are articulating the collectivity of, and deepening, these ruptures.

On Criminal Intimacy, World Making, and Becoming Whatever

The ecstasy and electricity of crime is undeniable. We've felt the sweetest adrenaline rushes as we've dashed from security and blown each other on the bus. And nothing offers up the feeling of being alive more than the weight of a hammer through the facade of capital. Crime helps me get out of bed every morning.

We queers and other insurgents have developed what good folks might call a criminal intimacy. We are exploring the material and affective solidarity fostered between outlaws and rebels. In our obstruction of law, we've illegally discovered the beauty in one another. In revealing our desire to our partners in crime, we've come to know each other more intimately than legality could ever allow. In desire, we produce conflict. And in conflict

with capital, we may have found an escape route from the deadening of our lives. Our gang's discourse is conflict.

The real power expressed in our crimes isn't in the damage caused to our enemies or even in the various improvements of our material conditions (though we take pleasure in both). The power we express is in the empowerments and relationships we're creating. In our sex and our attack—when we pull down our masks and share our cache of bricks—we are expanding the possibilities of our affinity. In our crime, we create dynamic new relationships of criminal intimacies. In these possibilities, we are learning how we might, together, reduce this world to rubble.

We must make ourselves bodies without organs. Within each of us is contained a virtual pool of everything we are capable of becoming—our desires, affects, power, ways of acting, and infinite possibilities. To embody and activate these possibilities we must experiment with the ways our bodies act in conjunction with others. We commit crime

together so we can unveil our criminal becoming.

We do not offer 'criminal' or 'queer' as identities, nor as categories. Criminality. Queerness. These are tools for revolt against identity and category. These are our lines of flight out of all restraint. We are in conflict with all that restricts every and each desire. We are becoming whatever. Our sole commonality is our hatred for everything that exists. Held in common, such a revolt of desire can never be assimilated into the state-form.

Right-wing talking-heads invoke the imagery of a 'culture war', waged between civil society on one side and queers on the other. We reject this model of war. Our war is a social war. The nexus of domination and class society is everywhere. Yet everywhere, too, are ruptures and points of conflict. In these fissures we exist in rebellion—we queers, criminals, whatever.

Our dirty talk and our nighttime whispers comprise a secret language. Our language of thieves and lovers is foreign to this social

order, yet carries the sweetest notes in the ears of rebels. This language reveals our potential for world making. Our conflict is space for our possible other-selves to blossom. By organizing our secret universe of shared plenty and collective-explosive possibility, we are building a new world of riot, orgy, and decadence.

Interview with the Mary Nardini Gang

*From Vengeance 3
A Gang of Criminal Queers 2009*

VENGEANCE: Does being a proletarian change for you being a militant queer?

MARY NARDINI: Being queer complicates the way we experience our role within capitalism. Queer bodies are often forced to sell their labor in ways that would be excluded from traditional marxist narratives of what it means to be a worker. This includes service workers and sex workers. These forms of exploitation problematize the often heteronormative and patriarchal ideas surrounding what is or isn't labor. Ultimately, the positions of queers and proles intertwine—we are the class that has no control over our bodies. This

means different things in various situations. But the bosses that manage our time and the queer bashers that manage our gender are clearly all class-enemies.

V: Why does both the Spectacle and also the mainstream gay and lesbian movement seem to only identify with the middle and upper classes, and never with working and poor people? Who benefits from such a narrative?

MN: It is abundantly obvious that the politicians who lead the “lgbt community” are only interested in preserving power for the ruling class. Political campaigns for gay marriage, gays in the military, and hate crime legislation, only reproduce the capitalist institutions of marriage, military, and the prison industrial complex. And it goes much deeper than that. Representations of queers portray and capitalize on images of wealthy, affluent, white, able-bodied gays and lesbians. You only need to look as far as Will and Grace or a copy of any LGBT magazine to see the way that queer bodies and desires are shaped by capital.

V: Within anarchism, there seems to be a coming clash (or a current clash) between activists and hooligans. Why do you think this is? What are the tensions that have given rise to this division?

MN: To be cheesy and quote *The Coming Insurrection*: “Everyone finds herself forced to take sides; to choose between anarchy and the fear of anarchy.” The divide that is happening in the broader anarchist milieu is also happening among radical queers. I think that a lot of the tension is rooted in that a lot of people have confused radical queer struggle as a safe haven for the worst form of identity politics. They’re really sorely mistaken. This isn’t about sustaining identities, it is about destroying them.

V: Can you speak about the actions that occurred around the time of the Bash Back Conference and your disappointment with some of the people who responded to those actions?

MN: At the Bash Back! Convergence, a dance-party train occupation. The temporary occu-

pation was an absurd mix of dancing, making-out, and a cacophony of ridiculous chants and singing. This created a situation where people caused a lot of havoc, vandalizing the train and reclaiming it as a queered space. A spontaneous street march then erupted from the train. The march attacked luxury cars and pulled shit into the streets.

Someone within the march began pulling newspaper boxes out of the streets and back onto the sidewalk while yelling “this is a peaceful protest.” After the newsboxes were removed, a police cruiser literally ran over someone’s foot and officers began beating people with their telescoping batons. Four people were arrested.

The next day, all of the liberal, activist types went on a tirade to denounce the previous nights events. A telling anecdote: Three white people stand up in a row, and denounce the occupation as racist, because there were people of color on the train. “There were people of color who actually live in Chicago on that train! They are actually

part of the community! That's racist! People were being rude!" Then, two female-bodied people of color who live in Chicago respond, saying that they find everyone disgusting. "Bash Back! isn't about being polite, or nice. Bash Back! means challenging and destroying normalcy. This is going to be rude. It's going to be messy! If you aren't into this, then you're in the wrong place." Everyone is silent for a moment. Then the stack continues. They are ignored and more white activists continue to talk about how the action was racist and alienating to people of color. It continued as folks talked about all the "white dudes with passing privilege" who instigated the situation.

I'm really disgusted by people's actions and sentiments that day, because of their complicity with the police and their silencing of all the bodies that weren't white, cisgendered, and male.

V: Where would you like to see Bash Back! go in the next several years, if the network is going to continue?

MN: I would like to see groups of queer anarchists working to build autonomous power and get more conflictual. I'm really excited about the squat that BB! Memphis just opened for homeless queer/trans youth. I'm really excited about groups distributing free pepper-spray and teaching people to fight. I'm excited about queers kicking the shit out of queer bashers, and always about fighting in the streets. Whether people continue to organize under the name "Bash Back!" or not, I think that the network of wild-ass queers who hate everything is going to keep growing and building autonomous power.

Mary Nardini

A Profile of a Milwaukee Anarchist

Mary Nardini Gang 2018

Mary Nardini was an Italian anarchist who lived and organized in Milwaukee's Bay View neighborhood in the early 20th century. She was revered in the Italian anarchist community as the 'guiding light' of I Dilettanti Filodrammatici del Circolo Studi Sociali (Amateur Thespian Social Studies Club). The Thespians were a group of Italian anarchists who operated a space that was not unlike many contemporary infoshops. Members of the group occupied themselves distributing anarchist literature, hosting discussions, and putting on anti-state and anti-church plays as fundraisers to support anarchist political prisoners.

Bay View's Little Italy, as a community, was known for its general distaste for the church and the state. Folks in the community were deemed trouble-

makers by religious and pro-government Italians who lived in the Third Ward neighborhood. Among the latter was Reverend August Giuliani. In 1917, Giuliani began a campaign to convert the largely secular Bay View Italians to christianity. He and his choir held weekly revivals, complete with singing and preaching in the streets of Bay View.

In late August of 1917, Mary Nardini and a handful of other anarchists confronted Reverend Giuliani in the streets. They declared themselves anarchists and proclaimed their hatred for the state, the church, laws, and the pope. Visibly shaken and offended, Giuliani and his band left.

He returned the next week. When he and his choir arrived, they saw Mary reading a book on her porch. As Giuliani began his sermon, several anarchists gathered nearby and began singing 'vulgar' italian songs that announced, "We fight the government, we fight the citizens, we are for anarchy!" Soon a crowd of over seventy-five had gathered and were heckling Giuliani. One person in the

crowd promised Giuliani, "If you return to Bay View, we'll kill you. We have the lake for people like you!" Fearing for his life, Giuliani fled.

On September 9th , Giuliani returned again, bringing several Milwaukee police officers with him. As he arrived, Mary Nardini was seen yelling into the front door of a house. Within moments, she marched out of the residence with a column of over fifty anarchists following closely behind. The police began roughing up one of the anarchists, resulting in several of the folks in Nardini's crew drawing their guns. What ensued was a shootout between police and anarchists that left two anarchists dead, several people wounded on both sides, and Giuliani running for his life.

In the aftermath, Nardini and over a dozen other anarchists were arrested for rioting. Eleven people, including Nardini, were then indicted for the incident.

On November 24th , while the defendants were in jail awaiting trial, a suspicious package was

delivered to Giuliani's church in the third ward. Fearing a retaliation bombing, church servants brought the package to the downtown police station. Sure enough, the package held a bomb. While being inspected the bomb detonated, killing nine police officers, including several who were involved in the Bay View incident. The explosion at the police station marks the most cops killed in any incident in the history of the Milwaukee Police Department.

Though Nardini and her comrades were in police custody at the time of the explosion, the incident irreversibly tainted the jury, and at trial she was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison.

Relevant Queer Mythology

Mary Nardini Gang 2018

Cooper's Donuts was an all night donut shop on a seedy stretch of Main Street in Los Angeles. It was a regular hangout for street queens and queer hustlers at all hours of the night. Police harassment was a regular fixture of the Cooper's, but one May night in 1959, the queers fought back. What started with customers throwing donuts at the police escalated into full-on street fighting. In the ensuing chaos, all of the donut-wielding rebels escaped into the night.

One weekend in August of 1966, Compton's — a twenty-four-hour cafeteria in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood — was buzzing with its usual late-night crowd of drag queens, hustlers, slummers, cruisers, runaway teens and neighborhood regulars. The restaurant's management became annoyed by a

noisy young crowd of queens at one table who seemed to be spending a lot of time without spending a lot of money, and it called the police to roust them. A surly police officer, accustomed to manhandling Compton's clientele with impunity, grabbed the arm of one of the queens and tried to drag her away. She unexpectedly threw her coffee in his face, however, and a melee erupted: Plates, trays, cups, and silverware flew through the air at the startled police who ran outside and called for backup. The customers turned over the tables, smashed the plate-glass windows, and poured onto the streets. When the police reinforcements arrived, street fighting broke out all throughout the Compton's vicinity. Drag queens beat the police with their heavy purses and kicked them with their high-heeled shoes. A police car was vandalized, a newspaper box was burnt to the ground, and general havoc was raised all throughout the Tenderloin.

What began as an early morning raid on June 28th, 1969, at New York's Stonewall Inn, escalated to four days of rioting through-

hout Greenwich Village. Police conducted the raid as usual; targeting people of color, trans-people, and gender variants for harassment and violence. It all changed, though, when a bull-dyke resisted her arrest and several street queens began throwing bottles and rocks at the police. The police began beating folks, but soon people from all over the neighborhood rushed to the scene, swelling the rioters' numbers to over two thousand. The vastly outnumbered police barricaded themselves inside the bar, while an uprooted parking meter was used as a battering ram by the crowd. Molotov cocktails were thrown at the bar. Riot police arrived on scene, but were unable to regain control of the situation. Drag queens danced a conga line and sang songs amidst the street fighting to mock the inability of the police to re-establish order. The rioting continued until dawn, only to be picked up again at nightfall of the subsequent days.

On the night of May 21st 1979, in what has come to be known as the White Night Riots, the queer community of San Fran-

cisco was outraged and wanted justice for the murder of Harvey Milk. The outraged queers went to city hall where they smashed the windows and glass door of the building. The riotous crowd took to the streets, disrupting traffic, smashing storefronts and car windows, disabling buses, and setting twelve San Francisco Police cruisers on fire. The rioting spread throughout the city as others joined in on the fun!

In 1970, Stonewall veterans Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera founded STAR — Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries. They opened the STAR house, a radical version of the “house” culture of black and latina queer communities. The house provided a safe and free place for queer and trans street kids to stay. Marsha and Sylvia as the “House Mothers” hustled to pay rent so that the kids would not be forced to. Their “children” scavenged and stole food so that everyone in the house could eat. That’s what we call mutual aid!

In the time between the Stonewall Riots and the outbreak of HIV, the queer community

of New York saw the rise of a culture of public sex. Queers had orgies in squatted buildings, in abandoned semi-trucks, on the piers and in bars and clubs all along Christopher street. This is our idea of voluntary association of free individuals! Many mark this as the most sexually liberated time this country has ever seen. Though the authors of this essay wholeheartedly believe we can outdo them.

Whore Theory

A Gang of Criminal Queers 2009

For the whore, it is of extreme importance to be at all times stunning, both in appearance and intellect. As faithful deviants of femininity, we have a certain responsibility to display a well-versed hatred towards everything pristine and bland. Little boys and girls need more examples of filth in their life; crazy beautiful cunts to admire. They must learn what it is to want, to be whores incapable of holding in and repressing their emotions.

Becoming-whore does not mean anything, so put your fucking notebook down. We are strutting contradictions and we do not care. If you cross us, we will annihilate you and everything you love. If you fuck us, we will break your heart or maybe fall in love and hate you forever. We are addicted to the disgust of society, corrupted Jeune-Filles that know no restraint.

We want to destroy everything, in diamond encrusted high heels. The violence of our desire tastes unlike any other bodily fluid; it is a poisonous venom that only the most masochistic of bodies can encounter and crawl towards for a second helping. We invite men in, waiting for the degradation that will warrant vengeance and until then we just shove their cocks in our mouths and swallow. What-ever.

We gaze at our body's image in every reflection we find and can't help but fuck ourselves all day long, because we are so incredibly beautiful. Our insecurities are displayed like sparkling gold crowns on top of our pretty heads; we couldn't be more proud (or ashamed) of our many imperfections. We are horribly vain, and every whore knows that only another whore can satisfy her needs.

Whore is not a sexuality, such a thing does not exist. Our orgasms are inseparable from our hatred, from our fashion and fears; nothing makes us cum that doesn't also revolt us in some way or another. We expe-

rience this world as an ugly little playground for our fantasies, and these dirty thoughts cannot possibly be contained within any designated arena of “sex”. Sex for us is turning heads, scraping knees, and pissing anywhere but in a toilet.

If you see a whore swinging her hips down a busy street, you may notice a furrowed brow while she mutters angrily under her breath. This is because you annoy her with your presence. Every insignificant body that brushes past her is at risk for her hatred. Hatred makes her erect. She wastes no time in forming assumptions about you based on what you’re wearing—your shoes are not fierce enough, your walk is not sexy enough, your eyes are not burdened enough. You are nothing compared to the beautiful people that hide in the alleyway, waiting to mug you.

Politics does not interest the whore, it is the whore. Seduced by the incessant pain of living and dying and aching, she is simultaneously afraid of every little thing and fueled with the exhilaration of having nothing

to lose. She thinks that to speak logically of this world is pure delusion: rationality is an unnecessary indulgence typical of mumbling pricks. Attempting to define her context or articulate her existence is utterly futile; absolutely nothing about her makes sense. The whore critically engages only with astrology, preferring the opinion of our sky’s constellations over the utterance of some dying old white man.

Brilliantly bitter, the whore holds onto grief and anger like precious gems wrapping around her heart; her traumas lovingly swim and pulsate through her veins like tiny shards of glass. A part of her longs for the sadness and disappointment she knows as truth; she is full of emptiness and boredom in its absence. For her, seeing the world through sorrow is seeing in full color, feeling the sensation of life tingle through each nerve ending on her body. Without it, joy eludes her as well.

The whore is utterly exposed—a raw wound dripping sweet, dead excrement onto each thing,

each person she comes into contact with. She is naked, forever tucking what is sacred into the crevice between her legs for no one else to see. If you look too close, be prepared to lose a limb, a lip, a piece of your fucking heart because what is precious to her is untouchable to you. You worthless shit of a human race.

A proper whore knows, deep down inside of her, why this world pretends to detest her. All her life she has had an irresistible charm that, when coupled with an unbecoming volatility, has the power to reveal to those around her their most unwanted desires. Her ass makes married gentlemen (and their bored wives) fidget incessantly, and her vulgar wit causes dry academics to wet their lips with excitement. Upon her exit, entire rooms breathe a heavy sigh of relief that they are no longer forced to face their quivering perversities. Alone in their modern bedrooms they shamefully jerk off to her image, quietly hating themselves and their crass routine of living. She is as quick to laugh as she is to cry. When Mercury is in retrograde, she knows that getting

out of bed means catastrophe. But even the fucked up alignment of the planets, working hand in hand with this mundane and despicable society, cannot stop her lunacy from being cast onto her surroundings and those around her. The circumstances which make her and fellow whores weep also create potent hysterics, and islands once isolated in insanity come together for a good laugh, and maybe a little revenge.

The whore is a slut, yes, but she is also a bum and a young delinquent; she is a faggot, a queen, an angry dyke, an insurrectional monarchist in heels, a tyrannical tranny. She is everything and nothing, everyone and no one. Glamorous in her many disguises and transparent in her filthy desires. She overflows with love for those spilling over with hatred, forever enchanted with the beauty hidden beneath this sterile economy of bodies. She enjoys nothing more than spitting on the face of humanity, laughing as her stinking spittle drips down pointed chins to make a satisfying splat on the dirty pavement beneath her feet.



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Mary Nardini Gang Be Gay Do Crime An Introduction 2019

Be Gay Do Crime

Elements of this introduction were presented at the North American Anarchist Studies Network conference in Montréal in the spring of 2018, on the occasion of the ten year anniversary of the initial publication of “Toward the Queerest Insurrection.” Others were presented at a small gathering hosted by Aleatory Books in Seattle later in the year. Some appear here for the first time. The full book that this text introduces can be found at <https://contagionpress.com/pocketbooks/be-gay-do-crime>.

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Anonymous from Reclaim Pride Brighton Reclaim Your Queer Fucking Life!

December 2021

Reclamation: A Queer Zine from Brighton, retrieved on 2022-01-06 from <https://cryptpad.fr/file/#/2/file/Cs1X3hKKWnwusrf3oRNehxpy/>

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A Gang of Criminal Queers Criminal Intimacy, 2009

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**A Gang of Criminal Queers Interview
with the Mary Nardini Gang**

From Vengeance 3, 2009

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Mary Nardini Gang Mary Nardini

A Profile of a Milwaukee Anarchist
2018

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**Mary Nardini Gang Relevant Queer
Mythology 2018**

Be Gay Do Crime, December, 2018,
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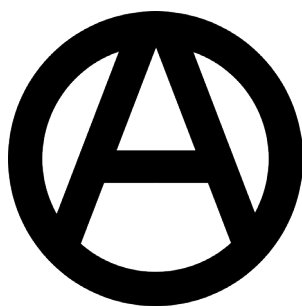
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**A Gang of Criminal Queers Whore
Theory**

2009

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