

*I dedicate this work to my love, Heaven and my son,
Darrian...*

Without your support, I would be nothing.

Lost cries from the Emerald Triangle

A Novella by Paul Allih

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Introduction:

What you are about to read are the passages from a diary that was written by Thomas H. Willis, the head of a farming family that lived in the mountains of Northern California—an area widely known as the *Emerald Triangle*. This section is made up of three counties; Mendocino, Humboldt, and Trinity. The Willis' resided in Redwood Valley, a part of Mendocino County. With a population just over five thousand people; their nearest neighbors were ten to fifteen miles away.

Those who knew this simple colony referred to them as “nice people”, who were “family oriented”, and who “mostly kept to themselves”. Shock and awe traveled through these remote parts as word spread about the violent standoff.

To this day, some still cannot believe what happened to the family during those hot days of summer. This book is an in depth look inside the lives of the Willis' before and during their horrific ordeal. The contents are truly the only evidence that remains to what really happened.

The testimony found within these pages takes place over a span of thirteen days in August of 1996.

Day 1:

The morning light broke over the mountains as the silent killers surrounded us. They stalked behind the breeze that flowed through the green valley—haunting the quiet, crisp of the morning air.

There was no sensing them.

They lurked within the tree lines like something alien. Hiding in the brush, the assassins held us in their sights, waiting for their opportune moment to strike.

The day started off like any other.

I was awakened early in the morning by a squawking bird that was perched on a redwood outside of our bedroom window. It chirped with high pitched shrieks that pierced through the comforts of my sleep. With my eyes blurry from crust, I loaded some rounds into my pellet gun and stepped out on to the front porch. The sun hit me like a punch in the face and by the time I blinked a few times the bird had already taken flight. I wasn't going to shoot it—I just wanted to scare the hell out of it.

Unable to get back to sleep, I made a pot of coffee as Diane continued to slumber, seemingly undisturbed. Unlike myself, she could sleep through damn near anything.

When we lived in Los Angeles she was able to sleep through the garbage trucks as they revved their diesel engines while slamming dumpsters on the pavement. Her eyes would hold tight during the crows from colorful winos in drunken highs, howling through the night as if they had just found salvation. Every so often, I would be startled by the sound of gunshots. At the time I was so glad that we were able to leave that hell.

Out here it is so much cleaner and quieter. For over five years we have lived in the middle of nowhere, mostly surrounded by trees and mountains. We left behind the emotional cripples that were chained in line to a deranged form of society. We left behind all worries of working dead end jobs that benefit no one but the slave owners. No longer trying to fit in with everyone else—we became the outsiders, living for ourselves.

Up until the time we moved I worked as a warehouse supervisor; storing and shipping useless knick-knacks that were made in China. My bosses were simply goons who cared nothing for their employees; all they cared about was the bottom line of profit margins. Before I quit they ended the medical benefits for everyone but, of course, themselves. Words cannot begin to explain how happy I was to get out of there. In the end, I spent four years in college just to work in a place that was two steps above a sweat shop.

While I managed that musty warehouse, Diane was a secretary for some low rent, ambulance chasing attorney named Ronald Spiro. He was a crooked lawyer who whored himself to corrupt politicians as he nickled and dimed accident victims. Ronald loved to squeeze money from those who did not have it, especially the people who really needed the most from their settlement.

He would take great joy in putting the screws to them by overcharging for every small thing he did; phone calls, the use of staples, every sheet of paper, and every letter of every word that was typed on those sheets of paper. Diane was sickened by the way this man did business, but he paid

her nicely. She made more than most in her profession and when you live in the city every cent you bring in counts.

In 1990, I inherited over \$200,000 from my mother. She said in her will that she wanted me to use the money to find some kind of happiness in self-employment. Diane had a green thumb and ever since our first date she talked about how much she wanted to be a farm owner. For a long time the city had been suffocating us and when we were given the chance, we cut out as fast as we could. After a few weeks of looking, we found our farm in small mountain town named Redwood Valley.

It was an immaculate area. Nothing but trees and mountains for miles—a most welcomed change from city life. Redwood Valley is a small town with a population under 20,000. The houses are spread out for miles apart upon open land—our nearest neighbor was thirty miles away from where we lived. Occasionally they would come over, but we mostly kept to ourselves. We worked hard, enduring long hours, and we stayed very close—it was better that way for us.

The land was sold to us by a man who inherited it from his father who was a fruit farmer at one time. The 200 acre area consisted of three single story, three bedroom houses, a giant green house, and a barn. It was a deal of a lifetime from a man who just wanted to get rid of it and finally move on. As he told us, one day his father stumbled onto a bees nest in the woods while chasing his cat. He was attacked viciously, stung to the point of having a sudden heart attack. Not unheard of, but a strange way to go out none the less.

This beautiful property had sat dormant for almost ten years before we bought it. Needless to say, it took a few months get everything together. We had to replace rotted sections of the floors in every house as well as repainting the insides and outsides. I had to completely rebuild the porch on the house that Diane chose for us, while having to hire an electrician to come out and rewire every room in every house. It was a pain in the ass at times, but nothing worthwhile ever comes easy.

Before we went looking for land, we had already figured out what we were going to grow. For quite some time we had talked about farming pot, given the chance we would become licensed farmers in the medical marijuana trade. Now we had the means to get serious about our plan, there were no more excuses.

The people in many towns and cities of California had spoken in favor of medicinal marijuana legalization by way of their vote. There was no shortage of clinics that farmers could sell their goods to and it was something that the big-wig businessmen would not touch with a ten foot pole.

It was like living in the simpler times, we were taxed but we did not have the miles of red tape to cut through to make a profit. All of our dealings were from shop owner to farmer. It was as if we jumped into a time machine and went back to the days when the independent farmer did his business with the independent shop owner—back when there was truly a free market. No strings and no competition from the rich pricks that had the means to close out the little guy.

We have both smoked it in the past and we believed it to be a pretty harmless plant that carried a lot of benefits

with its usage. I smoked it when I was much younger, usually with my friends while we watched b-grade horror flicks or at the occasional concert. The most damage I ever inflicted in the process was to a bag of cheese doodles. While I found more pleasure in drinking whiskey, Diane still smoked on occasions. From time to time I would catch her in the bathtub soaking in the bubbles, puffing on a joint with her eyes closed in relaxation.

After months of growing and distributing, we were able to live better than we ever had before. Mind you; we weren't rolling in gold, but were making much more working for ourselves than we ever did working for anyone else.

Back in supposed civilization, the blue collars were making less money while working harder than they ever had done before. At the same time, the white collar workers on the bottom weren't doing much better. While their wages were frozen, pay rates for CEOs continued to climb—if you ask me, that's no way to live.

At first, we grew four different strands; King Purple, Orange Twist, Berry Kush, and Black Widow. Twenty plants for each strand and by the end of each day I was wiped out—completely exhausted. Doing the math, I was putting in twelve hours a day managing the crops. The fact of the matter was that I needed some help.

After spending fourteen grueling hours farming, Diane and I sat on the front porch and discussed putting the other houses to use. We would do this by hiring extra hands to take some of the load off of me. However, we needed people that we could trust; people we knew. The two who

came to mind were those we thought would be the most fit to help us with our expansion; Harry and Calvin.

Harry was down on his luck at the time, he was an out of work underwater welder with no prospects. His wife, Liz, was a preschool teacher who was carrying most of the weight financially. Liz wasn't making much and the two of them were barely making ends meet. When Diane called them with our offer they both loved the idea, saying that they would be more than happy to join us. They did so on the agreement that we would pay them along with giving them free board and free herb.

When she called Calvin, she knew what his answer would be. "Cal", as we called him, was single by choice and a functioning pot head who was working at a bible factory in downtown Los Angeles. He was in his late 20's with no ties; a tall and lanky goof ball with a scruffy exterior—almost resembling that of Shaggy from the Scooby-Doo cartoons.

I knew Cal very well, and as a spiritualist who did not believe in absolutes, I knew he hated working for a Christian company. He was forever looking for a different gig, but none of them paid quite as well and a lot of them gave random drug tests.

After Diane's call, he quit his job and moved out to our farm just so he could smoke his green and live rent free. From what he told us, when he called his manager he said "I quit—I'm gonna grow some pot!" This wouldn't surprise me if this was true; Cal had always been appropriately blunt.

With the two of them by my side in the field, we were easily able to increase production without my back

breaking in two. We went from farming four strands to eight in no time and wrapping up the day within six hours. I was able to spend more time with my son and I wasn't so damn exhausted from playing farm boy that I could actually enjoy myself.

Diane's idea was a life saver and with all of us joined together, we became one big family. Our existence became one of paradise, functioning like a small community.

Pouring myself a cup of coffee, my son wandered into the kitchen from his bedroom. He was wearing his favorite pajamas; Batman's costume equipped with a Velcro cape. As he rubbed the sandman's dust from his eyes, he asked "Daddy, can you make some pancakes?"

I gave him a smile and said, "Sure Danny, after my cup of coffee. Go watch some cartoons while I check on the crops, okay?"

He nodded with a big grin and slicked off towards the living room. Collecting myself with a smile, I prepared to give the crops a once over, like I would do every morning. Before I could set foot on my porch, the house phone started ringing. Shaking my head, I retracted back into the kitchen and answered the phone.

Before I could say hello, Harry breathed heavy in a quiet rasp "Tommy, there's someone in the bushes 'round back!"

Puzzled, I asked "What?"

He said it slower, as if he was spelling it out to me "There is someone fucking around in the bushes on the side of my house!"

I shrugged it off, "Harry, how much shit have you been smoking this morning?"

Harry huffed, “Tommy, look out your back window, man. There’s someone out back!”

Telling Harry to hold on, I put the phone down and walked towards the back. Looking out of my back window, I didn’t see anything but the dense brush. Not amused, I walked back to the phone and said, “Harry, I don’t see goddamn thing.”

“Fuck it. I’m coming over!” he said before the phone went “click”.

As Harry made his way over to the house, I kept looking out the window in the back but I didn’t see anyone or anything. My guess was he was high on King Purple again, that stuff always made him paranoid. After a few hits of that shit, he would go on rants like how the government was trying to clone people through some kind of twisted eugenics. By his claim, there were trying to make an army of slave-zombies that will work, be productive, and never question “why?” I would just laugh and think, “Most of them do that all on their own.”

Harry came in through the front door like a frenzied lunatic. His hair looked as if it had been pulled out and his eyes were stretched wide open. He rushed towards me as I stepped out on to the back porch, “Tommy wait—don’t go out there!”

“Harry” I said, “Diane is sleeping.”

Breathing heavily, he whispered with a rasp “Tommy, Man—something’s going on around here.”

Attempting to calm him down, I told him “Just take a couple of deep breaths—I don’t want you scaring Danny or waking up my wife.”

Harry breathed in and out, inhaling and exhaling slowly. Once he was calm, he said “I woke up and was drinking my coffee and looking out the window. Then I saw it, some figure dressed in black—I couldn’t make out the face. It was just a shadow moving around through the bushes.”

I looked at him strangely and asked, “Have you lost your goddamn mind?”

He stuttered, “Tommy, I...”

Fed up with scene, I said, “Look, I’m going to take a peek for myself.”

He gave me a simple nod and we walked outside through the sliding glass doors. Harry followed behind me as I led the charge from the safety of my back porch. Our houses were set a part by about fifty yards each. The houses were lined to one side towards the east, about two hundred yards across from the green house. Our homes faced the fifty acre clearing where we farmed the crops. With that total in mind, there was about one hundred yards of forest behind our houses.

We walked along the forest line and looked in through the heavy brush. For ten minutes we slowly tip toed with wide eyes, but we found nothing. There were no figures, no shadows; not even a fucking squirrel. Calling it off, Harry went home and I went back inside to make my son some flapjacks.

I went out by myself and took another glance before getting to work on the new harvest. After finding nothing again, the only conclusion I could bring myself to was that Harry’s eyes were playing ticks on him. Maybe he saw a

fox or a bear? I didn't know at the time and I was more than willing to brush it off.

Honestly, I had enough shit going on and I did not have the time to patronize stoners. We have lived out here for years and have never been bothered by anyone. Sure, you hear stories about weird shit going on, but we were never personally troubled by anything such as that.

Later that morning, I asked Cal if he had noticed anything strange moving around in the woods. He told me that he didn't see anything out of the ordinary. After our short Q and A session, I told Cal what happened earlier and the two of us poked fun at Harry all day about it.

We harassed him about seeing things "go bump in the brush". He stood his ground as he swore that he saw something back there. The more we picked at him the more piss off he got. He was turning all kinds of red, throwing insults at us as we laughed at his expense.

Though it was funny then, it sure is no laughing matter now. Maybe I should have ventured further back into those woods and been more investigative. Maybe I should have taken an hour out and organized a thorough search of the property. Even if we had found something; what could we have done? I mean, what we would find waiting for us was bigger than anything that we were able to deal with.

It laid in wait like a monster of sorts, carrying an insatiable appetite for unlawful carnage while hiding behind a veil of order. This beast in roam goes from village to den, spreading its tentacles out to consume whatever it can leech too in a hostile takeover. As it moves across the land, it sends the innocents running to the hills while

harboring the guilty in its arms. When in the belly of this beast, you are drained of your life's essence. When you are in the mind, you are free to get away with the most horrific acts and it becomes your nature to do so.

Day 2:

Three weeks ago we sealed a deal with a big dispensary that was about to open shop in San Francisco. They wanted five pounds of each strand; each going for three grand a pound, and eight strands came out to be \$120,000. Needless to say, we were all pretty excited. This deal alone was going to pay for many years of growth and we wouldn't have to sweat anything. Over the next three weeks, the three of us worked long hours to supply the new dispensary as well as the smaller ones we already had contracts with.

There wasn't much room in the schedule to kick back during this time, we had to work hard and we had to work fast. We were waking up at 4 am to get out in the field at 5 am and we would work until 7 pm. I spent most of my day maintaining the irrigation system, which was a very meticulous task. Every line had to constantly be accounted for. If one line was clogged or broken then it could mean losing ten plants. Cal put his green thumb to work with the newly sprouting plants as Harry trimmed the bud from the mature plants in the green house. It is hot and dirty work that above all, took a lot of time and patience. Regardless, it was better than working for someone else.

It wasn't at all bad, though. Most nights Diane and Liz would cook up a quick dinner and we would set up tables in the front, like having a small picnic together. We would watch the sunset sink behind the hills and drink a couple of cold beers before getting back to the grind. Unfortunately, I really didn't have the time to spend with Danny. He understood what was going on—he was a bright kid.

At five years old, Danny was like any other boy; he loved to throw around the football and he drew pictures of the monsters that he claimed slept under his bed. He liked to get down in the mud to play with frogs and chase lizards around the yard. Danny had my dark brown hair and smile while he took his mother's emerald green eyes and fair skin. She was forever bathing him with sunscreen so he didn't get fried in the sun. I would tell her, "Hun, it doesn't matter—he'll wear so much dirt the sun won't be able to find him." She would just snicker at me while lathering him with the highest SPF she could get. By no means was she over bearing; she just wanted to be the best mother she could.

As I worked, Diane would homeschool him for four hours a day—weekends included. We thought it was best for him, that way we would know that he was getting a quality education instead of being pushed through a system that would only view him as a number.

When we would talk about homeschooling in the city, we would only hear one reason to why we shouldn't, "They won't learn any social skills." If the only reason you have to keep your kids in public school is to teach them lessons in fear of not fitting in, then there is no doubt why the rate of graduates are dropping.

We wanted the best for Danny and we witnessed firsthand the deterioration of our public schools. Diane and I both had our share of teachers that just showed up for a paycheck, but over the years it has become worse. Schools are at the point where they can barely afford computers for the children, let alone serve them decent food. Parents have

to send pencils and paper, not only for their child, but every other potential student in the class.

Once your son or daughter gets to class they are grouped together in an overstuffed class room with fifty students or more. If you are lucky, then your child will have the chops to be a fast learner while the others get caught in the cogs to be left behind because the teachers cannot set aside the time.

Worry not; if they don't pick up on Math or English as fast as the teacher can teach it, then they can be placed in some kind of Slow Learning Disability class. There, they will continue to be taught three grades behind those who in their grade level. If they see through the bullshit and realize that they are being forced into a pointless idiot line dance, then there are drugs from them to take. Pills that will keep them focused, keep them dumbed down, and keep them productive. If the pills don't work, then they will put him in a class room of six to eight kids who are labeled as "Emotionally Handicapped". Your son or daughter will be isolated from the rest of the students so they do not contaminate the other with thinking outside of the box of conformity.

In the end, if all else fails they can be forced to hold up the liquor store down the road from their house in their deteriorating neighborhood. They will be sent off to a private prison; after all, the private prison system receives more funding through our tax dollars than public schools. In some areas of our beloved country, a prison guard can make more than a public school teacher. It has also been reported that some governors have been using public funding to fund private Christian schools.

Your child can go through their doors, still get high on the drugs they can't keep from coming in due to crooked guards and learn how to be a better criminal. He or she can learn such trades as rigging make-shift tattoo kits and inking their friends for a pack of smokes. They can get their GED while their cellmate teaches them how to hotwire a Toyota. There are plenty of friendly people inside who can teach them how to make booze in a toilet and cook crack for a better career outside.

Some of you who read this might think I am being negative. I may be, but that doesn't make my statements any less true. Then again, some of you might be the same kind who complain about paying state taxes, all while bitching about how bad the crime rate has become. So, you don't want to pay the taxes that fund schools, but you want the crime rate to be low? You cannot have it both ways.

It is no secret that many of the children who fall behind ultimately turn to crime. Maybe, just maybe, if the public schools were getting the money that they were supposed to from your state lottery instead of private prisons, then you wouldn't have a crime rate to complain about. Then again, there's always the Military, right?

Earlier, I was awakened by a knock on our front door. It was three in the morning and I was more than ready to be irate. I staggered in my steps as I rubbed the sleep from my eyes. When I opened the door, there was Liz unhinged in a panic. Before I could ask what was wrong, she asked me "Did Harry come by at all?"

Fighting back a yawn, I replied "Shouldn't he be in bed?"

“He went out late last night and he never came home.”

I looked out to their driveway, “His truck is still here—where would he have gone?”

“Harry left on foot. He told me he saw something yesterday and he had to find it. I tried talking him out of it, but he told me not to worry and that he would be back.”

With a sigh, I said “Go home and relax. I’ll get Cal and we’ll go look for him, okay?”

I was pissed. This was two days after our hellish three week farming race and I was looking forward to rest and relaxation. We were supposed to be sleeping in and taking it easy. Instead of getting my much needed sleep, I had to go poking around in the woods to find my friend, who probably got lost in his stoned hunt for the missing link.

As I slipped on my boots, there was another knock at the door. Scrambling to get my boots on, I staggered to answer the door. I opened it to find Liz in the doorway again, this time she was shaking and cradling her crying baby, Maggie May. Liz pushed past me and shouted, “Close the door!”

I shut the door and started to go off on her, “Liz, I don’t have time for this shit! If...”

“There are people outside! I saw flashing lights coming into the house!”

“What the fuck is wrong with you people over there—is there something in your bottled water?”

“I’m serious, Tommy!”

Looking at her demeanor, I could see that she wasn’t joking. I took a deep breath, “Alright Liz, Calm down. What do you mean, you saw lights?”

She sighed, “There are people with flashlights outside.”

“Go sit down in the living room and take care of Maggie—I’m going to take a look.”

I twisted the door knob as Liz went into the other room. Slowly I opened the front door and crept out on to my front porch. Softly I closed the door behind me, peering out into the darkness. My heart was racing, damn near jumping out of my chest, and I remember thinking that I should have grabbed one of my guns. Looking from my porch I didn’t see anything, but when I gazed around the corner I saw lights coming from behind Liz and Harry’s house. They were white-light flash lights—very bright with a heavy surrounding glow.

My first thought was “THIEVES!” So, I ran back into the house and made my way to the gun cabinet. I told Liz to call Cal as I pulled out the 40/40 and loaded it.

“Wha...What’s going on?!” she asked with a tremble of concern in her voice.

“Call Cal! Tell him we have thieves trying to sack our plants!”

After shoving extra shells into my pocket, I went back outside to make an example of some vultures. When I crept around the back of the house the lights were gone—they simply vanished into the night. Thinking that they were probably hiding; I walked along the brush slowly and listened for anything that would give them away. After a few minutes of stalking, it was obvious that there was no one out there. Whoever the trespassers were appeared to be long gone.

Finding nothing, I doubled back to the house where I saw Cal was just leaving his front porch.

“Where were you?!”

“I was on the shitter,” Cal said holding his stomach, “that broccoli casserole went through my lower intestine like a freight train.”

“Thanks for the mental image. Come on in, I have somethin' you can take for your stomach.”

Walking into the house, we were greeted by Liz and Diane. They were nervous, but I kept them calm by telling them that the lights were from lost hunters. I didn't think little bit of momentary misinformation wouldn't hurt anyone in this situation.

The ladies went into the kitchen to make some coffee while Cal and I resided into the living room. Cal guzzled down the pink stuff while I quietly told him about Harry and the flash lights. He told me he didn't see anything, but he thought it best to inspect the crops after we came back from looking for Harry.

I gave Diane the key to the gun cabinet just in case something happened while we were gone. She knew the workings of the firearms, we taught ourselves pretty quickly when we moved out here. The police station is about an hour away, so any problems you find, it's best to deal with them yourself.

After giving my wife a kiss on the lips, Cal and I armed ourselves with rifles and flashlights to scan the surrounding area. For hours we scoured through the heavy brush, but our search turned up nothing. It was daybreak when we decided to get back to the farm and call the sheriff's office.

We passed by the green house to give it a once over, we could tell from twenty yards away that something was amiss. The door was teetering open, swaying with the gentle breeze. Mustering up as much strength as we could, we ran towards the plants.

Every night I made sure those doors were locked so no one could rob us. No one has stolen from us before, but you hear stories from time to time amongst the other famers. Usually it turns out to be asshole teenagers who don't want grow to their own stuff so they decide to steal it. They are crazy if you ask me; we are all armed to the teeth in these parts and have no problem pumping buck shot into someone.

Standing in the doorway of the green house I could already tell that we were missing six plants in the front. Someone took bolt cutters to the lock chain I rigged around the door, walked in, and stole three plants without tripping the alarm system.

The alarms I had installed were top of the line in their class. They were equipped with heat sensors that would sound with an immediate temperature change. Let's say 98 degrees of body heat walked past the three phase sensor beams. With the sudden spike in heat, the system would chime, alerting us with a loud buzz. Cutting the locks was one thing, but not tripping the alarms was impossible—unless someone knew the code. I hate to admit it, but my first initial instinct told me, “Harry ripped us off.”

My paranoia kicked in triggering conspiracies to run wild in my head. Like a shotgun blast, scattering fragments of confusion through a cloud of smoke; my fears of being stabbed in the back started to come to light. I constructed

these scenes of Harry backdoor dealing our crops for his own profit margin. He could have made off with the plants on foot for at least a mile up the road to meet with a truck. From there he would press on out of the mountains, leaving us to deal with the aftermath.

Walking back to the house, pissed off, I told Cal what was running through my mind.

“You’re nuts!” he said, “Tommy, why would he leave his wife and daughter for six measly fucking plants!?”

He had a point, but I had no other ideas to how any of this could have happened. My rationale was muddled by lack of sleep and no coffee—the bad mojo surrounding us before dawn wasn’t helping either. Ultimately, I thought it was best to not mention it to Liz and not call the sheriff just yet. The town was over an hour away and we had over the legal limit of plants. The last thing I wanted was some law-dog nosing around my farm. We put a lot of work into our crops and I didn’t want to see them fall victim to laws against the natural order.

Anyone can grow a few plants in their bathtub or out in their yard camouflaged by some begonias. To grow some serious strands of this plant it takes time and a lot of hard work, but most of all—a lot of love and care.

You have to make sure the irrigation is operating properly every day and you have to keep certain bugs from infecting the crops. The true blue cannabis cultivator will not use commercial pesticides—organics are a must for the mind, body, and soul. So, every morning I would go around to each plant with a low powered shop vac to clean off the webs from the spiders that are attracted by the sweet smell of the sticky buds.

This was a wasted day—I drank myself into a drunk by five in the afternoon as everyone pondered around me. Liz kept crying for us to call the police while we kept pleading with her to give Harry more time. Diane took care of Danny as Cal lounged around in a sort of daze. He carried a look on his face as if he was lost in his membranes—trying to figure out the chaos.

It was a strange day that brought me back to the city life—wallowing in abysmal dismay. Hand and hand with a bleak feeling of unjustly being wronged by those who were close to you. Just sitting around, wondering who or what fucked you and left you to rot. After five years of the slow crawl, being hit with this situation was nothing short of corrupting. No matter what the statistics are in your rural, country area—you were still numbered and left in the gutter. This is just the nature of the way things work and there is nothing you could do about it.

After the sun sank low and the moon came to rise, I laid my head upon my pillow to slip into my slumber. Cal slept on the living room floor and Liz slept on the couch. We put Maggie May in a crib across from Danny in his room. We were one big family holding together under one roof through the most trying of times. With everything that was taking place, sticking together was the most important thing.

Day 3:

The hours passed me by as I enjoyed the deepest sleep; a rest that I sorely needed. Out of precaution, I passed out with a loaded rifle by my side. My rest would be interrupted by the droning howl of the alarm in the green house.

It was a little past three when Diane and I were startled from our dreams. Thinking fast, I jumped out of bed and started to slip my boots on as fast as I could. Panic was running through me as I fought to keep my wits in place.

Diane asked holding her chest, “Is that the alarm to the greenhouse?!”

Stomping my feet into my boots, I answered “Yes! Stay in the house and get a gun. If anything happens to...”

I paused as I looked her in the eyes from the bedroom threshold. With a sigh, I finished “Make sure you and Danny are safe.”

I ran through the house, towards the front door as fast as my legs would allow. Throwing the door open, I spotted the intruder right away. Without thinking twice, I took aim at the shadow and I fired two rounds in its direction. The first shot missed, but I made contact with the second.

A fraction of a second after squeezing that trigger, I heard a yelp of pain as the target fell to the ground. Like a sac of meat, it dropped with a thud that ruffled in the grass. Reloading as I made my way to the target, I watched the shape squirm in place, grunting heavy exhales. When I got closer, I noticed it was a man wearing military issued camouflage—at least he was a smart thief.

He rolled around on the ground as I kept him in my sights and I asked, “What the fuck are you doing out here on my land?!”

I didn’t get an answer from him; he just begged me not to kill him while holding his side as tight as he could—murmuring jumbled words of desperation. Suddenly, he grabbed the walkie-talkie on his shoulder and spoke into it. Looking back now; I think he said he was hit, but the sound of the world was turned down when I noticed the patch on his shoulder. The woven stitch read, C.A.M.P., which stood for, Campaign Against Marijuana Planting.

CAMP has been a thorn in the side of not only the pot growers, but the general public as well. They were formed in 1983 in the state of California; mostly made up of anal retentive vice cops donning a paramilitary guise complete with apache helicopters and machine guns. Since their inception, they have arrested many of the growers and laid waste hundreds of thousands of plants, yet there has been no decrease in growing or usage.

Residents in areas like ours constantly have to put up with them flying low in their choppers, buzzing our houses at all hours. Using warrantless means, they trample through private property looking to enforce their laws on nature. They have been known to kick in the doors of innocent people, shoot family pets for no reason, and just flat out terrorize anything in their path. Every year their funding comes into question and every year they are given millions in tax dollars to pull weeds and harass tax payers.

When I saw what I had done, my eyes grew wide and I slowly backed away from the wounded trooper. In my cautious steps, I scanned the scene around me. All I could

see was the moon lit clearing at first. Before I knew it, the glow of flashlights had spread out from the dark of the forest aimed at me. My heart raced as it all became clear what was going on—they were coming for us.

A voice echoed by a megaphone came at me from the shadows, “Thomas Harold Willis, put the gun down and put your hands in the air—you are under arrest!”

I clinched my rifle as I froze in place and fear rode down my spine. There was only one thought that fired through my brain, “Get back inside the house!” After a momentary pause, I turned around and ran back to the porch. The voice screamed at me as I ran as fast as I could, praying that they would not fire at me from the darkness. Scared beyond all rational thought—I opened the front door and slithered in through the smallest crack.

Diane was right there by the front door, “What the hell is going on?!” She asked with fear laced in her voice.

“Baby, close the shades on the windows!”

“But...”

“Go on—do it now!”

Trying to catch my breath, Cal came up to me and pulled the rifle from my hands. “Tommy, what the fuck is going on out there?!”

Gasping, I told him, “I shot a CAMP officer outside.”

His eyes grew as his bottom lip quivered, “Holy shit—what the fuck did you do that for?”

“Keep it down!” I replied, as I looked around for Diane.

Seeing that she wasn’t around, I told him, “I couldn’t see him. He was trying to break into the greenhouse. When

he punched in the wrong code the alarm went off.”

Cal asked, “What are we going to do?”

“I don’t know, they have us surrounded—we’re fucked.”

“So, we’re going to have to wait it out?”

I gave him a nod as I walked passed him to get to the refrigerator. Cal’s eyes followed me as his jaw hung open, “What are you doing?”

Opening the freezer door, I said “I’m making coffee.”

If you buy coffee in a bag, put it in the freezer. The coffee stays fresh, and fresh coffee is just what you will need when you are surrounded by a government who wants to take your lively hood from you.

Sure, I was scared, but I had to keep my cool for the women so they could be equally strong for the children. All it takes in a bad situation is for one to panic, once one starts to panic the nerves of the rest are sure to wear thin.

From inside of the house we heard the voice behind the bullhorn loud and clear, “Those of you inside the house! Come out immediately with your hands in the air!”

I assured everyone to ignore the thug outside as I kept my control and told them exactly what happened. It was clear that they would hold no regard for us, even though I didn’t know I was shooting at an agent. The only thing we could do was sit tight. If we surrendered, they would most likely gun us down and say that we resisted. For wounding one of theirs—they could legally kill all of us.

We cut the lights off in the house and huddled in the living room—keeping close to one another while staying low. Within seconds, the sound of helicopters buzzed around the property as they shined their spotlights into the

house. As the head honcho outside spewed threats through a megaphone, ground lights were brought out and aimed into the windows. The strong fluorescents glowed through the small cracks of the blinds—illuminating our fears. This is when that a little voice told me that we were probably not going to get out of this house alive.

Our sudden sanctuary was interrupted by the ringing house phone. The high pitch digital tone cut through the quiet as we looked at one another. Taking a deep breath, I scurried across the floor towards the kitchen. Once I was in the kitchen I held tight to the tile floor as I reached around on the counter for the phone. Grabbing the receiver from the charger I quickly answered, crouched in the corner of the lower cabinets.

“Hello?”

“Thomas?” The gruff voice asked.

“Who is this?”

He answered with a bombshell, “This is Sergeant Jeff Milton of the Drug Enforcement Agency—I hope you know that you just killed a CAMP officer.”

“He wasn't dead when I last seen 'em... and what the hell was he doing on my land? I thought he was a thief!”

“Look... just lay down your arms and come out peacefully, Thomas. We'll work everything out then.”

I countered his offer, “How about you vacate the premises because I know you don't have a warrant—and I am damn sure that warrant doesn't include you shuffling around the forest around my house for the past few days.”

He laughed at me with a subtle cackle and replied, “Have it your way.”

Before I could respond to his demeanor, he hung up on me. Keeping the phone in my hand, I crawled my way back into the living room. Everyone looked at me with worried concern etched into their tired faces.

Diane asked, “Who was that?”

Looking into her eyes, there was a part of me that wanted to lie to her—for no other reason than to fill her with false hope. She was too smart for that kind of derision, but desperation is often greater than knowledge. Diane held the ability to see through my bullshit; she knew when I was patronizing her and when I was being genuine. So I told myself that from there on out that I would tell her the truth—I would try to tell everyone the truth.

“That was Sergeant Jeff Milton; he was calling to inform me that they want us to go outside.”

Liz and Cal looked around, waiting for someone to offer something when Diane blurted out, “Sergeant? Jesus Christ, what the hell is going on?!”

I shook my head, responding “I don’t know.”

After taking a moment to think, I told Liz and Diane to tend to the children. When the women left, Cal and I crawled into the dining room to my gun cabinet that sat against the wall. I unlocked the door to the gun cabinet and started pulling out gun after gun. Cal snagged the boxes of bullets and loaded each gun—on the floor guided by flash light. As an army waited outside for us, my head was spinning as I wondered if I was doing the right thing for everyone under this roof.

All of this was so excessive. I mean, not so long ago it was mandatory in this country to grow marijuana. George Washington grew it; he even smoked it and hailed its

principles as universal. It makes better shirts than cotton as well as an herb one can cook with. We grew it for its medical purposes—selling it to clinics to aid cancer patients and other terminally ill people. Poor souls who would have to take ten different chemicals crammed into various pills to accomplish what one plant can do, without the horrid side effects.

The American flag, Old Glory, was first stitched with hemp, along with our military uniforms at the time. It is a known fact that hemp weaves into far better garments than cotton. Clothes made with hemp last much longer than those made with any other substance. When it comes to rope, there is no better source that twines stronger than hemp.

In the end, it all comes down to money—the elites of the time stepped in and killed its production with the help of the U.S. government. This was done for no other reason than to peddle their worthless wears without good competition. Paper and plastic companies were the main reason why this organic substance was outlawed. By law, you cannot patent what grows naturally on the planet so in turn, something had to be done. Marijuana was not cost effective to these industry bent parasites. This is where we are—trapped in our own home, held hostage by guns that our tax dollars paid for. No matter how this ends, it is because we grew some weeds that posed a threat to corporate interest.

Somehow, the kids were fast asleep through all of the commotion. I didn't question it; I just did the best I could to make sure they stayed in the dark through as much of this as possible. After all, we were being persecuted for serving

a purpose on the behalf of nature. Sadly, I did not think ahead. Regretfully, I didn't think of my son and his future in the aftermath of this call to arms. The reason why I started growing this plant was for his future, but all I could do was fret his future as gun barrels sized us.

It's too late; we are in too deep and must keep our stance in this. All we can do is ride out this terror train and do the best we can to sway public opinion in our direction. Time is ticking and it won't be long until they call in the news networks to sift behind their scenes. Holding up in the living room, we went to sleep for a few hours. I had the television on and kept it low, for no other reason than to know what they were sending into the networks.

We awoke to the sound of the air-raid sirens blaring at 7:30 in the morning. Peeking through the tiniest crack in the curtain, I saw them lurking in the bushes, ready to fire on us. Pissed off and feeling cornered; I bummed a smoke from Cal's pack and snuck off to ease my nerves. My last cigarette was smoked when I was pacing outside of the hospital where Diane was giving birth to my son. This was my first drag in nearly six years and I was a little disappointed with myself, but I had bigger things to worry about.

The sound of the sirens screamed over the hill top as the sun came upon the land. Everyone peeled themselves from the floor as I walked into the kitchen and I poured myself a cup of coffee with my 40/40 draped over my shoulder.

Cal woke up swearing in angered confusion, "What the fuck, man?! Are they going to bomb us?"

Placing my cup in the microwave, I answered “Nope. This is how they rattle the cages. They are trying to make us uneasy.”

Diane replied, “Well, it’s sure as hell working.” She doubled back with a shake of her head. Looking at me with shocked eyes while that annoying high pitched howl echoed, she asked, “Are you smoking a cigarette?”

I shrugged as I took a deep drag. As I exhaled, Diane looked down at her feet and shook her head in disappointment, “You went so long.”

Taking a look at the burning stick of poison, I wondered what the hell I was doing back on the idiot train. I guess it doesn’t matter what you do; when the walls start closing in, a smoker is always going to turn to the smoke for comfort. As I stared at the cigarette in my fingers, Liz broke the tension, “How are the kids still sleeping through this?”

Somehow Danny and the baby managed to sleep through the insanity that was going outside. Then again, he’s always been a sound sleeper. When he was a baby, he would sleep through the loud sounds of the city—passing trains, screaming junkies, and howling drunks. He was just like his mother in that respect; holding the ability to sleep through anything.

When he did wake up he asked his mother with a soul shattering sound of concern in his voice, “Mommy, what’s going on?”

Diane held him close and told him, “Nothing sweetie, there are men outside who are just trying to scare us.”

Before my heart could sink too deep, the phone rang and startled me back to our reality. I pulled myself together and I answered, “Yeah?”

“Thomas, this is Sergeant Milton...”

“I know who it is” I said as I peered out the window to get a good look at him.

There he was less than fifty feet from the house, wearing dark sunglasses and camouflage. He had a receding hair line that waged its war over the top of his head and an aged face of battle. Milton was a slender man, who looked as if he was only five feet tall, but by the sound of his voice you would have thought he was standing eight feet in height.

“Thomas I am calling to let you know that the National Guard has been summoned to assist us along with some military reserves—it’s not too late to end this whole ordeal right now.”

I took a deep breath as I looked around at my family gathered in the living room. “Sergeant, you haven’t even told me why you were on my property in the first place. I have yet to see a warrant or hear a reason one would be provided in the first place. Now you want to negotiate, but what exactly are we negotiating?! As far as I am concerned, I shot an intruder.”

He laughed with that gruff rasp in his voice, “Thomas, who are you bluffin’? You and I both know you are holding way over your legal limit of plants. Also, I have a witness; a man who is willing to testify that you were gearing up to sell several pounds to a Mexican cartel.”

I went through the roof, “That’s bullshit and you damn well know it!”

“Thomas, we can resolve all of this as long as you come out peacefully right now.”

I yelled “Fuck you!” and hung up the phone.

Cal came into the kitchen and asked me, “What the hell is going on now?”

Keeping my voice down, I told him “They are trying to connect us with selling our goods to a Mexican cartel.”

As he stood in front of me speechless, I continued, “He says they have a witness...”

Snapping out of his shock, he asked in a whisper “Do you think it’s Harry?”

“Honestly, I don’t know. I haven’t had the time to think about it, but it very well could be. Just keep this shit between us for right now—Diane and Liz got enough to worry about with the kids.”

That night we ate dinner as the helicopters buzzed around the house and spotlights shined in our windows. We were taunted by the asshole foot soldiers outside, screaming and throwing rocks. I can say that we did the best we could to ignore them, but some things are easier said than done.

My nerves jerked with every stone that hit the outside of our house. Danny was especially shaken by their actions, but he was strong--a lot stronger than I would have been when I was his age and he makes me proud.

Day 4:

I woke up on the couch, clinching my rifle as a car commercial screamed through the television. On edge, I have been sleeping in spurts—a few hours here and then an hour or so there.

When the news anchor appeared on my television, it was so surreal. She was at the start of the winding road leading to our house. Broadcasting live, this handsomely groomed brunette from a local news station gave her report to the viewers.

“This is as far as we are allowed to be from the house, where police say, lives a family who has incited a violent stand-off. In the early morning hours today, Thomas Willis opened fire on an investigator who was serving a warrant to his address in Redwood Valley.”

My head began to throb as she continued to spin their version of the tale. This take was obviously piped through from the government, edited for the corporate wasteland to feed the drones.

“The warrant was for a search and seizure of the property, and what they were looking for was Marijuana. Thomas and his family are cultivators of the controversial plant—and authorities say they are growing thousands over what is allowed by the law in Mendocino County.

Sergeant Jeff Milton of the DEA in a joint effort with CAMP—Campaign Against Marijuana Planting, have the house surrounded. Sergeant Milton told channel seven news that they have evidence that the Willis residents are selling their marijuana to supply a dangerous drug cartel that operates south of the United States’ border.”

Everyone was sitting there watching this bullshit report in awe. Suddenly, my son looked at me and asked, “Is what that lady saying true, Daddy?”

Looking him in the eyes I said, “No, son—they have things mixed up. Remember what we taught you—that you can’t believe everything you see on TV?”

He nodded, “Yeah?”

“Well Kiddo, this is one of those times.”

All I could do was quietly revel in my disgust. These were flat out lies being fed to the viewing people about my family. For reasons that were unbeknownst to me at the time, our names were being dragged through the mud. I felt the best thing I could do was call into the station and give them our side of the story. Picking up the phone I dialed zero for the operator, but there was something wrong—the phone wasn’t working. There was no dial tone and the call wasn’t being connected—they cut the phone lines.

I walked into the dining room and cracked a window open. Keeping out of sight, I yelled, “Hey Sergeant! Cutting the lines to communication pretty quick, aren’t ya?!”

His gruff tone echoed in reply through his bullhorn, “You had your chance Thomas—now were going to show you how we do things!”

As I peered from behind the curtain, I watched as a tank slowly rolled down the winding road and into the clearing. “Diane! Get the kids and Liz into the bed room now!”

Quickly, Diane moved them into Danny’s room as Cal came running into the dining room, “What’s going on?!”

“It looks like they brought the military in.”

Cal looked out the other side of the window and we both watched as the tank got closer to the house. It rolled towards the small shed on the side that housed the generators. Looking down, I made the connection to where those steel belt strips of destruction were headed—the generators. My stomach turned as I could do nothing but act as a spectator to the power being crushed from our houses. The lights fizzled out as the air conditioner shut down, leaving the sound of foot soldiers outside to jump and cry in excitement.

Speechless, Cal and I stood at the window as the tank backed up and moved full speed ahead towards the green house. It didn't take a genius to figure out what was going to happen next. Sure enough, the tank crashed into the structure like a flamethrower would take to a paper tree. The steel belt wheels smeared our high grade herb in to the dirt with twisted aluminum and torn plastic. A part of me died as I stared at the mangled remains of the green house and our livelihood.

I wanted to step out of my front door and fire rounds at every one of those degenerate lawful, government bastards. While my son cried in his mother's arms, they cheered on the destruction of our lives. Cal looked to me as if he was waiting to hear a plan leave my lips—I didn't have one. Honestly, my mind went completely blank as Maggie May released with teary screams.

Staring out the window I muttered to Cal, "You know, we aren't gettin' out of here alive?" When I looked over at him, he turned his eyes towards the ground.

After a moment in his thoughts, he looked up at me and replied “Well, before this goes too far we should get Diane, Liz and the Kids out of here.”

Nodding, I said, “You're right—I'll talk to Diane and I'll work out a deal.”

The flood gates have been opened and I know enough about situations like these to know that the media is a concise tool to sway public opinion. Take Ruby Ridge; in 1992 a man named Randy Weaver moves his family to the Selkirk Mountains in Idaho, which overlook Ruby Creek. Their neighbors just happened to be an Aryan Nations Camp. Before getting kicked out for sneaking in a six pack of beer, he met a man named Gus.

Gus and Randy become somewhat friendly. Sometime down the road, Gus offered Randy some cash for a couple of shotguns and Randy would sell these guns to Gus. However, this would happen before Gus would be ousted as an undercover agent of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms by an undercover FBI agent. Shortly after, Randy Weaver would become a wanted man for selling two sawed-off shotguns to a federal agent.

The Weavers were heading home one day when they stopped to assist two motorists on the side of the country road. As it would turn out, the stranded motorists were actually undercover ATF agents who took the Weavers into custody. During questioning, Randy denied selling anyone sawed-off shotguns and later was released on bail.

Randy was given an order to appear in court; however, the paperwork the judge received had the wrong date. When Randy failed to appear in court, they issued a bench warrant for Weaver. The ATF investigation was then

turned over to the U.S. Marshalls with assistance from the FBI.

For days they spied on the Weavers, but it all came to a head when one of the agents got too close—causing the Weaver’s dogs to go crazy. Randy’s son chased after one of his dogs that got loose and watched a shadowy figure shoot the animal from the bushes. Scared, Randy’s son fired upon the intruder and was mowed down by machine gun fire from three other agents in camouflage. This sparked a three day standoff that was surrounded in a media storm and flared by public outcry.

By the time the Weavers’ nightmare came to an end, Randy would lose his wife and his son by way of U.S. Government bullets. When Randy and his daughter stepped in front of Congress, the family was slid a few million dollars for compensation due to “mishandling” on the behalf of the Federal Government.

None of this should come as a total shock—a year later the ATF burned women and children alive in a small town called Waco, Texas. Although, the official report claims that the “Davidian Cult” members burned themselves alive. One cannot help but notice the tanks on the video footage shelling the building, spitting flames, and plowing through the walls.

Agents fired CS nerve gas into the windows of the wooden building; the chemical compound forced their bodies to twist into horrid contortions. The siege lasted fifty-one days, with media only allowed partial information from the FBI who would only let them get so close to the action. It came out later that the FBI arrested certain journalists for sneaking past the areas they had sanctioned.

After all was said and done, the ATF and the federal government came under fire for killing over eighty people. Regardless of how many survivors testified that they were fired upon first, the US Government got away with the murder of their own civilians.

If it came down to it, I would do the best that I could to make a deal. Then again, I also know how much my government loves to single out and kill its civilians—especially those who they effectively paint as a threat. These are the things I think of while hoping I can at least get the women and children out of here. With my fingers crossed all I could do is hope to make it out of here, in one piece, to live a good life with my family.

Tonight we cooked some steaks and potatoes over an open flame after I made a grill out of our fireplace. It functioned like a grill, some smoke filled the living room, but it was better than letting our food rot or diving into a can of cold raviolis.

Danny asked me, “Daddy, why are we cooking in the fireplace?”

I don’t think I lied when I simply answered, “The generator is broken.”

After we ate I pulled Diane aside and talked to her in private. I told her that I wanted to surrender her and Danny to the feds outside. At first she refused to leave my side, but after some talking she reluctantly agreed with me. The only reason we were going ahead with this is because Diane agreed to it—she is the glue that holds us together. She is a strong woman and I have always admired her for that. In her vows to me she swore that she would stick by me as

long as I stayed true to her. Never have I strayed, so in turn, neither has she.

We were doing the best thing for Danny. I wasn't about to wage a war with the feds while my son is here. It is one thing to be outspoken, but it is entirely another thing to go barrel to barrel with authorities who have you outmanned and outgunned. That would be an action of total non-sense that would end in nothing more than a justified bloodbath.

From here on out I will record every detail in this note book. So far I have recapped the first four days of our struggle, writing fast and erratically, but now I am taking a precaution. If anything happens to us, I want people to know what really took place here. It is not about paranoia, it is about the salvaging of truth.

If we do get out of this, I want the documentation to remind me of everything that we have been put through—not that I would ever forget the slightest fragment of this ordeal. This will haunt me every day for the rest of my time on this plane of existence. We're all scared, looking into the black doll eyes of the unknown.

Sitting by candle light, I write this as I fight off the urge to sip on some whiskey. No matter how much this gets to me, I have to keep a sober mind and maintain a clear head. We have one person missing and his wife is on the verge of going bat shit. She has a daughter to take care of, but she is more worried about Harry and Maggie May obviously is feeding off her stress. She won't listen to Diane and she won't listen to me. With any luck, this would all be over soon.

Day 5:

I don't remember sleeping last night, I just tossed and turned in my thoughts—probably should have had that drink after all. Drinking some coffee that I made in a pot over the fire place, I watched our uninvited guests from the dining room as they geared up for another day. They stood out in the middle of my land, lounging around their make-shift tent camps. They're bullshitting and drinking coffee as the irony kicks me in the teeth—my tax dollars are paying these people.

Sick of watching the sideshow, I turned around to find Diane. I held open my arms and she walked into them, wrapping her arms around me. Her love rushed through me like a flood and relieved my tension momentarily.

As I held her tight, she asked me, "Do you really think this is the right thing to do, Tommy?"

I sighed, "I don't know any more, baby. I know what is going to happen if I walk out that door—they are just going to arrest us—holding us long enough to take everything we have ever worked for."

"We should stick together."

I looked her in the eyes and said, "If something happens to me—Danny will need you. I can't risk both of our lives—not to mention, his life."

"Tommy, I've always had faith that you would do the best for us, but this is a different situation. Here, I have to put my faith in the people outside to do the right thing—people who usually do the wrong thing."

Pulling her close to my chest, I ran my fingers through her hair. After a deep breath, she said, "They've

killed people like us before—they'll do it again. Without resistance, anyone of power can get away with anything.”

She was right, but unfortunately we had to take that chance. I had to get them out of this house before things escalated. Something in the pit of my stomach told me it would not be long before they launched a full scale attack on the house. It's hard to tell what was up their sleeve and they probably didn't even know. Most of them were just sitting around waiting for the opportunity to pull off a justifiable shooting.

We are in the dark, but I don't need a television to know that we are probably a national sensation by now. Every news station was most likely talking about us and I am sure we are not being painted with the most positive of lights. The ground work had already been laid out for the media—we are already being demonized as terroristic drug dealers. In the eyes of the American populace we are the vermin that is poisoning their sons and daughters.

Giving Diane a hug, I told her to check on Danny. Cal peeled himself off of the living room floor with a yawn. He walked over to me as I watched out the window from the corner of the drawn curtain. Cal asked me, “When are we sending them out?”

“Soon, I guess—I'm gonna throw that thawing chicken in the fireplace and make some eggs. We'll discuss everything over breakfast. There's some warm coffee in the thermos.”

Cal yawned with a nod as he wandered into the kitchen to fetch himself a cup of coffee. I had to give it to him—he was being really cool throughout this bad situation. Though he never had use for any kind of

authority, he was pretty reserved for a man with a target painted on his head. Having been locked up a few times for having trace amounts of weed on his person—he knew it was all bullshit and never skipped a moment to speak out on it. This was different though, we weren't just speaking out—we were making examples of our selves.

In another twenty to twenty- five years this plant will be legalized and taxed in the state of California—leaving countless ruined lives and bloody corpses in its wake. These will be labeled as past mistakes and it will be talked about with much head scratching. I can only hope that future generations will look at the war on drugs much like they do prohibition now—incompetent corruption at its most naked. Reserving this hope, I also think they should understand the dangers of the government subsidizing corporate interest—a man can dream, can't he?

As we ate our baked chicken and eggs for breakfast, we discussed the proper way to send the women and children out. Of course everyone had an opinion about how we should handle this, and surely there was a debate. Diane used her ways of subtlety to ask me to go outside with her and Danny. It was too late—I had already made up my mind.

When the time came, I hid around the corner and yelled out from the dining room window, “Sergeant, we’re sending the women and children out!”

Through the power of his bullhorn he replied, “Alright, Thomas!”

I covered behind Diane as Cal waved a white bed sheet out of the dining room window. Diane turned and

gave me a hug before opening the front door. By the twitching of her bottom lip, I could tell that she wanted to cry. Holding her close, I told her that I loved her and assured her that I would see her soon. Giving Danny a hug, I told him to take care of his mother while I wasn't there. He hung his head in disappointment because I wasn't going, but he told me he would.

Diane, being a natural leader—stood in front of the line and opened the door, keeping Danny close behind her. From where I was standing I couldn't see outside but no one on the outside could see me. I had her covered.

Before stepping on to the porch, Diane turned and kneeled down in front of Danny. Without warning, the sound of gun fire ripped through the mountain air. In horror, I watched a bullet tear through the right side of my wife—the mother of my child's head. My eyes grew in shock, as her body fell limp in front of my son. Danny stood back, gasping with hurt and fear filling his eyes.

Thinking on her feet, Liz grabbed Danny by the arm and ran towards the back of the house, holding on tight to her screaming Maggie May. I lunged to Diane and started to pull her in through the doorway. Caching a glimpse of me, they resumed fire. Bullets smashed through the windows and tore into the porch as I kicked the front door closed. I hovered over Diane as round after round pierced through the heavy oak, chipping jagged tooth picks from the pummeled wood.

Dragging her body across the floor, blood spilled from her head wound—smearing a crimson mess along the tile. Her hair was matted with blood, littered with skull fragments and brain matter. Tears started streaming from

my eyes as I pulled her into the kitchen and flipped her over. Quickly, I dampened a rag in the sink and I started to clean around Diane's wound—this is when I knew she was dead.

At this point, we were just fish in a barrel for their own sick amusement. Cal returned fire from the dining room window and you could hear the soldiers outside yelling obscenities in between the shots. Leaving my emotions with Diane for a moment, I dodged into the living room and started firing outside from one of the broken windows. The air was filled with smoke and debris; I couldn't see what I was hitting—if anything at all.

The bullhorn sounded with the Sergeant screaming for us to surrender. I replied to his demands through the fire from my rifle. They continued to fire at us as Sergeant Milton threatened to gas us. "Fuck him" I thought. All I could think about was how they killed my wife in front of our son. As futile as it seems when you have an army waiting outside, Cal and I continued to hold them off with our bullets.

Whoever finds their self reading these pages should know that the federal government shot and killed my wife in cold blood. She was unarmed and giving herself up peacefully with my son. They will spin it in whatever fashion they can to justify their actions, but the truth is, she was not posing a threat to anyone outside. Just remember; this has happened before.

Once I came back to my senses, I realized we should be conserving our ammunition. I called over to Cal and told him to hold his fire. Drawing back from the shattered window, he sifted through broken glass and woodchips to

make it to where I was in the next room. The agents continued to take pot shots at the house as I explained to Cal how we needed to conserve our bullets.

After a few seconds, the gunfire from the other side died down to an eventual cease fire. I took the opportunity to get some bed sheets to wrap Diane up with. After he told Liz to stay put with the kids, Cal helped me shroud my wife's hollow shell with fabrics. Holding back my tears, I told myself that I had to be strong for Danny's sake. We took her down to the basement, out of sight from everyone else. Somewhere in this storm of chaos, I would have to sit down and tell my boy that his mother is gone forever.

In a sickening display, Sergeant Milton was taunting me over the loudspeaker while we were tending to my wife's corpse.

"Thomas, you see what happens when you don't cooperate?!"

"Your wife had a gun, but our snipers have better guns and better aim!"

"Thomas, oh Thomas—how's Diane's head feeling? Need a bowl to hold it all together!?"

"She needed a trim—good thing we could take a little off of her top!"

There was nothing more I wanted to do then to go out there and shoot every last one of them in the head. Rage filled my insides to the point that I thought I was going to vomit. I was powerless to do anything but take it. Weakened and disarmed—we were surrounded and backed into a corner. In the end, all I could do was listen to this government swine spew his bile while hoping my son

couldn't hear any of it. Even as I write this; as fucked as I am, I feel nothing for bastards I have taken out.

Once the smoke settled and everything calmed down around us, I spent some time with Danny in his room away from everyone else. When I walked in he was staring at the floor in a sorrowed daze. I sat down next him on his bed and he put his arms around me. As he gripped tight around my sides, he asked me in the most innocent of tones "Why did they shoot mommy?" My heart cracked in two when I felt my shirt dampen from his tears.

Holding back my emotions, I had to explain to him that the people outside were bad people who were abusing their power. Despite how Diane and I felt about the power structure in this country, we always walked the line in teaching Danny our beliefs. Like our position on religion—we wanted him to learn and form his own opinions.

At the age of five he not only watched his mother die in front of him, but he also learned his first lesson in corruption. He learned that his government can kill him and get away with it just as long as they wear a badge.

When you are thrown into a painful situation, you can only keep your composure for so long before you break down. You have to set yourself free from time to time; as human beings, it's in our nature. We grab the bars of our emotional cages and rattle the doors, summoned by our souls calling for release.

Looking back on how everything turned out today, I feel so weak. I don't know how I am going to move on without Diane, she was everything. Though I know I must march on for Danny, and I have to be strong for the both of us, that strength that I once possessed is gone. That sense of

balance that she brought to me was ripped away, leaving a shaky skeleton. What remains is an empty hole that no person or thing will ever be able to fill.

I miss you, baby.

Day 6:

The sound of thunder rumbled in the distance, echoing through the valley. My eyes slowly opened to rumbles that rolled around us, shaking with soft tremors. I woke up with my arm around Danny as if I was protecting him from anything that would come for him in the night. Picking myself up carefully, I eased him off of me—trying not to wake him from his peaceful sleep. Sliding my way out of his room, I closed the door behind me softly.

I wandered over to the back doors to watch the clouds gather in their infinite beauty. Witnessing a storm build from this side of the mountain is nothing short of amazing. It is like having a front row seat to one of nature's most brilliant workings.

Soft grays roll into the deepest of blues—becoming almost black as the thunder starts with a crackle. Faint flashes ripple behind the mass, outlining its structure with magnificent radiance. As the thunder grows into a roll, rain begins to fall and before you know it; the valley is draped in this intense display of sight, sound, and touch.

Gazing on, I hoped for a heavy rain—a rain so powerful that it would wash away the parasites from this side of the mountain. In a flood they would be flushed down the backside of the valley like the human garbage they are. Carried away with debris—floating away in the earth's cleansing streams. They would kick and fight only to drown in an ever-flowing mud slide of the natural order.

As I smiled at the thought, Cal came up from behind me and quietly asked “How'd that sleep treat ya?”

“Decent—what went on while Danny and I were out?”

Cal shrugged, “Nothin’—it was quiet. After Liz went to bed I started to toy with this thing...” Cal held up a small am/fm radio.

“Oh yeah, we used to take that to the beach. I think it’s broken.”

Cal touched the power button and to my surprise the radio came on. I looked at him wide eyed as some kind of commercial sounded with a bit of static over it.

“I fixed it last night.”

“How’d you do that?”

“A wire just needed to be patched. But look, I listened to the news last night—what they are saying isn’t good, Tommy.”

“Well, we knew they were going to spin this. I mean...”

“No, it’s worse than that—they have Harry testifying against us.”

As the words left Cal’s mouth, I felt the ground being slid from beneath my feet. All I could muster was, “What?”

“They got Harry and I guess they offered him a deal, but they are saying we are holding Liz and the baby hostage.”

My head began to ache as the vibe in my guts shifted from bad to worse. I took a seat at the kitchen table where I placed the radio in the center and extended the antenna. The signal was coming in clearer, but they were talking about celebrities—mindless bullshit. How this can be called news baffles me to no end. It’s not about giving people

much needed information; it is all about ratings and keeping the advertisers happy.

“Cal, did you tell Liz about this?”

He shook his head, “No, I wasn’t sure if that was the best bet. I wanted to tell you first and go from there.”

I paused for a minute to think; my thoughts drowned out the distractions that surrounded me. Cal just stared at me as the celebrity gossip bled from the am speaker while the rain came down heavy on the house.

With a shrug, I said, “Well, we have to tell her what’s goin’ on. I mean, as long as we listen to this radio, she’s gonna find out sooner or later.”

“You’re right” Cal said with a nod.

“What else are they saying?”

With hesitation in his eyes and stutter in his voice, Cal reluctantly told me, “They uh, well they’re saying that they, um, shot Diane because she was armed.”

Part of me wanted to be irate, but there was a bigger part of me that already knew that this was inevitable. They pulled the card and they were playing it, this is how they twist the story—the deceiving web spun to the American public. As long as the average American thinks that we are outlaw drug peddlers, all is well. Whatever keeps the people from asking crucial questions, keeps them in the clear and justified.

The U.S. Government knows what their citizens want, and that is fatty foods and one hundred and fifty channels of dramatic bar brawls. Whatever keeps them occupied and takes their minds off how they are being taken advantage of. There is a part of our population who digs up the truth while trying to inform the other portion, but they are looked

upon as loons. A majority of these people are not nut jobs running around in tin foil hats, these people are patriots.

After the celebrity gossip ended, news about us came over the airwaves. We listened close as the announcer read off his cue cards, *“The standoff in Redwood Valley has reached day three, and the DEA has informed us that there has to be communication with those who are left inside. There is one hostage and her infant daughter as well as Thomas Willis’ son—Daniel Willis, age five.*

Sergeant Jeff Milton tells us the agents have taken heavy fire—six agents have been killed and four have been hospitalized. He told us that if negotiations do not bring results soon, the military will have to be called in—the weather is next.”

Shaking his head, Cal said, “Man, we need to keep our ears to the radio so we know what to expect.”

I replied, “That shit doesn’t matter. We have to find away to get Danny out of here with Liz and Maggie.”

Liz walked into the kitchen with a blank look on her face, “When were you planning on telling me any of this?”

I stood up from my chair and answered, “We didn’t know you were up, but we were planning to.”

Unconvinced, she yelled, “Bullshit, Tommy!”

Cal intervened, “Liz, we just found out ourselves—come on!”

Liz sighed as she took a seat at the kitchen table. Leaning against the counter, I said “Harry is alive.”

“Where is he?!”

“The feds have him. He’s apparently working with them.”

She folded her arms and her facial expressions morphed with angered emotion. Exhaling a deep breath, she asked, “What about us? What about Maggie? He’s just sitting somewhere in safety while we’re out here?” Pounding her fists on the table, she cried, “Diane is dead, goddamn it!”

Cal stood up and puts his arms around Liz, “Be easy, alright? We don’t want to scare the kids.”

As Cal calmed Liz down, I said, “Look we don’t know what’s going on. This is what the news outlets are saying and they are getting their bits from the feds—for all we know it could all just be smoke screen.”

Liz started to cry; hiding her face in the palms of her hands, she wept, “Why isn’t he helping us?! He’s just casting us to out save his own ass!?”

She shifted into hysterical tears and screamed intelligible psycho-babble—waking her sleeping baby in the process. I left Cal to mind Liz and I went to check on my son who was still fast asleep. Poor kid, I know he must have been exhausted from everything that was going on. He looked so peaceful, resting on his pillow as the rain came down outside.

Quietly, I stepped away and closed the door so I wouldn’t wake him. As I closed the door I noticed the sound of silence coming from the kitchen—the coast was clear again for reason.

When I walked back into the kitchen, Cal was sitting at the table and drinking a glass of water. He didn’t raise his eyes from his glass as I came in. He wore a sullen look upon his face which triggered me to ask, “What’s wrong?”

He took a sip from his water and calmly said, “We aren’t getting out of here alive.”

“Jesus Cal, I’ve already got one going bat shit—I need you going nuts like I need an extra dick.”

Cal chuckled, “This isn’t insanity—this is a moment of clarity. I am grounded and I am accepting my fate.”

Looking at him strangely, I thought he was drifting off of the deep end. He just sat there, glaring into his water with a calm madness. There was a moment of silence between us and all that could be heard was the loud pitter-patter of the hard rain. In the stinging sound of the drops, I had to admit to myself that Cal was right. Part of me began to ache, not for my loss, but for my son. If nothing else I had to get him out of here.

Pulling up a chair, I replied “Regardless, we have to try to get out of here.” Cal just stared at his glass of water, nodding casually.

I turned the radio back on and started going through the stations, looking for any kind of report. Thumbing the dial, I came across the Phil Lambert show. Phil Lambert is one of the leading people rallying against the threat of a one world government—the new world order. He is the voice of those who are on constant guard while he warns that the US to transform into complete police state—1984 Esq.

Mr. Lambert’s show draws in 300,000 or more listeners a day. He is a husky man who stands at six feet tall, speaking with a fiery gruff voice and with no loss of energy. When things such as the world trade center bombing and the attack in Oklahoma City take place, his audience expands. When everyday people question the

goings on within their government and they get no answers from the established media outlets, they turn to people like Phil Lambert.

“In 1993 Emad Salem, a 43 year old retired Egyptian officer and FBI informant; walked into a hospital in New York complaining of a headache and earaches mere hours after the 1500 pound bomb went off in the bowels of the World Trade Center.

He was paid one million dollars, was given explosives and a detonator. They told him to make a bomb in order set up a training operation. When it became apparent to Salem that this was not an exercise, he began to ask questions where as they told him to go through with the plans.

This is public record, folks! He recorded his phone calls with his FBI handler, where he discusses the building of the bomb and who was involved! And these tapes didn't come until after the trial! The Feds admit this is what happened! But after a few pieces in the paper and a couple of nightly news casts, it wasn't heard of again.

April 19th, 1995 the American people were lead to believe that a Ryder rental truck carrying a fertilizer bomb was parked in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, detonated and took half the building down. One truck, one bomb, even though there was testimony that there was more than one explosion!

Going through the wreckage they found two explosives and found at least two more devices that did not go off. When the mathematics were laid out, they added up to building blowing up from the inside out, not from the outside in. It would later come out that the certain levels of the government were on the scene before nine hours before

the attack occurred, ready to go in and take over the investigation.

Witnesses stated that they heard two explosions and saw two men running from the building; one was Timothy McVeigh the other would later be known as John Doe number two—a man of Middle Eastern dissent. There were surveillance tapes; over twelve that the feds refused to release into evidence during McVeigh's trial.

They would lead us to believe that one man planned this out and crippled this building with a truck bomb. McVeigh would be made out to be a right wing extremist, a lone nut that spent his time hanging around militia members and white supremacists. We were told that they found a copy of 'The Turner Diaries'; the famous books that details the start of a race war in the United States that starts with a federal building being blown up.

Timothy McVeigh was U.S. military and claimed that he was trained to smuggle drugs into the United States and commit assassinations in covert black operations. He was filmed in August of 1993 camp Grafton in North Dakota, over a year after the time were he was said to have been discharged from the Army reserves. Even more alarming, Camp Grafton was specializing in explosives and demolitions at the time McVeigh was there!

So, they use set ups like this to paint a dark veil over gun owners, homeschoolers, and constitutionalists. They hang a blanket of fear while merging the military with local law enforcement—completely disregarding the 4th amendment and posse common tutus.

This is it, Folks! What we are seeing are the building blocks towards the new world order—a one world government. Their goal is global dominance, through economic and militarily enslavement. They will lie and they will deceive through puppets while holding the strings behind the curtain.”

In his own way, Phil Lambert is a showman who commands his audience's attention. Admittedly, I didn't spend much of my time listening to him. It's not that I don't believe him in any way; because I do agree with him on certain things. My problem is that Lambert has this all or nothing attitude and he often comes off like a blowhard. I believe the rich loom over the poor, but I don't believe in a secret society agenda for a one world government like Lambert peddles. Lambert spends his life fighting an unbeatable power whereas I decided to pack my ideals and move out into the middle of nowhere.

The way I see it, misery is the river of the world and we had left that damn river far behind us. Somehow we still found ourselves swept with its sickening tide any way. No matter my differences with Lambert or my dislike for his candor, we needed him now. We couldn't just sit back and let the laws work themselves out. Nor could we rely on the mainstream media to see us through in our plight.

Since America's inception laws were created as a guise giving shelter to the rich using the bones of the poor. In the late 1800's, the ground work was laid for everything that would come to be. This was the time when law ruled in favor of the then upper 2% as the working class was pushed aside. Public schools were designed to teach basic skills to mold obedient workers while colleges were built to spawn

white collar buffers against dissent. These statements weren't simply extracted from the rants of madmen—these are historical facts.

Men worked like slaves, long hours for bottom of the barrel pay with no work place safety guidelines. The women who were able to work, worked longer hours and in worse conditions than the men. They worked themselves to death only to live in impoverished conditions while their children were put in line to be churned into the same routine. It all seemed so hopeless for those trying live the American dream.

There were those who stood and began to fight for their rights as workers. They formed groups and these groups had meetings where they made lists of their demands. These workers were met with violence by private security firms like Pinkerton and the local police. In some cases the National Guard was called in to shoot and kill unarmed civilians. It was in these instances when the government looked the other way.

After all of the bloodshed and sacrifice, the working class prevailed. Unions were formed and special agencies were put in place to oversee the risk of work place hazards. Wage and hour laws were created and for sometime the working man was able to thrive and support his family without a foot on the back of his neck. The times that came before were looked upon as savage history lessons, none of which are mentioned in public school text books.

Fast forward to the 90's; all of our industry has been shipped overseas to bypass unions and workers rights. Public schools are boarder line dropout factories, passing students through their flood gates who barely attain a

reading average. If they are fortunate enough to go to college, when they walk out with a four- year degree they will be lucky to find a job, especially one that pays them anywhere near what the education costs were. As time goes on, people will find themselves paying thousands of dollars just to land a job at a low paying grease pit.

It seems as if we have become doomed to repeat a terrible past. The American dream is just a myth; one that is told to the poor so they keep working dead end jobs for shit pay, no benefits, and no means to retire. However, the lies keep them at bay, buying the useless goods that we import to keep the economy going instead of grabbing their pitchforks.

After a quick commercial break, Lambert's rant shifted towards us. I turned up the radio and we listened close while hoping for the best.

"Ladies and gentlemen, if you need further proof of our government's barbaric nature, look no further than Redwood Valley. As I speak to you now, there is a small town family under siege by the DEA, CAMP, and Military reserves. Your tax dollars are being used to gun down a family of farmers. What are they farming? A plant that god himself put here to be consumed by us—marijuana.

Still, the war rages on against human rights and the natural order of things. The powers that be want you buying over priced chemicals; they want you investing in cotton over and over again as well as keeping the logging industry plowing through the planet.

I don't smoke the stuff—I don't even drink. But if I had a terminal disease like cancer, you bet I would smoke

some grass before I shove one of those poisonous big pharm concoctions down my throat!

It's all about corporate control and they are using paramilitary forces against American citizens! And none of this story is adding up!

They have one of the farmers in custody, a man named Harry Mitchell. The strange thing is that they are not telling anyone how they got him. He has not been charged with any crime, but the Associated Press is reporting that he has told the DEA that Thomas Willis is holding his wife and daughter hostage.

Now, this standoff started because Willis shot an officer who was serving a warrant, but somehow they took Harry Mitchell into custody a day before the supposed shooting took place? Something is amiss here, folks. Much like in Waco and at Ruby Ridge, the dots are not connecting to the points that they laid out. Do they think we are too stupid to see through the smoke screen?

What they are doing is against the law and it's unconstitutional! The military is not legally allowed to operate alongside state law enforcement, posse common tutus! Look it up, know your rights! Understand the laws that our government ignores for their own gains!

The corporate media isn't reporting these holes. And they won't unless we make them do it. Rest assured, Folks, we will get to the bottom of this!"

For a moment I didn't feel so alone, and I could tell by the look on Cal's face that he felt the same way. When you are trapped in your home by an army of totalitarian government foot soldiers, cut off from the outside world,

and no way to call out—you tend to feel like the whole world is against you.

When Lambert started taking calls from his listeners, we found out that there were over one hundred people at the beginning of our road in protest. They were holding signs that read slogans like, “LEGALIZE FREEDOM” and “NATURE DOESN’T NEED MAN’S LAWS” as they chanted protest songs. When I heard this, I was filled with such a warmth, it was like a high. A smile formed around my face as an over whelming sense of strength surfaced from the storm of nerves that once controlled me. The people were speaking out and they were rallying behind us. This is when I became convinced that we were doing the right thing—we were the true patriots.

Unlike those flag waving, yellow ribbon wearing automatons who think the government and their thugs can do no wrong; we were going against the grain. We were standing up for our rights within the crosshairs of corruption while those good government drones were watching baseball, eating fatback sandwiches, and bitching about paying property taxes.

Yes, these fine examples of patriotic Americans have no problem with paying the federal taxes to carpet bomb poor people in other countries, but they’ll be damned if they are going pay for public education or fund public option health care.

Another caller was put on the air and it was a woman who claimed she was here protesting. She stated that the news crews on the scene did everything in their power to not put them on television. Apparently, when she tried to talk to a number of reporters she was ignored and looked

upon like a fool. This didn't come as a total surprise because up until we put this show on, we didn't know we had any support at all.

The rest of the day was quiet but the storm lingered over us. All of the ground forces stuck to the shelter beneath their tents as the rain came down. I wish it could have rained for one thousand days; one thousand days more I could spend with my son. So I could teach him everything before it's too late. It seems like you are never given enough time to do anything, especially when it comes to spending time with those you love. You are always left with that feeling you could have done more, if only you were given the chance.

I miss you Diane.

Rage filled my soul earlier when we scanned over to Ben Gluck's radio broadcast. Normally I wouldn't pay attention to one word that leaves this man's mouth; however, we are so desperate for information that certain sacrifices had to be made.

Ben Gluck is a republican who refers to himself as an "independent". He is pro-war, a stout Reagan admirer, and to put the cherry on the proverbial fruitcake, he is a converted Mormon in his 40's. His tone is one of screaming fire in a crowded theater, with half cocked theories that have no validity. It is almost as if his job is to make sound arguments look bad. Unfortunately, he brings in 1.5 million listeners a day and another two million some odd viewers to his nightly television show.

He sounded off in that rabid nasally voice of his, *"The ruckus in the mountains of California reaches*

another day today. It's all over the news, I don't know why; they should just go in with the military and execute them. They did it in Waco, Texas! Why waste tax dollars on cutting deals with criminals? This administration is all ready taxing us to the tilt as it is, why waste the energy when bullets are much cheaper?!

I know what you're thinking, 'what about the children?!' Well, who really cares? Do you think these drug dealers who were home schooling their kids really taught them the god given values that decent, law abiding American citizens possess? No! Of course they didn't! How many more officers need to be shot or killed before these scum bags are taken out?!

I cannot support anyone who peddles dangerous narcotics. You can say what you will, 'oh marijuana is harmless!' Marijuana funds criminals. Those criminals are junkies and utter scum of the earth. They provide no credence to a free society. You can also spew that bile of an argument, 'But it's a medicine!' Let me say this, they have plenty of medicines that sick people can use. Legitimate companies put these out and they help many of people. If you are so sick that you need to use illegal drugs to get better, then you should just buy a gun and end it all now, because there is no help for you.

You may not agree with me. You might even think that I am going too far in my stance, but it doesn't matter if you agree with me or not. The only thing I have to answer too is myself—I have to be able to look in the mirror and be able to sleep at night.”

When he cut to commercial, there was an ad for an FDA approved blood pressure medication. This medication

is manufactured by one of the leading pharmaceutical companies and so far, has been linked in the deaths of ten thousand people. There is no word that they are pulling it from the shelves, nor is there any investigation taking place. It's a sick irony, but it's an irony none the less.

Gluck is the same man who condemned the victims' families of the Oklahoma City bombing for demanding more information from the government. After the World Trade Center attack, he was in support of dropping nuclear bombs on various countries in the Middle East. When the gay community marched in New York City, he called for the riot squad to shoot them. After his comments sparked outrage, people spoke out against him by picketing his station. The police were then called out after he encouraged his listeners to come to the station to beat up his vocal opposition.

The source must be taken into consideration, but when someone has this much air time to spread such hateful propaganda, it makes you wonder what his higher ups believe. Gluck is sponsored by a slew of corporations that support him by giving him money for television and radio ads. I am a firm believer in freedom of speech, but when you use your rights to target people with threats and harmful blowback, the situation changes. When your words call for violence towards people who disagree with you, then you are just a dangerous person who probably should not be on syndicated stations.

Day 7:

I couldn't sleep last night; my mind was off and wandering about Liz—I think she is losing it. She has been walking around here in a strange daze. Yesterday she was passing us like we were ghosts, while ignoring Maggie May's cries as if she wasn't in ear shot. It was unnerving watching her just sit in the living room and stare off into nothing. At times, holding Maggie as tight as she could, rocking back and forth with a glazed look of madness in her eyes.

When I came out this morning, I found Cal sitting at the kitchen table with the radio on low. He scratched his growing beard, just starrng at the small radio. The rain was gone and the sun was trying to shine through the overcast—the gray sky was illuminated with a soft, pale glow.

"Is there anything new?" I asked.

He shook his head, "Nah" he said in a low tone, "Same old shit; different day."

After taking a quick look around, I asked "Is Liz awake?"

"She's still asleep, but I think there's something up with her, man."

"Tell me about it..." I replied with a roll of my eyes.

"No... really, Tommy. I woke up in the middle of the night and she was sitting here tracing her fingers around the table mumbling something to herself. She was staring in my direction, but it was like she was looking past me—like she didn't even know I was standing there."

“Cal, I’m sure she is just exhausted. She doesn’t know what’s going on with her husband and she has Maggie May to take care of damn near by herself.”

Shaking his head, he said, “We need to keep an eye on her—a close eye.”

I agreed, but what the hell were we supposed to do if she goes ape shit? Danny was my main concern and I’d be damned if my attention was taken from him because of some one’s clash with reality. Then again, this was my house and everyone under this roof was in my care. If one of us went loony then that person could risk the safety of everyone else—I couldn’t let that happen. Ultimately, I told Cal I would talk to her and see how she was doing.

“This life is so strange” I thought to myself as I took a quiet seat in the living room. When I first met Diane she was sitting at an outside table of a café; just eating an apple and reading a book, minding her own business. I was sitting inside with Harry eating a cheese burger. For some reason, my eyes couldn’t be deterred from her. There was something that just drew me in. Her curly dark, red hair flowed past her shoulders, radiated by the sinking sun. She looked up and as soon as I caught a look at those emerald green eyes, it was over.

I couldn’t wait any longer, I decided to walk up and introduce myself. She told me to have a seat and from that moment on we had wonderful conversation over coffee. Harry was pissed because he had to go to the party by himself. Looking back on it, his destiny was calling him that night as well.

Liz and Harry met the same night as Diane and I—just mere hours apart. From the fantastical story they loved to

tell, they met at the party I was supposed to be at. Both of them were drunk and in the grips of a warming drug—ecstasy. Having never seen each other nor met before, they were both swimming around in the pool where they started making love without saying a word to each other. With sky blue eyes and long golden blonde hair, as Harry told me, she had the body of a Venus.

Afterwards the two started talking as they came down, naked on the pool deck beneath the summer's moon. They would be inseparable from that point on, finding completion in the arms of one another. Drunken druggie hippies who twenty years after the free love movement still held on to its key values. It was the kind of love affair that would make a Nixon republican cringe.

Anytime we would go out as couples, it would always serve to be an interesting night. These two rode on the outskirts of what many call “society” and they weren't afraid to show off their discontent. These were the nights we would hit underground poetry slams and homemade wine tastings, sometimes marijuana tastings. It was after one of these smoke tests that Diane and I discussed growing this fine plant.

Diane and I were on our way home, talking about how cool it would be to live like farmers. Later that night she drew up a quick schematic of an irrigation system and from there we were off and running. For a year we talked about it, we said that if we ever came into money we would run off and grow some pot. Sometimes a plan is all you need to escape the mundane; such routines the others seem doomed to wallow in.

Unlike the relationship Diane and I developed, Liz and Harry had an open relationship. They were together but the two would bring other men and women to bed from time to time, this course this all changed when they moved out here. After three months of moving to Redwood Valley, Liz found out she was pregnant. This news shocked us all because the two swore off having children. As Liz put it, “I know it sounds selfish, but I don’t have the skills or the patience that it would take to be a mother.”

Over the months of her pregnancy, it became clear to us that the two were calming down their wild ways, especially Liz. Harry was always free spirited to a fault and at first he had no intention of settling. In confidence, he told me that he tried talking Liz into having an abortion, but she wouldn’t hear of it. The further along she became, the more Harry would drink and smoke, pinning for mental escape. To his credit, he was physically there for her while he trembled inside. This is the first time I have spoken or written anything about Harry’s dismay, no one else knows what he was really going through.

Liz named her baby after a Bob Dylan song and album, *I won’t work on Maggie May’s farm no more*. Diane would take her time out for a couple of hours a day and coach her in Lamaze with Harry while I would spend time throwing the football around with Danny. This is around the time I Harry snapped out of his mindset and became a stronger father.

Speaking for myself, I understood where Harry was coming from. When Diane found out she was pregnant, I was shaken to my core. However, I was completely honest with her and confessed my fears of being a father. My

father was never there for me; he was far more interested in chasing women and drinking with his buddies. When my mother came down with breast cancer, my father disappeared and no one has heard from him since then.

My fears came by not having a father figure myself. I, along with many others in my shoes tell ourselves that we need a strong role model to become a prevalent role model ourselves—this is not true. If nothing else, I am a damn good father. And no matter what you do, you will always question if you are making the best choices for your child or children—it is just natural to do so. If you didn't question your actions then you wouldn't be a parent, well, you wouldn't be a good one.

Mom had no money, I had a little bit and I used it to hire a private nurse to look after her when Diane and I could not be there. She loved Diane and Diane loved her, the two would gang up on me from time, especially when it came to smoking cigarettes. I quit the day my son was born and it was probably the toughest thing I have ever done. Unfortunately, Mom wasn't there to see him; she died before she was able to hold her grandson.

It all seems so surreal thinking about it now, as if it was forever and a day ago that we were once happy on this piece of land. The place that we came to embrace our most blissful of dreams has become a nightmare. Like shadows surrounding us, hidden from our vision and watching every move we make.

The crackle of the bullhorn breaks through the quiet, echoing a loud beep followed by static. I jumped from my

thoughts to hear the voice of Sergeant Milton—a sound I had not missed.

“Good morning campers! We wanted to extend our regards from Camp Diane!”

Cal and I rushed into the living room as Danny walked out behind us, asking “Daddy, why did they name a camp after Mommy, is it because she is dead?”

My blood started to boil as I held myself back from taking a pot-shot at that criminal asshole. He was like a tick that was digging under my skin; making itself at home as it burrowed through my nerve endings. I signaled Cal to take Danny into his bedroom and I crawled into a huddle beneath the living room window.

“It’s nice to hear from ya, Serge! I’m honored that you’d name your barracks after my wife—the woman you shot in cold blood—that’s very Christian of you!”

He laughed with the cackle of a demon for all to hear before replying, “I’m glad you appreciate good, godly humor, but let’s cut the shit—are you about ready to give yourself up or do I have to take further action?!”

I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. All I could think about was the welfare of Danny and Maggie May... Liz. “There is a woman and two children in here... if I send them out will you open fire on them?!”

The good Christian that Serg was, scoffed through his horn. “Are they gonna be armed... like your wife?”

Knowing he was just trying to get me to react to his nonsense by way of negativity, I kept my cool and did not play into his hands. “No!” I said, but under my breath I muttered, “You murdering mother fucker, shit head,

cocksucker, waste of sperm—if I could kill you, I fucking would!”

After a pause, the bullhorn beeped and Milton spoke, “Alright, send ‘em out and they will be unharmed!”

“If I send them out to you, what are your terms!?”

“Well, I won’t order to have them shot dead bang—what else do ya want, Thomas?!”

“I’d like to know my chances—I’d hate to waste the bottle of twenty year old scotch that’s sitting in the desk of my office!”

“That’s funny—I wouldn’t have pegged you for a scotch man! Hell, stoners usually don’t drink so much!”

“Shows how much you know, Asshole—I don’t smoke the shit!”

Leaving him to ponder, I scurried across the floor and made my way into Danny’s room where Cal and Danny were taking shelter in the corner. Kicking the door shut behind me, I asked, “Did you hear all of that?” while trying to catch my breath.

Danny’s head was buried in Cal’s chest while Cal asked with a stutter, “Can we trust them? I mean...ya know...”

I didn’t know and it was written on my face—they could see right through me. Tired and wired, I was being seduced by desperation. They could read me like a book; and as I was looking at the ground, they were staring blindly at me for guidance.

Thinking to myself, my thoughts screamed, “Fuck, when did I become the decision maker? The only reason I made it this far was because of Diane. Oh baby, where are

you right now, when I need you the most?! I need to know what the hell I am supposed to do!”

Cal broke the silence, proposing, “Why don’t we talk to Liz and see what she wants to do?”

I told Cal and Danny to stay low as I opened the door to crawl towards Liz’s room. When I opened the door of Danny’s bedroom, Liz was making her way to the front door.

“Liz...”

“Liz!”

“Goddamn it, Liz!”

I called several times but she wasn’t flinching. Taking a deep breath I screamed, “Liz! What the fuck are you doing!?”

She kept walking as she cradled her infant child like a zombie. I jumped to my feet and lunged in front of her. Blocking her way, I asked, “What the hell are you doing?! Did you see what they did to Diane?!”

Looking at me blankly, she replied, “Harry’s waiting for me out there. I can’t leave Harry alone, can I?”

It was clear to me that she had lost her mind and I didn’t know what to say to her. Searching for the words to say that would repel her steps; I stood in front of her—blocking her path to the front door. “I won’t let you open that door... we can’t trust them!”

She looked me in the eyes and said, “It’s not up to you, Tommy. All that matters is me and my baby.”

Before I could say a word, a round was fired, breaking the silence. The bullet rocketed through the lower glass panel of the front door. As the sound ripped into the air, I jumped towards her and the baby in a last ditch effort. As I

fell, Liz took fire and slumped to the ground. Lifting myself up, I saw that Liz was covered in blood. A crimson splatter ran down her front as she squirmed to sit up. She shook her baby while frantically screaming “Wake up! Please, wake up!”

Maggie May’s stomach was torn through in a bloody mess; shredded like rancid coleslaw, peeled back in layered chunks like a splattered onion of red and purple. Her small body was limp in Liz’s arms, with every shake the more reality set in that she was dead. Liz cried over the tiny corpse sleeping in blood soaked peace. There wasn’t a single thing I could think to do, barring witness to this atrocious scene. My thoughts were on hold, my instincts were raped—I just watched in terrible awe.

When you see a small child die, there is no composure to keep. They didn’t deserve what happened to them. No matter how you view it, they were innocents in a war they never asked to be involved in. Seeing Liz trying to resuscitate her daughter back to life, I tried to keep my head together. Blinking tears away from my eyes, my thirst for escape built itself into a mountain—a rocky ledge that offered nothing but a cold touch.

Liz sheltered the dead infant and made her way back into the room from which she came from. I tried calling out to her, but she ignored me. She walked through the warzone as if she wasn’t there—like a ghost. The world around her had gone silent as she tuned into her motherly instincts.

As she closed the bedroom door behind her, I slide over to the window and screamed, “You shot a baby—a fucking infant! Do you feel proud and just now!?” But

there was no reply from outside, not even a snickering laugh in the distance could be heard. My head started to hurt; a sharp shooting pain ricocheted from side to side in my temples.

“You fuckers!” I yelled as I broke down into tears, losing complete control. For a moment I dropped my guard, just sat there and cried my eyes out. My head was aching with a pain that was making its way to the pit of my stomach. The sudden urge to vomit hit me like a ton of bricks, but I held it back—inhaling and exhaling.

Regaining my senses, I crawled across the house and got into Danny’s room. Cal and Danny were in the corner and all I could do was look at my son. Once again my eyes began to swell and that sick feeling came creeping back in my gut. The look on Cal’s face told me I was putting him on edge. Danny wiggled over to me and put his arms around me—I broke down again. I held him tight as tears rushed from my eyes.

As I held Danny, Cal went out to the kitchen to get the radio. We decided to lay low in Danny’s room for a little while. At this point I didn’t know what to do anymore. We were getting short on and running on empty mentally. I kept thinking about opening the back door and letting Danny make a break for it. In a somewhat decent world, an official wouldn’t open fire on an unarmed child.

Honestly, I cannot say whether or not they knew they were opening fire on a mother holding her baby. I would like to believe that they thought Liz was cradling a shotgun in the shadows and just made a horrible mistake. However, I watched them gun down my wife in cold blood. When you are front row for acts such as these; the bliss that is

found in ignorance can only take you so far before it becomes willful blindness.

I didn't want to tell Cal what happened in front of Danny, but I feared what would happen if I held back news of that nature. Liz was in mourning, shrouded with the uncertainty of her existence and that of her husband. She was in agony and trapped with us in this house where there was no plausible escape. If she didn't lose her mind before, it was surely on its way out now.

Putting aside my need to shelter my son, I told them what had happened. As Cal looked down at the ground stunned, Danny asked me with tears in his eyes, "Daddy, why would they shoot little Maggie?"

Searching for the right words, I answered, "I don't think they tried to shoot her. I think they made a mistake."

Cal gave me a look as Danny inquired, "But how does a baby look like a gun?"

Stuttering to reply, I just told him that law enforcement are human beings and humans beings make mistakes. Afterwards, I snuck into the kitchen and grabbed up some chips and juice boxes for him—that seemed to take his mind off it.

We spent most of the day in Danny's room listening to the radio. There was nothing new in the reports we were hearing from the mainstream media—it was the same sold shit. When we tuned into Lambert's show, he went after Gluck for his comments.

"Ben Gluck, the corporate mouthpiece shill that he is, verbally attacked the Willis family on his show. It was a gutless move on his part to further the agenda of the media machine that he helps steer."

When people like Gluck and his ilk pretend to be investigative and speak on the behalf of the American people, what is really going on is they are trying to throw you off. Gluck will never tell you the truth about the Trilateral Commission; he'll never go into details about the Builderberg group.

I've been in contact with Gluck about the FEMA camps, and he has never replied to any of my messages. I have offered him proof in the form of government documentation, but he still continues to say there is no evidence of them and denies I have sent him anything.

These camps are real, folks. They have been around since 1986 when they set up six of them throughout the country and have been in use. I have government documents that clearly state they were and are being used as experimental work camps.

They have taken inmates from different prisons, shaved a few years off of their sentences in exchange for their silence. Then they put them to work in these camps in order to train government agents.

Gluck will never admit these things are taking place, he won't tell you that Bill Clinton wants to expand on these camps! Facts are facts, folks. And Gluck needs to realize, you can have different opinions but you cannot have different facts. It doesn't work that way."

I wasn't surprised to hear Lambert going after Gluck; the two were known to go at from time to time. Of course, Gluck would never openly attack Lambert on his television show—that would give Lambert a bigger platform and gain him a bigger audience. However, we knew that Gluck

listened to Lambert because whenever the two would feud, his ratings would jump—Gluck is all about his ratings.

So, we tuned into Gluck's show later on for nothing more than for cheap thrills. Usually we didn't listen to either of these guys, but when you are cornered and desperate for news as well as entertainment, you will get it anyway you can.

Gluck wasted no time running Lambert through. *"Here we go again! Phil Lambert, the proverbial tin foil hat baring nut job, is on the attack. Once again he is screaming about the new world order while trying to defend yet more criminals!"*

For the last two days, Lambert has been calling these drug smugglers innocents, while trying to claim the government and local law enforcement are the real criminals. The man is mentally ill! He's a crack pot! And Lambert, if you are listening or if any of your loony fan base is, I don't need any doctored documents from you.

I don't need to you to tell me anything. I have my own mind; I know what is real and what lunacy is. You Mr. Lambert are a peddler of insanity and a dangerous member of the fringe in this country that operates with no reason."

This was to be expected, instead of debating, Gluck incited a three- ring circus battle royale of name calling and phony outrage. He didn't care about what was going on with us; he has no interest in the tyrannical doings of our government. For Gluck, this is all about ratings and money.

Gluck has put out several books rallying against Clinton, calling him a socialist when he is anything but. There are many people like Gluck on radio and television. These talking heads get paid in the media to send up false

flags, stirring up issues that either do not matter or have no end in sight.

When we moved out here, we cut ourselves out of those perpetual loops that so many Americans find themselves worrying about. Instead of being concerned about their jobs being sent overseas in mass droves for cheap labor; they complain about those who come to this country after treaties like NAFTA and GAT have ruined their homelands.

While some are crying out against wars in other countries, a larger percentage focuses on ending a woman's right to choose. Ultimately, these are the same people who are against expanding health care to the sick and feeding the poor.

This was the rat race that we were escaping from, ignorant minds full of discontent on a rampage with no direction. We found simpler lives up here, far from the madness that was brewing like a kettle. The irony is, it has all caught up with us and the reality of where our beloved country was heading is outside surrounding us.

As the day went on, Liz never left her room of confinement. Whenever I would knock, she wouldn't answer—she had locked herself in and dropped out from the rest of us. Cal told me to leave her be because she just needed time to heal. I knew she needed time to cope, but how therapeutic can it be to lock yourself in a room with your dead infant? The thought alone was enough to make my stomach turn.

Writing this now, I don't know what to believe anymore. Everything just seems to be blurring together tonight. Everyone is asleep and I am all alone with my

thoughts. I take hits from my bottle of scotch by candlelight as I contemplate waking up Danny and cutting through the woods—leaving nothing but chance to guide us.

I am buzzed and desperate.

Like the drunk who stumbles out to his car because he drank all of his poison hours before last call. Spellbound with intoxication, he can barely keep his focus on anything in front of him. Dropping the keys as he tries to unlock his door and he says to himself, “I can drive.” When he finally gets in the vehicle, he momentarily forgets what he is doing there. Firing up the engine, he doesn’t have enough sense to know the lives he is risking.

I know better.

Tomorrow’s another day.

Day 8:

The sound of the helicopters hovering around us has become as natural as the chirping of birds. It has become second nature to stay away from windows and keep low to the ground. Eating whatever we can and sleeping whenever there is enough peace. This is how we must live in order to survive—like we are in a warzone.

From this point on we have moved from real food to canned food. Luckily we stock piled these goods at fifty cents each; we kept about three hundred cans of spaghetti rounds, baked beans, corned beef. Typical survival food, the last eat stuff you want—nuclear winter nutrients. When you are two hours from civilization you buy in bulk, as both simple preparation and for emergencies.

The days just seem to be bleeding together. Earlier I had to calculate how long we have been held up in this house. We have been held hostage for five days and only our assailants know how long they have been routing around the property. Like a predator hunting its prey; laying low in the bush, waiting for the opportune moment to strike. In five days, one of us has been captured and two have been killed, leaving the rest of us to linger in the insanity of uncertainty.

“How long can we hold on?” I wonder. How long before one of us completely snaps and puts the rest of us at risk?

Cal and I huddled around the radio as the morning went on. There seemed to be nothing new; reports were still rehashing the same old spin. Writing this, we are still waiting for Phil Lambert’s show to come on to hear if he

found out anything. Still, I wish we could have a way to send information out to them. Maybe I will get out of here with my son, and together we can clear the air about the charges that are placed against us

As far as I know, Liz still hasn't come out of the bedroom. She hasn't eaten since yesterday when she ate breakfast. When I knocked on the door, she asked me to leave her alone and not worry about her. While I tried to keep us all sane on the inside, all was quiet outside. I could only guess that they were planning their PR cover up for gut shooting an infant. We will just have to wait and see as the day goes on.

An hour ago a number of news stations released information about the names of the cartel members. We supposedly had arrangements with Carlos Manning and Victor Sanz. These were the supposed proprietors of the clinic we had our big deal with. I don't know what the hell is going on, but these guys aren't members of a Mexican Cartel. In fact, these two would be the least likely suspects to even own a gun.

Carlos was the kind of guy who reminds you of your goofy uncle—real easy going and full of jokes. He was a portly fellow and an American. Sure, he was of Hispanic descent, but he didn't even know how to speak Spanish. Victor came with him on the second trip out when the new strands had finished. Victor seemed nice, but was really soft spoken and timid in a way; hardly a drug smuggling killer.

If these guys were from a cartel, they did one hell of a job in covering their tracks. Why would they buy from legal farmers like us? There are plenty of people growing the shit in Mexico, why track all the way up into the mountains to buy from people who are supplying the dispensaries legally? None of this makes any sense. Words cannot describe how pissed and confused I am right now, but I'm trying to keep my cool so I don't lose my wits.

Cal seems to think that they were probably undercover agents. He enlightened me on the story of "Freeway" Ricky Ross and the crack explosion in the 80's.

He told me that the cocaine was smuggled in from South America to be sold on the streets of America. Ricky Ross was a low level drug dealer who was offered a sweet arrangement by a distributor named Danilo Blandon. Blandon dealt him large sums of cocaine on consignment; Ross took this cocaine, cooked it, and made it into rocks which doubled his money.

In no time at all, Ross became a rock star in his trade and he had more money than he was able to handle. He had houses set up where you could walk up to a window and buy crack like you would get a meal at a fast food drive through. Ross had cooking stations and dispensaries set up all over town—in every sense of the word, he was a kingpin.

When it came to law enforcement, Ross seemed to have luck on his side. Whenever a bust was set up by local police, a phone call would come in and Ross would clear everything out. This didn't last forever; Blandon gave Ross up to save his own neck. The DEA swopped in and arrested Ross while Blandon walked away. Later it was revealed

that Blandon was selling cocaine in America, poisoning Americans to send the money back to Nicaragua to fund the Contras and our Government was involved.

With crack exploding on the streets of America, the U.S. Government was in South America aiding the Contras. Secretly backed by the U.S., the Contras were killing their way to over throwing the Sandinistas government in Nicaragua. Keeping military spending going under the false threat of the Cold War, the Reagan and Bush regime assisted the Contras. Not only was the rebel group getting funds from several drug traffickers such as Pablo Escobar; but were also hit men for Swiss bank account holders.

The Contra operation was over seen by a five star Colonel named Oliver North, who funneled weapons and equipment to the Contras. In exchange, the Contras sent millions of dollars worth of cocaine on the planes back to the US. These shipments were flown in through an airport in Miami which was used by the CIA. It would turn out that the Contras were trained to be an instrument of the U.S. Government. The CIA was writing their handbooks while they were wading through the lands of Nicaragua and Honduras. They were killing women and children—torturing innocents, looting villages, and burning down farms.

As the war in Nicaragua escalated with no end in sight, the Reagan administration feared congress would cut spending under the fear of another Vietnam. They were right; soon congress made it illegal to aid the Contras directly or indirectly. This is when they took things into their own hands. Cowboy Ronnie solicited thirty million dollars from Saudi Arabia as well as petitioning for help

from Guatemala and Israel. Meanwhile, Colonel North traded 2,000 missiles to Iran in exchange for hostages. In turn, Iran then sold the missiles and passed the cash off to the Contras in secret.

When some of these things were brought to light, an investigative committee was formed, headed by John Kerry. The committee found substantial evidence of drug smuggling and illegal arms dealing on the behalf of Latin America and the U.S. Government. These crimes ran as high up as President Ronald Reagan and Vice President Bush; this scandal would be known as the “Iran/Contra affair”. Congress from both sides, thought it better to forgive and forget, so no one involved was arrested for any of their crimes. In fact, many of these criminals would be regarded as heroes and great leaders. Some of them are lurking in different corners of new administrations—different job titles with the same agendas at work.

So here we are, under fire by the same government who is directly responsible for pumping cocaine into the inner city of this country. We are blacklisted because we grow a plant that could be used to assist people who are ill. Fugitives because what we offer can aid them better than anything that is synthetically hatched in a lab. As farmers, we are doing nothing different than those who harvest broccoli or green beans. Our service is a service to nature and to the human beings on this planet. Respect is what we should be given, not tyranny.

Hours have passed me by as I try to keep a leash on my emotions. The writing helps, but the effect is starting to wear thin. It’s five in the afternoon now and I am working

my way through a bottle of Scotch. I don't remember ever drinking as much as I have been over the last couple of days. Of course given the situation, weakness is just a moot point. I'm sure no one can blame me for trying to find a mental escape while being physically trapped. After all, Charles Bukowski described drinking as "a great symphony"—all I know is that it takes the edge off.

We listened to Lambert's show earlier and he claimed to have his own informants stalking around at the beginning of our street. Supposedly they are lurking around the press tents and talking to some of the protestors. He said one of his people reported hearing gunfire yesterday and the press reported them as being "warning shots". I can only guess, but I figure this was when they shot Maggie May through the front door.

Lambert also said he is looking into who the cartel members are. He then went into a discussion about how the U.S. Government has used undercover agents to sell drugs and illegal arms only to arrest people low on the totem pole. It feels good to have someone on your side, a voice over the airwaves that reaches others. Regardless of how crazy he may be. I am doing the best I can to be positive about his whole thing, but I can't help but feel like I am a pariah.

Breaking out our can openers, Danny and I munched our way through some cold raviolis for dinner while Cal ate some form of beef stew. Once again, we failed to get Liz to come out of the room. She refused our offer of dinner, screaming incoherencies at the top of her lungs from the bedroom sanctuary. Shrieking her cries of madness, I turned on the radio to drown her out so we could eat our

processed shit in peace. While trying to block her out, I hoped that this outburst would help her in some way. Like I said, I am trying to be positive.

When night fall came, some of the agents and soldiers outside became loud. They started throwing, what sounded like rocks at the house while carrying on like drunks. Thumps pummeled the roof and thuds smacked from the walls. Some of them yelled things like “Come out and play!” Danny was scared, shaking he asked, “Daddy, what are they doing?”

I looked him in the eyes and told him, “Son, don’t be afraid—they are just tossing rocks.”

“But why are they screaming at us?”

“They are trying to scare us—but we aren’t going to let them win are we?” He hesitated to answer and then I looked at him a little bit stronger, “Are we?”

Looking down at his feet, he answered, “No... we won’t.”

“That’s right!” I said before giving him a hug. Holding him closer, I could feel his little heart beat against my chest—it palpitated fast and steady with fear. There was a slight tremble running through his arms and legs. As a father, you do the best you can to keep everything harmful at bay from your children. You take on this responsibility while trying not to overly shelter them or becoming too over bearing. Sometimes you hit a point of overkill, but in the end they know it is because you care.

It is almost comical when you think about how our government has spent so much time warning us about music, movies, and now video games. They spill their

bullshit, saying that these are an endangerment to young minds.

These iron fisted politicians are the real and true threat to the well being of the American family. They'll send your kid off to be shot for corporate gain, but a song from a rock band is more dangerous. Somehow a video game where you kill people is more damaging than one of their bombers slamming warheads into neighborhoods in a foreign country. Their message is simple; keep your kids away from anything that will give them a gander view of the propaganda.

Billions are spent on the military yet the same people we call our heroes, our troops, come home and end up homeless. Blind eyes turned with ease from the rich politicians who sent them into hell's wrath. This is our government at work—paid by the people, to sodomize the people and their rights. After you read these pages, you will have to ask yourself one thing; “How much of my tax dollars have been spent to wage war on people who were growing plants?” I'm sure the answer will sicken you.

As your pay shrinks and your bills get bigger, you'll pay more in taxes just to keep a certain 2% at the top of the heap. You will scrounge at the bottom as the foot strengthens on the back of your neck. At the end of the day, you're only salvation will be to come up with the change for a six pack, a carton of smokes, and enough channels to keep you from grabbing your gun.

I dream of people turning off their televisions and heading to the streets; taking the initiative to legalize freedom. These pissed off taxpayers, tired of funding the way for their own limitations, become unleashed for all to

see. They march holding signs, demanding that the billions of dollars ceased to be spent in arresting 60% of the citizens because they want to get high. Americans are jailed because of smoking some weeds to keep a corrupt prison system rolling in its funds and bonds.

One day, after the people have spoken; we will smoke our plants in peace without fear of being prosecuted. We will make great foods and products with this herb, as we wonder how we could have ever lived without it. Paper would be cheaper because we would harvest it from the stalks while saving our forests. Our clothes would last longer because we wouldn't have to waste our time with processed cotton.

To salvage our existence we will have to come full circle and use the ways of our past to further our lives into the future. We will have to topple our officials to damn the corporate efforts that are in place. To stop polluting not only the earth, but also the humans who inhabit it. Measures will have to be taken by the masses; no longer can we rely on crooked puppets who pretend to do the work of the people. This is critical for the lives of our children and our children's children; we must fight on the behalf of common decency and common sense.

Maybe I am burdened with the curse wishful thinking, maybe I'm just drunk. Either way; a man can still dream, can't he?

Day 9:

We were awakened by the sound of an air raid siren screaming into the house before the sun came up. Three in the fucking morning; I damn the bastards. Peeling myself up from the floor, I took a look from behind my cowardice curtain; the lights are far too bright to see past.

Behind that annoying howl, that Milton screamed “Wakie, wakie!” through his bullhorn. Cackling and screeching with laughter. Once again, the thuds and thumps were heard, rocks bouncing off the outside of the structure—bastards.

Irritated and fed up with the bullshit, I took an ax to my solid oak coffee table. I hacked it into pieces so I could boil some coffee—it’s been too long since I have had a cup of coffee. Three scoops of sugar, two spoons of powered cream. Halfway through the cup I felt my sense come back to me, then I became upset because I was forced to hack up my coffee table for a pot of coffee—the irony.

The coffee table that I had splintered into fire wood was bought when I was visiting my uncle in Pennsylvania. Diane and I visited the countryside of PA, out in the middle of nowhere, where the Amish reside. This table was made by a man named Job, he tried to sell it to me for a hundred bucks—I gave him two hundred. This table was beautiful, it was hand crafted and built sturdy.

On the legs were lion heads at the top going down to the paws, protruding from the wooden base. The top was a perfect oval that was about two inches thick of redwood. This table took Job eight months to carve out by hand and there was no way I was leaving without it, nor was I going

to underpay him for it. I have never owned something of such craftsmanship before in my life; it was a true staple of American ingenuity, or at least what American ingenuity used to be.

So, I sat sipping on my coffee, watching my beautiful table kindle in the fire place. Memories of a better time rippled through my skull as those who surrounded my house tried to defecate on my path to joy.

Remembering Diane and her crippling smile... boom!

The city where we would spend rainy days in bed... thunk!

The look on her face when she held Danny for the first time...ding!

As I tried to keep my composure, Cal and Danny attempted to gain a peek outside at the stone throwers. All I heard was... thud! bump! bing! I was sitting in the corner stirring my anger with an ugly stick, my fuse shortening by each hit against my home. These people need to be put in check and I am of little power—hung-over. Fuck this... I'll probably write more later on when I don't feel chucking a bomb outside.

Goddamn bastards.

After a back and forth with Milton, he was swearing to launch a gas attack on us when the shipments get here. I have my doubts, but I am afraid to risk it with Danny here. If it was just me, I would have taken far more shots at these hired killers than I have. By my own admission, I have taken it easy on these invaders. There was a time that I would have swallowed them with bouts of fire and an expulsion of venom. Spewing their bones into the muddy graves they deserve.

But I have calmed down since I have become a father. There is an example that I have to set now, one of which sets the path for my son to see. This responsibility dies down that desire to fire; it eases the need for that speed burst to aggression. He watches everything I do, he listens close to everything I say, and I just want him to be a better man than I.

With everything that has taken place, I fear that I may have already lost him. His mother is dead by the hands of his government and my odds for survival are slim to none, where does that lead my son? In time, an all consuming agony will transform into an uncontrollable rage and this twisted anger will bond with him in the most desperate of moments, locking him into a permanent mourning.

But maybe, just maybe, he'll do what I hope he will. Maybe he'll be able to move on with his life and leave this painful scene behind. Possibly become successful in something that he is happy doing. Really, that is all a parent wants for their child, success that brings happiness... and possibly grand kids.

The hours have brought me here, another day of being glued to the radio—channel surfing for information but ending up empty handed. No one knows anything—shit, zip, zero... fucking America. I heard at least twenty goddamn commercials offering me a car, an erection, and cheap insurance but nothing about us being trapped on this fucking mountain!

Breathe in... breathe out... inhale... exhale; calm.

Cal thinks I am going stir crazy, but I know I'm not. Crazy is too cute of a word to use for my mental state when

Liz has barricaded herself in my bedroom with her dead baby and won't come out. I don't even want to think about what she is doing in there. As I write this in the corner of the kitchen, I can honestly say that I am keeping cool for my son. My son is the one that is giving me the strength that I am clinging too.

All day long they have had the fucking siren screaming at us and that sick, psychopath Sergeant Milton has been taunting us over a bullhorn. My head is spinning; confusion is pounding me and I don't know what to do. The temptation to send Danny out at night fall is growing more and more. I will have to comb it over more, clearing my head to do so, barring what could go wrong in mind. Inhale, exhale—the pros and cons are blurring the inevitable line that I should be able to distinguish.

The radio screamed of a conspiracy, driving a splinter into my headache. According to the Associated Press, a portion of us farmers are growing marijuana to flood it into the United States so the Mexican Drug Cartels could spread it around to the cities and rural areas of America.

Three, two, one...

They are using the media to set up more attacks on innocents who are acting within California laws.

Lights, camera, action...

The finger pointing continues as the spin machine blows it out of proportion. We are being railed against and unjustly charged. They are labeling us as the bane of all existence—it's such bullshit.

This was to be expected. If I were to say anything different, then I would be a liar. I would be no different

than the soulless sacks of flesh that surround us. I just hope that some pebble of truth would have come out by now, so that we could move on to some kind of normalcy. To live as everyday people, a life outside of being pegged as criminals in the highest degree. Surely, we would stand out from those who bare no conscience and no remorse. The same group who have no reason for their violent actions against others.

Threats come over the bullhorn and it is more verbal bile of a gas attack spewed by the head demon outside. At first I ignore him because I am in no mood to be taunted. Sick of hearing it, Cal implores me to make some kind of deal with him. Sticking to my guns, I tell Cal to leave me with my thoughts. I tell him go find some canned goods that we will be eating for lunch—spaghetti rounds, chicken soup, maybe even chili.

Something drives in me to want to take aim and shoot Milton between the eyes. A sensation of both madness and necessity pushes through my soul, screaming to color it with the blood of another human being. Then again, whether he is truly human or not is still up for debate. A carnivore for certain, but him being anything remotely human is shocking; just as shocking as this ensuing blood bath. Even though my finger itches; I hold back, unlike the brutality that he and those like him have displayed—I am a better man.

The disinformation is spreading, but at least we have Lambert to squash some of the bullshit as it comes out. He comes on the air with the pulse of a heart attack, sounding the alarm for all to hear.

“Ladies and gentlemen, we are in the vice grip of a societal vacuum that wants to brainwash us into thinking the most important measures are shopping, eating, and believing whatever they tell us.

I have news, folks! News that will turn your heads!

This is directly from the sources I have in Redwood Valley covering the standoff. The reports they sent me yesterday were taken directly from someone in the press tent, someone from one of the major outlets covering this event. Now, they were told by this press member that they were told that they could not run this piece.

In order to be able to put this information out, I agreed to not give the name of the station or the name of the person who gave us these documents. At the moment, I can't give the names of the crew I have on that mountain. From what they have told me, there are riot police surrounding the area, ten protesters have been arrested along with four reporters from various independent media outlets. Word is that the local police operations are now in the hands of the feds.

As it turns out, those patriots under siege by our lawful government are not drug smugglers at all... in fact; they were duped by the CIA and the DEA. That's right! We have our own modern Freeway Ricky Ross repeat happening right under our noses!

From what I am reading here, this government document states that the two supposed cartel members, Carlos Manning and Victor Sanz are in fact former undercover CIA agents who are now working for the DEA. They have been using undercover agents like Manning and Sanz to sack legal dispensaries that were voted for by the

people of California. Innocent civilians have been carted off to jail; their shops destroyed all because the federal government refuses to recognize the validity of state laws.

This was leaked to a major news outlet and then it was leaked to us after they were told they couldn't air it. Well, we are airing it here because this is a key piece of news and the American people need to know what is going on.

Gluck can say whatever he wants to, these are the facts. He will try to spin this anyway he can, but we know the truth. The only thing that is crazy is how our government is trying to operate and think they will get away with it. And they will as long as we sit back like obedient lap dogs and let them. Only we can stop them!"

My jaw hung open, swinging low. As everything went silent, my head began to throb. At this point I needed a drink—something strong. Cal was rendered speechless, looking past me as if he was trying to find the right words to say. He stuttered in confusion as my mental state began to slide towards a breakdown. All hopes that they made some kind of mistake have become a dead issue. Their actions against us are intentional and have been planned for quite some time.

Trying to come to terms with the information, I try to breathe. Cabin pressure dropped and the walls started closing in. Questions bounced around in my head as I felt what I could only guess was an aneurism. The DEA was trying to set us up while using all levels of government to take us down, for reasons that largely remained as theories. When you are in this much shit you know you are most likely fucked on all counts, and getting out unscathed becomes nothing more than fable.

As we were sitting here, prisoners in our home, they were using Harry against us. What were they bribing him with to lie about us? Were they bribing him at all? Maybe he was cutting a deal to save his ass? I wish I knew what the hell he was thinking. God! Harry, what the fuck are you doing! Your child is dead! Your fucking daughter! Do you even care that your wife is losing it? Man, what the hell happened to you?

I had to start writing again to keep it together; this pen hitting the paper has become my placebo. Walking around the house isn't cutting it; I'm trying to keep a mask of calmness over my urge to explode. A stress headache is beginning to rip through my skull and I think I might throw up. Jesus, I can't let my son see me like this; shattered pieces strung together into the form of a human being. He needs to see me strong and able, not where I am right now. Goddamn, its mid afternoon and I am sneaking shots of booze to keep myself going. Rock bottom, staring down the barrel of a gun—I'll join you soon Diane.

It's been a few hours since my last entry, and it seems that madness has made itself at home here. Even though everything seems to be falling apart, this notebook is a lot like medication for me. These pages are my sanctum to lay down my darkest thoughts and weaknesses through these trying times. Logging in and out with entry after entry is more than just documentation of this siege—it is cheap therapy.

After two days of hiding out in Diane and my former bedroom, Liz finally stepped outside. It was a macabre scene; caked in blood, she wandered from the doorway into

the living room with her dead baby wrapped in a soft blanket. The smell of post mortem rot hit our senses like brick wall. Rotting flesh filled the warm room, forcing our stomachs to turn upside down and push inside out. When it hit me, I thought I was going throw up my canned macaronis.

It was after midnight when she walked past Cal and I; not saying a word. We watched her as we tried not to toss our cookies; she went into the kitchen and proceeded to make a bottle for her dead baby—poor Maggie May. Cal and I looked at each other with a mix of shock and a dash of horror. I searched for words but that foul stench, the odor of carrion left me speechless and cringing. Looking to Cal, I could tell by the expression on his face that he wasn't going to say anything.

As the water ran from the faucet, she sang nursery rhymes to the decaying shell that she held so lovingly in her arms. Tones so melodic, that at one point would be soul soothing; now come off as demented notes of lunacy. Scooping the formula powder from the can, she tapped the spoonfuls in the bottle while ignoring our presence. Her eyes were fixed on what she was doing as her strained voice muttered “hush little baby” from low to high, repeatedly.

The soft lullaby paraded on as she added water to the milk powder. Filling it almost to the top, she turned the faucet off and shook the bottle to a mix. Covering the nipple hole with her pointer finger, she shook it while humming. Cal and I took in this display with no reaction, but our need to watch was as if we were driving past a car

accident. I can tell you right now in these ink smeared words that I was beside myself.

With a gentle force, she nudged the rubber tip between the lips of the necrotic infant. As if it was still alive and fighting her bedtime feeding. She shushed the dead child in between lines from the song, rocking the lifeless being back and forth. Walking past us to re-enter the bedroom, she held the baby tight dumping milk down its decomposing throat hole. With her head in the clouds of a different time, she didn't notice that the milk was over flowing and dripping along her path.

When she closed the door behind her, Cal and I just sat in silence. I was just happy that Danny was already in bed, because explaining something like that to a child would be maddening all on its own. Grabbing my bottle of scotch, Cal and I took slugs as we tried to regain our wits.

Cal took a swig and told me, "I read something about mothers who lose their children in a tragic situation. They all have their own way of dealing with it... Liz is stuck. She still wants to be a mother but her one and only has been stripped from her."

I just sat there, half listening and half tuning out as I thought of a way to get the hell out of the house. One thing was clear to me, and that was she had truly lost her mind. In this regard, she had become the loose end that could compromise the rest of us. "Selfish?" Maybe, but this is a standoff and when you are under fire survival is all that matters.

"Out of the pain of losing everything she had come to know; Liz trapped herself in a moment when she was most

happy—when she was a mother”, Cal said as he let the warmth of the scotch fill him.

Nodding to his words of pseudo-psychological rhetoric, I drank from my bottle. Quietly I thought to myself about what I could do. I’m tired of being the one who has to play leader, it is exhausting. Especially when comes to making a decision such as the one I am kicking around; does she stay or does she go?

Yes, I feel for her loss, I wouldn’t be human if I didn’t. Also, I feel for her as she has to live with the possibility that her husband marketed her off on a chopping block to the feds. There is nothing but mercy to be felt for her losing her first born daughter. I am an ocean of endless compassion for Liz, but I have a child of my own to tend to. There are others here that I have to think about as the cheese slips further from her cracker. What the hell am I supposed to do? Let her endanger us all?!

I asked Cal what we should do and he had no answer—thanks a lot.

Though I feel much sympathy for Liz, I know that we must think for ourselves and about our own well being. As much as I would like to join Diane in the arms of forever, I have Danny. He consumes most of my thoughts, as he drives away my selfish wants. He is just a child, a victim of our decisions that will stand to pay for that we have done—no matter right or wrong. I cannot leave him vulnerable because of someone else.

The enemy that we face is unscrupulous and their resolve is greater than ours. While we have one small outlet on our side, they have the national media in the palm of their hand. Some would call us crazy to put up this kind of

fight, but we have no choice. There is a sickening feeling in me that speaks in repeat; they are going to kill us all. If we go out with our hands in the air, fingers tickling the sky, they will shoot us dead and claim we were armed. Who would be the wiser? A handful of tin foil hats that that the masses are told to regard as crazy?

To this day the majority of the people think the slaughter at Ruby Ridge was justified because Randy Weaver was as a white supremacist. As I write this, people think that the U.S. Government had a right to infiltrate the Davidians in Waco, Texas; killing over eighty people because they were a supposed cult. Hardly a word is ever spoken of those who have lost their lives in the struggle for decent wages and proper working conditions as they fought against the upper class. They think nothing of incidents such as the Ludlow massacre, because they are buried so far deep, almost hidden.

On April 20th 1914, National Guardsmen backed by a private security firm and militiamen opened fire on a tent colony of coal mine strikers. Machine guns spit bullets as women and children ran for shelter from tent to tent. Some escaped into the hills while others hid in pits dug under a few of the tents. Men tried to hold back the forces by returning fire using their rifles, but it was useless—they were out gunned and out manned.

By night fall the gun fire had died down but the danger still remained. The troops made their way down the hills and slithered into the colony, masked by the dark of night. They covered the tents in coal oil and set the fabric homes ablaze. As people fled from the burning structures, militia men fired rounds of machine guns at them. Children

thrown into a panic ran back into burning tents while mothers and fathers ran in after them.

The next day it was reported that twenty-six strikers had been killed—men, women, and children. The tent colony had been rendered to smoldering ashes with the scent of death lingering in the mountain air. While sifting through the ruins, a telephone linesman removed a mangled cot to expose a pit. Within the pit he found the charred remains of two women and eleven children, huddled in their last throes of desperation.

A wave of anger rushed through Colorado and the United Mine Workers sent out a call to arms. Three hundred miners joined forces, loaded their guns and took to the hills. In retaliation, the strikers blew up mines and went after militia men and guards. Within days, revolt was in the air with demonstrations raging all over the country. The working man was sticking it to the slave drivers and their hired thugs couldn't control the situation.

Even though President Wilson was busy with warring against Mexico for the business interests of the United States, he finally had to open his blind eye to what was going on in Colorado. He sent in troops to bring order to the situation as Secretary of War Garrison called for both sides to lay down their arms. After seven months, the strikes finally fizzled out, but sadly the Union did not gain its recognition. Over sixty men and women were dead, but not one militia member or mine guard had been indicted.

You will never read of plights like these in a public school text book in America. These are the things that are hidden deep in the pages of our history. Stories like these are the most important lessons that can be learned. The

realization must be there to teach your child why they have the rights they do. They need to know that someone fought for them and sacrificed everything so that the next in line could have it better. Those who have given so much in their fight against the grain are our true heroes and their battle should not be hidden.

This is another reason that we chose to homeschool our son. We taught him the truth about the discovery of America. While others were being taught that Christopher Columbus was a heroic discoverer, we taught Danny that Columbus was nothing more than a brutal murderer who was fueled by greed and his thirst for gold.

From 1492 on to the drafting of NAFTA, the only way to find the facts is if you dig. You will never read these historical truths in a public school text book. These are hidden from the minds of children so they do not question the fairytales of how this nation was truly birthed. They won't find out until they get to college or read on their own in order to learn what really took place.

Day 10:

Shaking in my own flesh, I can't believe what I am about to write in this continually agonizing diatribe. I can only hope that someone other than myself reads this so they know exactly the kind of hell that we have been put through. One cannot imagine what it is like to live like animals, caged within the walls of your own home. I cannot imagine being forced to carry the memory to the end of time.

There was something different lingering in the air in the walls of this stuffy house this morning. It was a foul smell, one that spawned much sickness—the stench of rotting flesh. My eyes opened with the turning of my stomach, twisting in the clench of my gag reflexes. As I stood up from the floor, my head started to spin in a dizzy spell. I tried to blink away my headache while attempting to breathe through my mouth—it's harder than you would think.

I followed the scent out into the living room where the odor grew stronger. Looking around the room as my eyes began to water; I noticed the door to the room where Liz was hiding was cracked open. Pulling my shirt up around my mouth and nose, I tip toed towards the open doorway—cautiously.

Poking the door open with ease, I saw Liz looming over her dead baby—poor Maggie May. The infant was a decaying shell—barring discolored flesh and frozen still with rigor mortis. Maggie's arms were stuck over her chest and her legs were slightly bent, coming off like a rotting baby doll. There were four or five flies staying close,

buzzing around the sad looking corpse. Whenever Liz would move away, the insects would swoop in for a vile taste. I fought to keep my composure even though I was ready to vomit.

I watched in horror, Liz talked to her dead little girl as she tried to change her diaper. “Oh, you little stinker—you just can’t help having a smelly hinny, can you?!”

I was speechless—I couldn’t believe what was going on right in front of me. This woman looked into the eyes of her dead child and somehow thought she was still alive. Her mental state was so strong and willful that she thought the stink of putrefaction was nothing more than a diaper soiled with feces. There was no more room for debate—Liz was gone.

“My god” I thought to myself, “How am I supposed to deal with this?” But the truth is that there was no gentle way of confrontation in this situation. This would be an ugly scene; the two of us fighting over an infant in the grips of necropsy. What if Danny were to see this? What would his reaction be? I mean, he’s already going to need years of therapy after witnessing his mother’s demise. Jesus Christ, I wasn’t cut out for this type of insanity.

As I stood and watched her, she acted as if I wasn’t there—it was like she didn’t sense my presence at all. I was fixed in the doorway as she dumped powder on the dead baby’s crotch and into the new diaper, believing it would drive away the smell. She cooed to her and tried to tickle the eroding exterior as my stomach kept turning. Liz grinned and giggled as if she was hearing her child’s laughter in her head.

There was a part of me that just wanted to back away and go throw up somewhere. Then there was stronger part that told me I that I needed to deal with this before it got worse. How things could get any worse than this was beyond me. I didn't know, but no matter how much I wanted to turn around, I couldn't—I was damned to be some kind of a leader of the down trodden.

Letting actions guide me, I walked in and asked “Liz? What’s going on?”

She didn't raise her head or even glance in my direction. Liz kept constant focus on the small body in front of her and answered, “Nothing, I’m just playing with my baby.”

As tried to find the words to retort with, she turn to me and asked, “Do you want to hold her?”

Looking at me with doe eyes—I stuttered in my words as I stumbled in my thoughts, “Oh, uh, um I... I... I can't. My hands are uh, dirty.”

Just as the words left my mouth, her demeanor changed. She went from copasetic madness to off the hinges insane. When she reached down to pick up Maggie May, the flies scattered away in fear. Cradling the dead baby in her arms she glared at me, “What?! You think you're too good to hold my child, Tommy?”

Liz walked towards me slowly, in an almost stalking manner as I backed away in slow steps. Looking at her and then looking at the baby, my eyes were jarring. That gut wound was caked with blood, surrounding jerk-dried flesh—it was such a horrid sight. The smell was something beyond grotesque and my only thought was to get the hell out of there.

Leaving subtleties at bay, I stated, “Hey uh, Liz, you need to take a deep breath and um... your baby is dead.”

She flew off of her calm handle, “No she’s not! She is cooing to her mommy—can’t you hear her?!”

She kept stalking towards me, giving me the most evil eyes, growing angrier every time I tried to reach out to her. So far gone, she did not want to come back to the painful reality of her loss. Liz was content in her lunacy because where she was in her head her baby girl was still alive there.

“Look, I’m sorry I bothered you, but I have to check on my son”, I said as I stepped back out through the threshold into the living room. As I closed the bedroom door, I assured her “I’ll be back later, okay?”

Leaving that stressful confrontation behind, my gag reflexes kicked in and I thought I was going to heave right where I stood. The rancid stench filled the house after I had let it out of that room. I knew that I had to do something to kill the smell before Danny came out of his room.

Going into the kitchen, the odor just grew stronger. I followed the nasty smell to the door that lead to the basement. Reluctantly, I walked to the underground entrance while I covered my mouth and nose with the collar of my sweat stained t-shirt.

I gave the knob a twist and that is when it hit me—I knew what part of that awful smell was. Despite knowing this, something in my gut pushed me to pull the door open anyway, just to make sure. Nothing could prepare me for the macabre that I was about to unearth. With a crack, the seal broke and I was pummeled with the invisible cloud of

stale funk. It was the gases of my wife's remains mixed with the damp, moldy basement air.

The house was being filled with the smell of rotten corpses and we were cornered by foot soldiers who would love nothing more than to take a shot at us. This was an awful place to be in, and I had to do something to fix it. Bad enough the house was stuffy and hot with no air conditioning, but no one would be able to eat with the reek that lingered in the air. Closing the door, I fought off my nausea with a few shots of scotch as broke out my notebook.

So, I am writing this at nine in the morning with an empty skull. Burned out and ready to wave the white flag, I wish I could end this all right now, I don't want to be a fucking hero—I never wanted be a hero. I just want to go back to the city and be a slave, it's easier that way. I am no goddamn leader and I sure as hell don't want to pretend to be one.

If I am the leader here, then I am a terrible one.

In confession, I have no idea what the hell I am going to do at this point. I have lives in the palm of my hand and here I am collapsing under the stress of all that is being tossed on top of me. A real leader would be able to keep his cool and think of something in the midst of all of this chaos. Here I am, drinking in the wee hours of the morning while trying to maintain the right frame of mind—I'm trying to think positive now.

With another shot of whiskey, I light up a burned cigarette butt. I quit years ago but as of late, anything seems to help the processes of getting through these hardest

hours. Everything seems to be coming back to haunt me this morning, joined by new demons to dread.

Diane, sweet Diane—it is the small things I harp on while I smell what remains of your precious existence on this planet. As I burn your favorite incense, I am thinking back on that little hole of an apartment that we started out in, just scraping by. I worked in that warehouse for seven bucks an hour while you were finishing up your remaining years of college. We were barely making ends meet and the economy was being anything but kind to us. In my darkest moments of defeat, you were there as a shining light of hope for me to rise in.

I remember you telling me that Bill Clinton was going to make everything better—he would put the proverbial band aid on the gushing wound. Clinton would be the much needed healer after so many years of the rich getting richer. He would come in like rays of the sun, cutting through the darkness and reinstating freedom. This good old boy from the south would bring us the decriminalization of marijuana and change that was much needed. His wife would give healthcare to those who could not afford it—65% of the population.

The reality was Clinton reared his ugly head by cutting the flow of money towards social programs while kicking in more towards the military. He spent more on the drug war than the presidents who came before him, as well beefing up laws to lock more people away while further privatizing the prison system. Bill Clinton was no better than any of the white collar criminals that came before him. After all, he had the worst record of any sitting Governor in Arkansas on education and the environment. To show how

tough he was on crime, he interrupted his campaign and flew back to Arkansas in order to oversee the execution of a brain damaged black man—with the cameras present of course.

Our breath of fresh air of change was a gusty wind that carried poison to fill our lungs—a black cloud harboring lies and corruption within its gray lining. His running was to fool the youth and hopeful of America. Beneath his soft exterior lurked a savage that would censor anything that posed a threat to the veil of the military industrial complex. He increased the budget of the CIA while backing the paramilitary side of the war against drugs, even though he “did not inhale”. Bill Clinton would prove himself to be one of most dangerous presidents, a fascist under a guise of freedom.

We aren’t the first Americans that have been infiltrated under Clinton’s rule. Under the zero tolerance law, they are able to confiscate anything in the name of the drug war. They can take your house, your car, your boat and whatever else they deem as being worthwhile and they don’t even need proof to do so. This is what has come to our front door and once the damage is done, it is done.

The new Soviet Union in red, white, and blue saturation; you cannot differ from the station. Without batting an eye, the poor become poorer as the prison system quadruples in size. Petty crimes become felonies and the death penalty is viewed as a necessity. Are these the Christian morals we are all supposed to follow? Is this what Jesus would do? Probably not, but the majority of the people who spew biblical passages are only thinking for themselves and no one else.

For one reason or many, I cannot seem to stifle my emotions from exploding through my pen. It could be that these might be my last words at any given hour in my log of the day. Then again, it could be that I am going insane from the stench of carrion that is filling my nostrils. The constant reminder of death can drive one off of their beaten path. Forcing some head first into a gutter of thought that holds nothing more than negativity—the brute reality.

It may seem that I don't know what I am doing anymore, but I can tell you that I know what the battle is, and I know what it entails. I know what this means to me and those who are picketing outside. This is a matter of freedom, and you cannot claim to be a free person in a free country if nature is outlawed. You cannot pledge allegiance to a land where the military enforces corrupt laws against the simplicity of nature. When things like this take place; it is not freedom, it is fascism.

My son asked me when he awoke, “What’s that smell?!” He scrunched his face as he held his nose.

Without a second thought, I shrugged and answered, “That’s our food going bad.”

Yeah, I lied to him again but what was I supposed to do? Tell him the truth? You tell your five year old son that the stench that’s making his nose curl is his mother’s putrefying carcass with an eight month old baby girl, and see where that gets you.

Danny held his nose and ate his canned peaches with his dry cereal. I watched him with tears ready to break because I swore to myself when he was born that I would never lie to him. I would never steer him in the wrong

direction and I would always shoot straight with him. He ate as I fought the urge to spew my honesty in his direction. Fighting back my urges, I just sat there while he was chomping down on corn starch drenched fruits.

A feeling came over me that triggered questions of my motives as a parent. I left him to feast in his ignorance, no matter how much it killed me. For better or for worse, this is what I felt was best for him at the time. Closing my eyes and swinging from my bottle, I took a deep breath and paused for reflection.

When I left my years as a teen in the dust, I was pissed at my parents for not telling me how things really worked. Then again, no one told them a damn thing either, they had to find out on their own. It is just the trials and tribulations of growing up; you spend your teens looking at your parents like they were fucked. Then you grow up only to realize that you are just as fucked as they were—maybe even more so.

As the afternoon rolled in, rocks were being bounced off of the exterior of the house once again. It is an annoying sound, ping, pong, thud and thump! Sons of bitches, they know we can't retaliate and that's why they are fucking doing it. The noise was driving me up the wall. At the same time, it's better than bullets being fired around us.

In the end, I just ignored their actions and tuned into Lambert's show for some sense of solidarity. This has become our only news show. He was speaking on our behalf while welcoming the opinions of those who were fighting for our cause. His show was our platform out of desperation with various voices crying out for us.

Sure, some may call them radicals or dub them as conspiracy theorists because of their views. However, the way I see it is; our situation is destined to become both a conspiracy theory and a raging argument. In some ways it has already reached that point, depending on how your senses are tuned.

His voice came off like a fire ball through the tiny speakers of my shitty radio. In one of my lowest points, my moment of doubt, Lambert somehow propped my soul to stand tall.

“Ladies and gentlemen, today we are getting word that the people being held hostage on a mountain in California are being targeted for their land. A family that has supposedly sold drugs to some Mexican cartel, yet the cartel cannot be named and the two men who are members of this supposed cartel are operatives of Central Intelligence Agency.

Something stinks here, and we need to ask questions!

Folks, you know me, and I don’t like to preach but this cannot be allowed to go on. We cannot allow our government to get away with something like this. If we let this slide what happens when they come for your property?

What if they come for you and gun you down in front of your family just because you where growing a few plants?! Or maybe you are growing nothing at all. This could happen to you much like it could happen to your neighbor. This could happen to me; much like it has happened to several others.

It’s already happened in some areas of California. In 1992 a thirty-two man assault team made up of the DEA and local police infiltrated the Trails End ranch, gunning

down Donald P. Scott in his home while serving a search warrant. They reported seeing marijuana plants on his property, but these allegations were sketchy. Michael D. Bradbury, the District Attorney of Ventura County conducted an investigation into the raid, issuing a report on the events leading up to and on October 2, 1992. The DA concluded that asset forfeiture was a motive for the raid. As I am telling you this story, the IRS is trying desperately, but Donald's family is fighting them to the bitter end.

Under Zero Tolerance, asset forfeiture is a part of the law that allows them to take everything you ever worked for even if you are innocent. They can take your car, your boat you house, your land; and you will play hell trying to get it back! This is a police state alive and in effect, and they will not back down unless we do something now. These parasitic worms will continue to think they have the right to do whatever they want until we stand as one and let them know that they cannot get away with what they are trying to achieve."

I listened as my son ate his lunch in the other room, minding nothing over his can of spaghetti rounds. Keeping my eyes on him; I took quick drags from my smoke when he wasn't looking as my ears were tuned to Lambert. My thoughts drifted as I wondered how true this all could be. What would they want with my land, though? Wouldn't you think the feds would have bigger fish to fry?

"There needs to be more people picketing at the beginning of that road. There needs to be people that have the guts to stop what is going up there! I have sent my people in the area up, but I am broadcasting directly from

Texas and I can't be there. I need you to call me and tell me what is going on. As far as I know, they cut off the power there where they have a baby girl and five year old boy... so much for their excuse of looking out for the children like in Waco Texas where they killed eighty people!

This is what I fear, folks... I fear that they have learned how to kill innocents and use the media to spin their propaganda so that rest of America thinks that it is all justified so that they can continue in their agenda without outrage!

Don't listen to people like Ben Gluck when they say that this use of force is justified. It is not, he is just a mouthpiece to con you into thinking that actions like these are okay. He is no better than they are! While using talking heads like Gluck, they can keep on their track while the majority is tuned into Seinfeld and the X-files—numbed with stupidity as they wish for a better life, chasing the American dream that no longer exists!"

Over the tiny speaker of the radio, the air raid siren was screaming loud and clear, aimed in our direction. I tried hard to ignore it, but it didn't help matters that I had a forming migraine. The scent of death infiltrated my nostrils as my head pounded with pain. My senses were being beaten into the ground and I was afraid that I was going to lose it. After all, there is only so much bullshit a man can take at a single time.

After a half hour of the sirens, Milton screamed inaudible words through his bullhorn. In the process, Liz was screaming out of the bedroom window at them. She called them pigs and bastards, but I doubt they could hear

her over the noise they were throwing in our direction. Liz was just wasting her energy and annoying the hell out of the rest of us. This was a hellish torture, and it went on for four hours. At one time I thought that Los Angeles was the closest I would ever get to hell—I was wrong.

As the day made its pass and the night closed in, Sergeant Milton yelled threats of gassing us over his loudspeaker. The time was drawing close to where I had to get Danny out of here. How I am going to do it still poses a problem, because I have no clue how to do it. If Diane was still with us, she would probably know what to do. She was always the one I would turn too when I was unsure. Now I am all alone, faced with one of the toughest choices that I have ever had to make. Chances are getting slimmer by the day that I will make it out of this shit storm alive.

Writing this passage, I am trying not to think about my end. That will just complicate my decision making and drag me down. Selfish emotions tend to side track rationale thought, taking you from where you should be. I know I have lived my life and I leave behind a son who will be stronger than I ever could be. My only mission now is to get him out of this situation alive. I cannot play leader to anyone else at this point. Liz is too far gone to be concerned with and Cal has to manage on his own—this is just the way it has to be for my son.

Tonight I am reflecting on Lambert's rant, and I can't help but wonder what there will be for Danny after every manufacturing job is sent over to China. I am plagued with worry that he won't have the opportunities that were there for me. What will be left for him to make of himself in this fading republic?

Like every parent, I wish the best for him. I am hopeful that he will become a doctor, one that cures the diseased and nurses the broken. Maybe even a lawyer, one who fights for the rights of everyday people against the tides of corruption. However, I am brought back to the reality of the crooked trade agreements that line the pockets of the upper 2% while propping up sweat shops all over the world.

What happens when the middle class is phased out and forced into the poverty line? How will they pay their legal bills when they have to fight the bank off to keep their house? Where will the money come from if they sue their employer when the company refuses to pay for worker's compensation? What is he to do when the judge favors the corporation with a greased palm?

The power is being taken away from doctors to save lives and put into the hands of some undergraduate in a cubical of an insurance company. What happens when the insurance companies rule in favor of the almighty dollar? When they decide it is cheaper to bury you than to pay for your necessary surgery. These are the reasons why I fret for the future of the children we have brought into this world.

Before we were put under the gun, there were nights I would lie awake in bed thinking about my son. I would stare at the ceiling while Diane slept soundly, my thoughts swarming in my head about the road we are headed on. Only one thing would allow to me calm down and rest peacefully. The thought that one day my son would take over the farm for his old man and live for himself.

This seems to be a pipe dream at this point, and I wouldn't wish this corner we have been backed into on my

worst enemy, let alone my son. I still have faith that one day the people will evolve into a mass of anger to battle the rich and powerful. One day they will wage a war of thought against the lies, rising to overturn the laws that arrest the poor and lock up the sick.

Another drink down and another closing in truth... it's time for bed.

Day 11:

Cal, Danny, and I huddled up in the far bed room where we burned incense to chase away the rot that hung in the musty air. I tried to sleep but I found myself looking at the ceiling, fighting the temptation to drink myself into a stupor so I can pass out. Nah, another hangover was not needed—especially with this horrific stench that is hanging over us.

This morning I woke up on the floor with a sore back and a headache. Trying to sleep on the hardwood is no damn good for an aging back and the smell that hovers is worse. My eyes kept opening as the carnival of thought paraded in my head. A cup of coffee was desperately needed to fix my state. Taking my trusty axe, I hacked up some wooden chairs and tossed them into the fireplace. As the wood kindled in the flames, I peered outside to see men in paramilitary gear sifting through the remains of the green house.

Three or four of them tried to pull the plants out from the wreckage, while another four troops aimed their guns at the house. I can't tell you how long they had been out there, but something spooked them back in the brush. They ran off with as many crushed plants they could carry. My guess is, they saw the smoke rising from the chimney and thought we might take a shot at them. Tempting as it was, I didn't think it would have been smart to do something like that early in the morning. I wanted to keep things quiet for as long as I could.

Let it be known that I have done the best that I could do to keep everyone sane. Let be known that we were

illegally pursued. In the process to increase their funding towards a threat that appears to be non-existent, they have killed a mother and an infant. No matter how they try to spin it these people are cold blooded murders. We were not the first and we will not be the last to be victimized by systematic eradication, and for what, our land?

As I boiled my coffee over the open flame, I listened to the morning news. They offered nothing but garbage; some idiot actress with a few grams of powder was pulled over on the sunset strip and given a slap on the wrist. This isn't news, this is gossip and it doesn't affect me. Most likely, she will get a TV show people will bow in awe to how much she is paid. She will probably release a book in a year or so and people who can barely read will buy it. This nit-wit will make more money while further eroding societal standards. I guess it does affect me.

When Cal slipped out of the bedroom, he joined me in having a cup of Joe. We discussed what to do about the smell, but we ultimately decided to leave it alone for now. Neither one of us wanted to say it, but the best bet in my mind was to chuck the corpses out through the back door. On the surface this showed no compassion for the dead, on the other hand; what were supposed to do?

Have you ever smelled a rotting corpse? It is an unpleasant odor that carries bacteria as it spreads out from the source. Take away air conditioning then throw in a touch of humidity, and you have a spoiling cocktail of utter disgust.

First rigor mortis sets in, tightening the muscle tissue in the last pose. Then the flesh begins to discolor, spawning purplish soft spots of pulp. The bowels then relax; releasing

nauseas gases that were stored in the intestines with ghastly sounds while the bladder and the colon expel urine and feces. Discoloration spreads as various forms of bacteria form within the body. Within hours, maggots begin to colonize and tear through the inner walls—bite by tiny bite. While all of this is happening the scent grows with pungent disgust and if it is taking place in a closed off area, the putrefaction takes off at a rapid rate.

That shell molding in the basement is not my wife. My wife is gone and there is nothing that is going to bring her back. The smell of her dead body is nothing more than a constant reminder of how she was murdered. While her body decays like bad meat, I have to lie to my son about the rancid odor that has taken over this house.

Liz is another story entirely; her loss is something that I can never begin to understand, nor is it one that I want to ever know. Just thinking about losing my son makes my insides churn with an emptiness that brings tears to my eyes. Poor Maggie May was shot and killed before she was able to crawl or grow her first teeth. It is nothing short of a tragedy for a parent to suffer that kind of loss. Our friend has lost her mind and rightfully so, but something needs to be done to bring her back to reality. She is compromising our stability and whatever we may have left of solidarity.

I didn't want to be cold-hearted, but I confessed to Cal, "I think Liz has run the last mile..."

He nodded, staring into his black coffee and replied "We really need to do something, but I don't know... I can't even pretend to understand what she's going through."

I could only sigh with frustration and run my fingers through what was left of my hair. There were no words that

I could find to express what I was feeling. As I took a sip from my cup, Cal offered, “We need to have an intervention of sorts, you know? We just need to sit her down and talk to her.”

This is when I told Cal, “I don’t think it will help. I mean, she honestly thinks Maggie May is still alive. What do you say to someone in that state?”

Cal took a swig from his coffee as I asked, “What if the two of us just confront her? No bullshit, no fronts—we just come out and shoot straight with her?”

He looked at me with eyes that waited for a punch line. Yet all I could do was shrug and gulp from my coffee that was growing cold.

After a few seconds of discomfiting silence, he finally replied, “Well, we might as well try, right?”

Taking a sip from coffee, I added, “What else are we supposed to do, really? I mean, are we supposed to let her keep going the way she is and turn a blind eye?”

Giving him a moment to let it sink in, I lit a Cuban cigar that I had been saving in the freezer for while. I got it from someone I was friends with in Los Angeles. He gave it to me a year ago when I invited him up here to taste what I was growing. It was a little stale, but goddamn, it was still pleasant.

Puffing away to get the stogie burning, I just came out with it, “We need to get through to her and get these dead bodies outside—this smell is fucking killing me.”

Cal lifted himself up from his seat, “Let’s go talk to her.”

I have to admit, it sounded good and strong when the words left my mouth but when the reality came home to

roost, I was scared. This was a touchy situation that we were about to enter and I didn't have enough coffee in my system for confrontation. Honestly, I just wanted to drink my coffee and smoke a contraband cigar.

In my head I saw the two of us trying to pry stone cold corpse of a baby from the arms of a demented mother who thinks her pride and joy is still alive. This is not the activity I wanted to partake in. It's not an easy thought to harbor so early in the morning with no sleep and hardly any caffeine coursing through me.

Cal stood up, summoning me to do the same with a waving of his hand. "Aw fuck" I thought as I forced my body to slowly leave the comfort of my chair. As Cal walked towards that dreadful bedroom door, I made my exit from my zone of non-confrontation. My head began to cave at the thought of what was about to happen while I followed Cal's footsteps.

With his hand gripping the door knob, my heart sped up in beats as I tried to calm my visible exterior. Show no fear; let those on the outside think that you stronger than you are. Macho bullshit started to flood my head and force my actions. My thoughts however were a different story—they were screaming with conspiracies of what was about to take place.

Twisting the handle, Cal pushed the door open and the hinges gave with a cracking sound. Suddenly the smell of death hit us like a brick wall from the darkness of the room. Cal stepped back in an attempt to breathe as he covered his mouth, aghast. I stood in my footsteps, frozen in awe at the scene that was in front of us.

There was Liz, softly swaying back and forth, swinging by a rope tied to her neck. She had taken her life sometime last night by way of hanging. This sight was nothing like anything from the old westerns—it was much more grotesque. I could see where the tightened noose had forcibly broken her neck. Her tongue was hanging out as her arms dangled limp beside her dead body. A chair laid over on its side beneath her feet as her toes tickled the rank air. The wooden seat that she used as a lift-pad just lay beneath her remains.

Cal pushed past me, making his way to vomit his coffee someplace far from this twisted scene. He shoved me, bailing towards the kitchen. Stunned at the sight of Liz, I investigated with wandering eyes as my stomach went cold. Keeping my head in check, I looked around the room from where I was standing and that's when I noticed what she had done to Maggie May.

The baby was lying in the bed, dissected, as if she was trying to perform some kind of ignorant haphazard surgery with a cheap Chinese steak knife. At this point I had to close the door, fighting off the urge to throw up myself. I tried to catch my breath as I wondered what the hell took place while we were trying to sleep. How far gone was she to think that she could bring her cold corpse of a child back to life? Was this my fault?

My sanity ached as I stumbled back to the kitchen table. I needed to sit down and get my mind straight. The smell of the coffee was jerking on my guttural system as I listened to Cal heave in the kitchen sink. Hearing him yak and cough made me want to explode in sickness. Somehow

I kept those sensations down. Breathing in and out, filling my lungs with the nasty burn of carrion.

After getting his dramatic sickness out of his system, Cal sat down and gulped a glass of water. “What are we going to do about that scene in there?” He asked while catching his breath between sips of water.

“I don’t know what the fuck to do anymore.” Turning my head and looking him in the eyes, I continued, “Cal, I am hurting inside and the only thing I know anymore is that I need to get Danny out of here.”

Cal exhaled and asked, “Do you have any ideas on how you’re going to do it without them firing on him?”

“No, I don’t. But I have to get him out of here, Cal.”

At that moment I think Cal understood what might have to be done. Though he didn’t say anything, his expression said it all. I know this because I felt the same look making its home upon my face. We didn’t have much time to discuss it, we had to move quickly to get Liz and Maggie May down to the basement before Danny woke up.

We stuffed our nostrils with tissue in an attempt to block most of the smell. Then I grabbed the step ladder from kitchen. Cal held Liz from around her waist as I cut her down from the beam that she hanged herself from. As Cal fought to hold her dead weight, I used my hunting knife to saw through the thick twine. Thread by thread, I finally worked through it and she dropped into Cal’s arms.

I helped him put her on what used to be me and Diane’s bed; then we started to wrap her in extra bed sheets. Once we had her bundled from head to toe, we walked her through the house and down into the basement. Once we opened the door to that make shift morgue, our

senses were assaulted with the grim scent of decay. Fighting passed the rotten air; we made our way down the stairs as fast as we could.

“Goddamn! You think we should open a window down here!” Cal said, with grunts and groans.

“If we open the windows, then that gives them a way in— we can’t give them that kind of opportunity.”

Trying to hold our breath, we plopped Liz’s body down next to Diane’s remains. Without hesitation, we jogged back up the stairs and closed the door behind us. To my surprise, there was Danny rubbing his eyes free from sleep.

“Daddy, what’s going on?”

Cal looked at Danny then he looked back at me, “Tommy, take care of Danny—I’ll, um, finish up.”

I took Danny into his room and closed the door behind us. He was confused, as any child his age would be. Surely, I wasn’t about to let him see Cal take the remains of a dissected infant down into the basement. Danny doesn’t even know that his mom is down there, I just don’t have the heart to tell him. To me, that isn’t something that you openly express to your five year old.

We sat on the floor playing with his toy cars; we raced his 1967 Mustang and his 1971 Plymouth Roadrunner. It kept his mind off of what was going on outside and it brought me back to a time of simplicity. I miss my old life, and it makes it even worse to know that I will never have that life again. If I live to see tomorrow, I’ll just be happy to have another day with my son.

A half hour had past as Danny and I played with his cars, Cal walked in and gave me a nod. The signal told me

that he handled it and it was clear for Danny to leave his room. Danny paid no attention, he just rolled the wheels of his miniature late sixties Ford, making motor noises with his mouth. Lost in his own little world where for a moment, nothing can bring him down—adults need drugs to reach that plateau.

It is the ignorance that is found in innocence that keeps a child warm when the coldest oceans surround them. When they don't know any better to be scared because they have yet to be taught dread. They become that beacon of light that shines through the darkest times of our existence. They glimmer with an ignorant hope—unknowing of the powers they possess. The strength they display before they are subjected to one of the most painful rites of passage—the true horror of it all.

We listened to the radio during brunch—canned chili and raviolis was our feast. The thugs outside staged a burning of what was left of our plants, claiming that the cartels would have to shop elsewhere. One of the DEA agents was quoted as saying “This is just a small dent in a big problem we are slowly putting an end to everyday in this country.” It was all very moving and extremely powerful to hear—if you are an idiot.

They might have us hiding from them and they might be close to taking us in, but they are nowhere near ending the war on drugs. If they were, then people wouldn't be able to get drugs. Of course they are tossing around made up figures and pretending to make a difference. It's all a smokescreen, nothing more and nothing less. Outfits like CAMP and the DEA as well as local law enforcement need

to show that they are actively doing something. That way, they can continue to get funding from the tax payers.

Where were our elected officials who granted us the right to grow these plants? Where was there support of people like us who were growing within the law? They were nowhere to be found because no matter what you vote for in your state and no matter what your state legislators fight for, the Federal Government has the right to overturn them and ignore the people.

In 1993 it became perfectly clear that no change would come from Bill Clinton when he announced his plans to double the amount of inmates in state prisons. This was a goal that was succeeded by both Reagan and Bush before him. They have all passed bills that stiffened laws to build up the jails in order to make the prison complexes millions of more dollars.

Over in Ventura, there is a billboard that reads “Help a friend, send him to jail!” this following the national television ads that implore you to turn people in for a cash reward. They are imploring you to spy on your neighbors and turn them in, especially if they are sitting on their back porch while smoking a joint.

These are not the actions of those who live in or reside over a free country—these are footprints of a rebirth of Nazi-style Germany. Where you have to cooperate or face being locked away in one of their cells. It has spiraled into an Orwellian nightmare that is spreading its tentacles of corrupt policy around the world.

I am filled with disgust that our local officials haven’t the fortitude to step in and cry treason. Our sheriff knows that we haven’t dealt anything to anyone other than

dispensaries, yet there hasn't been one word from him. Silent partners in our most crucial moments—politicians who are more concerned with party lines. This is what is to be expected when deal makers replace leaders.

No matter; I have to keep my calm. I have to keep my senses intact and not fly off the handle. For now I am going to sneak off and have a smoke. Not many cancer sticks left, then again and there isn't much time either. The fuse is burning and I have to think of something quick. It has been quiet this morning, but that's only because our captors have been show boating for the cameras.

When Lambert came on the air he brought a slew of bad news for us, *"A few hours ago I was informed that the two investigators I sent to cover Redwood Valley, Chris Lands and Michael Drescher have been taken into custody.*

Chris called me from holding, he said that they were charged as rioters after three officers dressed in black and wearing masks started throwing small rocks at law enforcement. The police took to the picketers as the masked men disappeared behind the police lines. They were caught in chaos and thrown into one of the patty wagons, while they arrested twelve others.

I have wired them bail money and they will be returning to Texas, hopefully soon. We will get all the details when they get back with an on air interview and they will tell us in their own words what went on.

When things like this occur it both saddens me and angers me to know that the right to peaceful protest is being stripped from us. This is what they do; police send a few of their men into a group of protesters to stage some kind of threat. Then the media rolls the footage and backs

them by stating protesters became violent. I've seen it a thousand times, Folks!

I will keep covering what is happening in Redwood Valley and I implore anyone in the area to call in and let us know what is really going on there."

What would happen now? With no actual information to come our way, I fear that our most paranoid thoughts might take us over. Phone calls rolled in on Lambert's show, but from no one that was out in protest. Most of the callers spoke of their personal fear of showing up to what once was a harmless dirt road. In this sense, they have won the war.

They started up a little after Lambert's show went off the air. Rocks were being bounced off the house while Milton shouted for me to talk to him. I asked Cal to take Danny into his room to keep him safe. Warily, I grabbed the Winchester and ducked around the corner of the dining room window.

I yelled out from my crawlspace, "Hey, Milton this would be a lot easier if your tank didn't crush my fucking generator!"

He laughed that irritating cackle through his megaphone, "Let's not harp on the past, Thomas. Why don't we start talking about you giving yourself up?"

"We already tried that! One of your foot soldiers put a hole in my wife!"

"No, no... I didn't kill your wife. Your wife got herself shot and you know why... she should have come out with her hands in the air, if she would have done that then she'd still be alive right now."

As I tried to contain my anger, Milton continued “Look, you need to come out. Think about your son, Danny, do you want him to be fatherless, too?”

“That sounds a lot like a threat to me, Milt!”

“Now Thomas, I am a man of the law. And with the law on my side I don’t threaten—I give ultimatums.”

I took a deep breath and relaxed my nerves. In a facetious tone, I taunted his patience, “Is that right? Well, what are your *ultimatums*, Milty?”

He chuckled and replied, “Something will be arriving for us tomorrow, and if things keep going the way they are between us; you and yours in that house might be guinea pigs for a new nerve gas.”

After a pause to gauge my reaction, he went on to say “All we have to do is launch a couple of capsulated cans through your windows. Once they break they will immediately start to fill up inside the house. When the gas enters your nose or through your mouth, you will cough like you never coughed before, to the point of throwing up.”

As I listened, I noticed Cal had poked his face from the door in Danny’s room. His eyes widened and his jaw slightly dropped as Sergeant Milton went into graphic description of what this nerve gas could do to us.

“Your muscles will ache and your skin will feel like it is on fire. While all of this is happening you won’t be able to do anything when we come in and haul you off.”

Milton paused for moment, and when I didn’t reply he finished up with “You have it yourself, Thomas. You have until tomorrow to make your decision!”

Pushing off from the wall, I ran into Danny's room and hit the floor where they were keeping low. As I caught my breath Cal asked, "You don't think they are going to do that, do you? I mean... you know?"

I looked over at Danny who was looking up at me with the most innocent eyes filled with confused fear, just waiting for me to assure him that everything would be alright.

Taking that in to account, all I could say was "I don't know, I think they are just trying to get us to come out. But we can't just wait around to see what they have planned. We have to start talking about what we are going to do."

They looked at me, waiting for something of great brilliance to leave my lips, but I had nothing. No plan, no scheme—nada, zip, zilch. As I questioned the rationale behind what thoughts I had, I felt my body breaking down more and more. I was running on fumes and I feared that the two of them could see it in my eyes. The last person in the world that I wanted to doubt me was Danny and I needed to sustain his faith in me. He needed to know that no matter what happened he could rely on me to do the right thing.

Put a handful of people in a situation where their lives are in danger, then take away the luxuries of electricity and decent food. All that will be left is the faith that someone in their group will have the strength to pull them through. This single individual is the light in their hour of darkness. When you pile enough stress on to one person to play leader; that person will burn out, ultimately taking everyone with him.

I am afraid that I am fading out here and I don't know if I can keep going against this seemingly immovable force. If I could give up without being gunned before leaving the front door, I would have been out of here days ago.

Day 12:

They didn't even wait for the sun to come up before they started those fucking air raid sirens. Five in the morning and we were being assaulted with that annoying sound. That sound brings you back to one of their other blunders—the Cuban missile crisis.

We have become so used to these tactics, that we weren't even jolted from our sleep. Hell, I'm so used to living like this that I don't even miss television at this point. Regardless, there was only so much one could take of that horn. Cal took my rifle as he cautiously walked towards Danny's door.

"What the hell are you doing?" I asked.

Opening the door, he answered "Something we should have done days ago. Just take cover and keep low."

Before I could try to talk him out of whatever he was going to do, he ran into the living room. I peered out, watching as he stayed low and moved to the front of the house. Peeking from the broken window in the front door and poked the barrel outside. Cal fired a single shot and immediately ducked away from the door.

When the bullet hit the device, it shut down with an almost comedic sound. *Wahhh wah wah wahh walp waaaaa wuuurrrrrlllp!* I laughed to myself for a split second, before their answer to our punch line came in the form of metal jackets. Obviously, they did not possess my sense of humor about the reaction to their action. Seemingly, every gun that was out there was fired in our direction. Bullets shattered what was left of our windows, zipping inside the house and ripping through the walls.

Somehow Cal was taken by surprise by firing squad's commencement. Dropping the gun, he hurried back to the bed room across the floor on his hands and knees. Glass pop corned around him as shredded dry wall fell like dusty snow. Suddenly, bullet started coming through Danny's room. I moved to Danny as fast as I could and covered him, not caring if I got hit. Shielding Danny, I thought to myself "That was really fucking stupid!"

I could hear the rounds ripping through the kitchen, taking out the ornaments and storage canisters on the kitchen counters. Pushing his way back into Danny's room, he slid down to where the two of us were. He put his arms over head as I felt the glass bounce off of my back, jabbing small pricks into my flesh through my thin shirt.

While hovering over my son, I screamed at Cal over the heavy fire "What the hell did you do that for?!"

Lifting his head up, he shouted back with a grin "I just wanted to throw some shit into the fan, man!"

"Oh yeah, could ya maybe warn us next time?!"

Cal laughed out loud while the shots bounced around us; he was getting lost in the madness. It was clear that he was over tired and he wasn't thinking straight. The seconds felt like hours as the round flew over raining debris of where ever they hit on top of us. Danny was being so strong, he didn't even scream or cry.

Once the gun fire stopped and the air cleared, we stayed in the room just to be safe. I held my tongue and tried not to glare too hard at Cal. Bottling my anger, I was dreading what was left of the house outside of this room. Cal put our lives at risk as well as the sanctity of our fortress.

When the sun made its climb over the hills, I walked out to view the damage. The living room was torn to shreds. Family pictures and fine art were blown off of the walls, riddled with bullet holes. Our curtains were rendered useless, shot off their curtain rods—fabric ripped apart. Vases were reduced to pieces and the couch was gouged of its stuffing. Everything Diane and I were collecting just porcelain chips—wasted. It looked like a land fill.

With a sigh, I moved into the kitchen to view the damage. The sliding glass doors were freed of their glass, sparking bits sprayed all over the kitchen. A canister of flour was blown away and white powder was everywhere, on the counter and scattered on the floor. Wood was chipped and splintered from the kitchen table, chair legs were blown off. It was a fucking mess, but thankfully our food was stashed where it didn't take any fire. However, the container that held our coffee had been taken out. Coffee grounds were everywhere, mixed in with the sugar, flour, and kernels of glass. My head screamed with one thought, "Not the coffee—anything but the coffee!"

As I ink this entry, I cannot hold back my emotions. When everything calmed down the one thing I wanted to do was beat the shit out of Cal. I held myself back because that wouldn't be the right thing to do. There were only three of us left and what we needed most was solidarity. What he did put all of our lives in jeopardy and it was inexcusable. Danny could have been killed. Hell, I could have been shot, then who would take care of my son?

All they are going to do now is turn this against us. They will report that we opened fire on them and they simply returned fire. This would be their perfect excuse to

how Maggie May was shot as well as how Liz was killed. Since the media is already on their side, all they have to do is pump it in their direction and they will run the story. America will then be on their side thinking they are justified in the handling of hostilities. With that one single pot shot, Cal gave them just cause to escalate the situation to any level they wished.

We have now entered the most desperate of hours. The time was upon us to calculate our every move and plan every action. To count the seconds as we second guess our ideas. This is when we walk the line with the foot soldiers outside who have the green light to kill. But, this can't happen here, right? Blue bloods spilling red, American gizzards—replace the stars with swastikas—the stripes are your blind fold. You are free; free to be whatever they will allow you to be.

Jesus, I am starting sound like Lambert now... I need to get to bed.

Somehow Danny and Cal were able to go back to sleep, but I couldn't. I closed my eyes; however my worries of what was to come kept me wide awake. Leaving the two to rest, I went out and attempted to do some clean up. Luckily I had enough battery power in my drill to finish the job. Taking the doors from the other two bedrooms, I drilled them into the sliding glass door frames. It didn't look nice, but it was cover.

After sweeping up all that was blown to bits in the kitchen, I damn near came to tears in a glass of water—pining for a cup coffee. To make matter worse, the news on our situation was not good. They wasted no time in

spinning what happened this morning, just like I knew they would.

Some lower level agent from the DEA was being interviewed, and he said “We were just sleeping and all of sudden we came under heavy fire from the assailants. Two men were wounded, but they were not seriously injured. We are looking into stepping up operations, but we have to be cautious because they do have hostages—that’s all I can say at the moment.”

Even though I saw this coming, I couldn’t help but sigh and shake my head in disappointment. Of course they would never admit what they were really doing up here. My lack of shock was countered with questions. “What can they be up to now?” I wondered. What else could they possibly do short of storming inside the house and shooting us? Did they plan on gearing up that tank and plowing us? Or maybe firing upon us with the tank? Neither of these things would surprise me, I could only hope that they would be weary after their previous blunders.

Though my thoughts screamed aloud, I kept my head straight and listened to the radio sipping on my water.

Thomas Willis used to be a simple man with a simple job in the city. That is until his mother died and he decided it was best move his family away from society. While he manned the illegal crops of marijuana, his wife Diane home schooled their son Danny.

Authorities tell us that Thomas and Diane Willis are anti-government extremists who have outspoken views that they are teaching their children, potentially against their will.

It is these extreme views that have drawn a crowd one mile from where the standoff is unfolding. People with similar opinions are carrying signs that read such slogans as 'end the new world order' and 'free us from the chains of a one world power'.

Do these views pose a threat to the security within our free country? Or are they just a small amount of disillusioned people.

After the break we will talk with a man who is a close friend of William Bennet, the first Drug Czar appointed by George Bush, political author Christophe Burns.

I never heard of Mr. Burns, but I know who William Bennet is and I know his track record all too well. William Bennet, an alcoholic cigarette smoker, who has the most extreme beliefs of crime and punishment. He openly said that there should be public beheadings of drug dealers and called for life sentences for marijuana smokers. Remembering things like this about Bennet, I could only imagine what his friends are like.

By the time they came back from the break I was preparing myself for the worst, but I guess I didn't prepare myself enough.

When the anchor man asked him, "Do you think the Federal Government is doing the right thing with continuing this stand off?"

Burns cleared his throat and answered, "Oh yeah, you cannot allow lawlessness to prevail. They need to go in, level that colony and call it collateral damage."

Wearily, the anchor asked, "Don't you think that would be taking things, I don't know, a little too far?"

Without skipping a beat, Burns combated him, “Well, are we just supposed to let this go on? What I mean is; if we back down that will let every moron that goes against the very foundation of freedom, that it’s okay to break the law! Now marijuana is illegal for a reason, it makes these people nuts—then these nuts run loose through our society spreading conspiracies.”

Pacing himself, the anchor tried to find his sympathetic bone by asking, “What about the kids that are trapped in that house?”

“There are always innocents that get caught in the fire, you know? But what if they are not innocents? Y’know? Like in Afghanistan, there are these brainwashed kids who are carrying around machine guns. Any kind of threat to our security must be eliminated.”

The more this pompous parasite spoke, the more my blood began to boil. He was calling for our heads and the heads of anyone else who supported us. I found it sickening that he used the word “free” as he demonized those who expressed their frights. People like Christophe Burns write books to peddle good government propaganda to the ignorant. They go on national news stations to spread their hatred for anyone who stands up and raises their fist at injustice. The very injustice that Burns and his ilk seem to benefit from.

As this spineless vermin continued to spew his venom, I found it best just to turn off the radio and crack open a can of processed beef stew—it sucks, but it fills the hole.

I find myself sitting in Danny’s room as he and Cal toss around a football in the living room. Getting back to

my writing as my questions were just answered. My nights of lying with my eyes open and wondering if there was any validity to Lambert's theory are over. Is this really about us harvesting a controversial plant or was there something else? Was there some other motive behind this siege? The answer is, "yes".

Lambert proved to his listeners today that this was nothing more than a land grab. He read the paperwork that he attained and he has posted it on his website. My wife is dead; Harry is in custody while his wife and child are dead—all so they could take our land from us. To someone who would know any better, it would almost be unbelievable that this is going on in America. It would almost be unthinkable that it could happen here if you were in the darkness still sheltered by woeful ignorance.

Where is the mainstream media at on this? Why haven't they come out and reported this? No one can convince me that they don't have this information. They spend hours following around celebrities, but they don't know anything about this? With all of the digging that they do rooting through some asshole's trash cans, but not one reporter stumbled on to this? One of two things is taking place; either someone is telling them not to run part of the story or they are keeping it from the public of their own volition.

As I write these words, there are only a handful of corporations that own our media outlets. When Reagan passed an act which deregulated the media monopoly, big business outfits seized news stations and news papers like a pack of hungry wolves foaming at the mouth. This was the answer to solve the problem of the overflow of information

that poured from the Vietnam War. After all, you cannot revolt if you don't know enough to stand up.

Now it's a corporate club with a handful of companies with their hands on the strings. In complete control of what airs, pulling the limbs of their well groomed puppets to sell ad slots. Next to funding political campaigns, some of these companies also build fighter jets and warheads as well. So, when we are at war what do you think these outlets are concerned about? Informing the public of that juicy government contract for million dollar war machines?

After listening to several hours of radio news on different stations, I must say; I don't know what to believe anymore. There is no way I can fact check anything that I have heard, so it's all hear-say. All I can do is speak for my actions, and my actions alone within these pages. There was no way I was selling my plants to a Mexican cartel, so I *know* we were set up.

If I could only think of a way that we could all get out of here, I would blow this situation wide open for all to see. I would go head to head with the federal government in a court of law while playing the media card, this time in my favor. With a raised fist, I would be the whistle blower that would wake everyone from their systematic comas. They would turn away from the talk shows and prime time television farces, to pay full attention to the things that are going on right under their noses.

With a sigh I calm my raging spirit and come back down to earth. The reality of our situation is one that cannot be ignored. No matter what happens, a few free thinkers will be outraged. The majority will go on living their lives until something similar happens to them. Until they are

under fire from those who they thought were supposed to protect them, they will call instances like we have been subjected to as “conspiracy theory” or “justification”.

The truth of the matter is; no one truly knows until they are in our shoes. Subjugated by a lawless system that has been allowed to stray for far too long. I wish this hellish experience on no one, but until they walk for days on a similar path, all they can do is suspect. They, like me, will catch themselves wondering if there was something that they could have done better. Then they will find themselves in the position to wrestle with the knowledge that I am coming to grips with now—if we are leaving here, it will be in body bags.

I remember when the nights used to be so peaceful here. The crickets could be heard for miles, chirping through the quiet forests. Occasionally they would be silenced by the sounds of coyotes baying at the moon. My fondest of memories will be sitting on my front porch, enjoying the serene surroundings with my family. These are the thoughts that keep me sane through these trying times.

These are the things that I harped on earlier as they aimed three air raid sirens at us at full blast. We had to stuff tissue in our ears to try and block out the sound, it did no good. The noise was piercing and they kept this going for four long, grueling hours. Along with the annoyance horns, they shined giant spotlights into the dark house. We locked ourselves in Danny’s room and hid in a far corner so they wouldn’t have a shadow to shoot at. In the grip of fear, our senses were being assaulted to the point of confusion. For

all we knew, this was all a deterrent while they finally tried to sack the house.

I held my little boy as he shivered in my arms. My rifle was pointed at the door, cocked and ready for anything that might barge through. Cal kept his aim with his shotgun at the one window, just in case they came in from the side. We could not be too sure what was happening in shadows around us, but we knew that we had to stay on our toes. We have been in survival mode for so long that we have grown to expect anything.

For hours they wore us down, digging deep into our nerves. By the time they cut the sirens, we were so weak that we almost collapsed into our slumbers. They left the spotlights blasting through the house, illuminating their white heat. Using their tactic to my advantage, I grabbed my bottle of scotch and pulled out this notebook. No matter how tired I am, I have to keep an accurate record of what is taking place. It's clear to me that damn sure no one else is going to do it.

If we do make it out of this mess alive, what will be left of our heads? How much therapy will we all need to become grounded back into regular life? What about Danny? When he becomes a teenager and learns about the situation from an adult stand point, what will it take to give him a normal life? I think the answer is that we will be "normal". We can never go back to the way we lived before this.

We have been forever altered to be on the defense from our government. When the smoke finally clears and we are able to move on, we will always be weary of what lurks in the shadows. Like anyone else who has been

victimized, we will be damned to harbor a certain shock and damage for the rest of our lives. No amount of therapy can cleanse our minds from the horrendous ordeal that we are being dragged through.

Every night since this has begun, I have been bombarded with night terrors. I will slip into a deep sleep then suddenly wake up pouring sweat while my heart races; ready to shoot at anything. Looking at my watch, I know I had only been out for a few hours, but it seemed like it was only for a few minutes. Unable to go back to sleep, I get out my bottle and have a few shots. Shudders of warmth would flow through my body in ease. My heart rate slows as the sensations massage over my tightly wound muscles. With any luck, the scotch would relax me enough to go back to sleep for a couple more hours.

This is all but a temporary solution to what seems to be a permanent problem. The routine is getting old and I am beyond exhausted—we all are. I feel the constant burn of a junkie itch, the growing need to leave this house. I am craving the fresh air like an addict craving a fix. Never could I have been convinced that my dream home would somehow be shifted into my prison. A place where the guards are madmen and escape means a wall of bullets ripping through you.

My head is awash tonight, so I am drowning my sorrows in an eighty-proof pool of holy water. I will not apologize for my drunken poetics—it seems that it's all I have left right now. There is this quote that has constantly bounced around in my head, "The soul should not die, ungodly in an armed madhouse."

Truer words have never been spoken.

Day 13:

Sick of tossing and turning, I pulled myself from the floor and scanned through the stations on the radio. The bright side to having 1,000 watts of spotlight shined into your house is, at least you see what you are doing. I hid in the shadows of the kitchen with the radio on low, trying to get any kind of information I could. Finding nothing but reruns of news shows and fishing shows, I gave up.

Tracing back the days, I now know it is Sunday.

In a few hours some will be waking up and going to church. After their hour long sermon they will be hitting restaurants in family droves to practice their togetherness. They will spend the day together, relaxing and basking in the love that they share for one another. With any luck, they would return to the grind on Monday morning with a refreshed feeling. A feeling that tells them, no matter how shitty your job is, at least you are loved.

Truth be told, I was never one for going to church however every Sunday was our family day. We would make breakfast as a family and then eat as a family while making plans for our family outing that day. Sometimes we would go into town together and walk around, other times we would have a picnic. It didn't matter, as long as we were together; this was important to Diane. For her Sunday was the day that she looked forward to the most. One thing I never told her was that Sundays were my favorite days, too—I am sure she knew.

Watching the sun slowly climb over the valley from a broken window, I sift through the memories that I hold on to in my head. Flipping through them like a photo book,

one after another, I remember better times with the ones I have loved the most. In the shittiest of bouts, it doesn't hurt to lose yourself in good thoughts.

Not even an hour after I put my notebook down, they kick started the assault by rolling in two tanks that aimed their barrels at the house. The steel belt radials dug through the grassy hills as the engines bellowed with the sound of war from their gullies. My attention was grabbed by my would-be nemesis, Sergeant Milton.

"Thomas, come out and see what we've got for ya this morning!"

I just stood there looking out from behind a shredded curtain—peering through a bullet hole in the spider webbed glass. Saying nothing, I let him think that we were still asleep to see what his next line of actions was.

"Come on, Tommy! I know you can hear me! I am a Sergeant for a reason!"

Behind his calls for me to come out, there were cheers from the men who surrounded him. They joined him, in taunting us. However they were being far less civilized about it. I just watched and stayed quiet.

Keeping my eyes on both the tanks and Milton, I saw Milton give a signal with his hands, suddenly the tanks moved slowly towards the house. One turned towards the front of the house and the other crept around to the back. In the hills behind the tanks, I watched an army of ten come around with what looked like portable rocket launchers. My eyes grew wide as I feared that the worst was about to take place.

Looking out to the other side of the land, I saw another ten or so men carrying those same weapons. All

terrain vehicles moved in front of them slowly to provide them some kind of shelter. Something was about to go down and this is not where anyone with good sense would want to be—in their sights. It was at this point when I had wished that I got Danny out of here the night before somehow.

Cal dodged out of Danny's room, startling me as he hid in the around the corner from me. After seeing the tank outside of the house, he hysterically asked, "What the hell is going on?!"

"Where's Danny?!"

"I told him to hide under his bed, and not to come out until one of us came and got him!"

After giving him a nod, I answered "They are planning something big out there, what it is, I don't know."

Cal simply replied, "Ask..."

I looked at him as if he was mentally defective and all he could do was shrug at my not so subtle glare. With a shake of my head, I reverted my attention back outside. Milton, once again, was trying to get my attention as his ground soldiers were setting up positions closer to the house. By this time, they were trying to form a perimeter that surrounded the house with fire power.

Tired of hearing Milton call my name in various half assed sentences I bit, "Hey Milty, when you and your ilk circle my house like sharks, it doesn't look like you are trying to be friends!"

Milton laughed, "We are past the point of being friends, Tommy!"

"My friends and family call me Tommy—you're neither, asshole!"

“Now why do you have to be so impolite? Either way—that’s not your house anymore. It is now property of the U.S. Government.”

“So it’s true?! This was all just a land grab!”

“Now, now... I don’t have the time to argue semantics with you. Come out or we will crush that shit shanty with you and yours in it.”

Taking a moment to think, I told Cal “Go tell Danny to stay put and grab up every gun and load them. I’m going to the liquor cabinet.”

Cal scoffed, “This really isn’t the time to make a Manhattan!”

“Just fuckin’ trust me, alright?! Go load the guns and save me the rock salt rounds!” Four parts sugar mixed with six parts potassium nitrate, salt peter, cooked together over a medium flame makes a smoke bomb.

He scurried off into Danny’s room as I made my way into the kitchen. Cal didn’t think very well under pressure and I knew what I was doing. We needed to ward them off any way we could, if for no other reason, to get my son out of this escalating war zone. Anything in your house can be turned into a weapon. Take a gallon of gasoline and a pound of Styrofoam, mix the two and you have napalm. Add a few cups of rust scrapings and then you have a nasty batch of thermite. A half bottle of alcohol with a rag soaked in high proof booze or gasoline stuffed into the mouth makes a fire bomb—a molotov cocktail.

Reaching into the lower cabinet, I pulled out two unopened 1.75 liter bottles of high proof spiced rum and half of a bottle of vodka, two of Diane’s favorites. I opened the rum and filled half way into the empty 750 ml bottles of

scotch. Going into the overflowing laundry basket in front of the basement door, I took two t-shirts and ripped them into rags. Then I stuffed them into the half bottles holding the rum, I capped them and let the cloth soak up booze.

I needed more bottles and there were more, but they were in the basement with the rotting corpses of our loved ones. That horrible smell of decomposition, I would have fought my way through it to build up our weapons. So I wrapped a t-shirt around my face and ran down into the basement. Moving quickly, I collected plastic and glass bottles with a couple of grocery bags. Holding my breath beneath in the ratty shirt, I grabbed a five gallon container of gasoline and I ran back up the stairs.

As I closed the basement door with the bags of jugs in my hands, Cal was in the kitchen emptying the rounds of rock salt into a container. I set the bags down on the counter and pulled the shirt from my face, gasping the fresher air. My head ran wild for what else I could make to hold the forces back from our lines. One after another, he carefully and cautiously he unscrewed the tops and dumped the contents.

He shook his head, “I don’t why I am doing this, but...”

I assured him, “You’re doing fine, Cal—keep it up.”

After I was finished, I went into the living room where I hacked up the kitchen table and tossed the pieces in the fire place. Setting them on fire, I allowed it to burn down to a low heat. Then I took the rock salt and put in a big pot with sugar. Four parts sugar mixed with six parts potassium nitrate, cooked the two together and it makes a smoke bomb. Just a pound of this stuff can fog out a city

block; I was prepping enough to smoke out this side of the mountain. Taking into consideration the winds, the open area and the forests, we would need a pretty big dose for it to work.

While the foot soldiers outside were raising hell to shake us, I had Cal watch the cooking mixture as I went into talk to Danny. He was playing with his cars on the floor, as if he was in some kind of bubble where he could not be touched. When I walked into his room he looked up at me with black bags hanging under his eyes. There was a worried look that was lingering in his pupils.

Sitting down next him, I asked, "What's up, buddy?"

He looked down and shrugged, "Nothin'..."

"Danny... you know that I can always tell when there's something wrong."

Looking up at me, he replied, "I know, but it doesn't matter. You're gonna send me out there all alone and I am never going to see you again."

I fought the tears from filling my eyes as my soul crashed in the pit of my stomach—he saw right through me. Taking a deep breath I said to him, "Son, you have to make it out of here. You have to be the one to tell all the people what happened to our family."

Tears surfaced in his eyes and he said, "Daddy, I don't want that to happen! I want you to be with me! I don't want you to die!"

It grew harder to fight my emotions as my eyes expelled a stream that rolled down my cheeks. Sniffling I told him, "Son, you know I love and everything I do is for you, right?"

He looked at me as he started crying, hearing my words but he had no verbal response. I looked him in his glazed over eyes and re-asked in a stern voice, “Right?!” His bottom lip gave a tremble as he nodded reluctantly. As hard as it was not to cave in, I needed to show my strength so that he could be strong. Every ounce of energy would be funneled into getting him out of here alive and unscathed.

This is how I knew it would ultimately play out; the sacrificing of elders so that youth can live on. Today we set the higher standard by giving a blow to a greater force. We will not give up our rights, we will not surrender to their greed, nor will we go quietly into their cages without repeal. For this day is the day that we stand against the tyrannical fist that grips this once great nation. The same things our forefathers fought against are happening at this moment and only a few seem to care. Well, I scream it now through guns and make shift weaponry—a small scale reprisal of 1776 is in place.

A few hours ago I set my note book down to finish up the preparations for tonight. While I am doing the best I can to capsule all that is happening, I find myself teetering between accepting my fate and fighting on. As of this hour, we are surrounded by tanks, choppers, and ground forces that are ready to fire upon us. Little do they know; we are ready for whatever they may throw at us from any direction; we are ready for anything.

Off and on, all day long I have kept in contact with Sergeant Milton. I can’t tell if he can see through the bullshit that I have been feeding him, but it doesn’t matter at this point. My mind has been made up and as we

countdown the hours to nightfall, this is all just a waiting game. Danny is taking a nap while Cal is in the living room writing some kind of diatribe for himself. Judging his demeanor, I think he has come to terms that there is a possibility that we are all going to die. We are out gunned and out manned; all we have on our side is blind luck and the will to persevere.

I know that this was all staged for the land that we worked so hard to maintain and to make our own, in the vein of the American dream. I know that there was really no reason for this to have happened. My wife has died in vain. My friend's wife and child have passed on for no reason other than to be ruled out as victims of greed. It did not have to be this way and I will die without the real answers to why—passing unknowing.

The foot soldiers have been slithering around on the outside, securing their positions and trying to look inside the windows. We can hear them circling us, the crackling of twigs beneath their combat boots. Given their orders, they stalk around us like predators foaming over their prey. They were stoking the fires of war, readily able to take us out when the time comes—Americans against Americans pitted by a ruling class.

Now as the hours burn towards dusk, we find ourselves standing before the gaping jaws of night fall. By light of candles, pondering their first move—we wait. In the shadows, cornered by the walls of this once beautiful home—we wait. On edge, but we do not tremble; our fears are subdued by knowing what we are doing is the right thing. Though we may die in the field, they will not take us peacefully. I hold out hope that when they look upon the

scene that played out here, the powers that be will think twice before trying to take anything from their people again.

While I sit here with uncertainty, I know that most of my country people are watching sports and slamming down cold ones; shoveling their deep fried grease treats into their faces while screaming at their televisions. I know that the majority isn't thinking about what is going in the world outside of the comfort zone of their homes. Locked within the delusional sanctity of their protective bubbles, they tell themselves everything is fine. No need to worry, everything is beautiful in the land of milk and honey. Jesus, I could use a beer and back to back football games to retard me for a day or so.

I look back now, and I guess I took those lazy days for granted; the days where you just take it easy. You settle for a nice buzz, a big sandwich, and an afternoon nap. There is a part of me that wishes we would have stayed in the city; if we had, we wouldn't be involved in this shit. Diane would still be by my side and Danny would be out of harm's way. No point in empty wishes; I might as well make the best of everything that I can—at least while I am still a part of this cosmic mud ball.

It comes full circle, like anything else in this strange life; repetition is nature's dry sense of humor. The hierarchy uses the same tactics; they are just executed with a different style to fit within climate. They use legislation to pass judgment and the courts are used for their witch trials and once the stage is set, they use the media to burn you at the stake. Thin is their veil, when they claim to

protect the children from certain evils, misuse to justify that their actions are right and sound.

With the evolution of witch hunts, comes the silencing of those who exercise their individual rights. Through countless actions, voices of dissent have been targeted and are raked over the coals—vilified. Censorship has come home to roost in the United States of America because the people have been hoodwinked into turning a blind eye. While you all sleep cozy at night, people like Phil Lambert are being spied on and arrested at airports. Come up with any excuse you want, but those who keep quiet have allowed these things to happen.

As I shake with uncertainty, I am reminded to what the American flag is supposed to represent. We live under an idea that those who gave their lives gave it for a flag to fly upon high. However it seems that we have forgotten why that flag flies, and why it should be burned from time to time. This flag represents the blood that was shed for our right to tell our officials to go fuck themselves when they no longer represent our interests.

It isn't there for us to follow in line under corrupt leaders who attempt to sell our livelihoods to the banking cartels. It doesn't stand for us to wallow in blind allegiance, nor does it mean that we should back the invasion of other countries. This flag flies in my front yard, this flag hangs from Harry's porch, and this flag is in the front window of Cal's house. We stand for what America used to be, and we are dying to preserve that ideal.

I shiver in the scariest moments, and I can't help but feel that my countrymen have let me down. As I tear over the thought of my wife decaying in the basement, I tremble

in regards to what might become of my son. We are all to blame for how out of control our republic has become. We have allowed this to take place by placing our concern in the things that do not matter. Force fed these stories of the lifestyles of the rich and pampered, the press has deterred us from what really matters. No one is to blame but ourselves for not standing up and demanding we know the truth.

For every person who has tuned out many have been victimized, and it will only get worse if this is road we are to travel. I hope that these writings will find their way into the right hands. The American people need to know the truth about what is going on. These officials don't care about your kids getting high or addicted to drugs. Hell, chances are they are hooked on the junk that the feds have shipped in from South America or Afghanistan. They want your possessions and they want you locked away in their private prisons.

It's time to put this notebook away for the time being. I am going to spend some time with my son before the sun completely retires. My time with him is all that matters to me in these most desperate hours. Lost in the confusion of unknowing; I must teach him to be the man that I should have been. He has only been on this planet five short years, but he has had to grow up quicker than I had expected. It is both sad and tragic to think that he will never be allowed to enjoy the ignorance of innocence. All I can hope for is that he will be able to move forward in strength.

From here on out, it is a just a waiting game—a long, grueling bout with time. We aren't sure what they are up to out there or if they are even planning anything, but we have

to be ready for them regardless. They are outside swarming around us like a sea of sharks, just waiting for a drop of blood.

Time has escaped me and as I write this, what looks to be my final passage, I am the only one left here. The house is filling with nauseous fumes and my eyes are watering to the point of blindness. Still, I write in this diary as I sit next to my fireproof safe. Waiting—waiting for them to fire their tanks into what is left of my humble abode.

The cans were launched through what was left of the windows by handheld canons. I took the four pound putty mix then I planted over twenty strike anywhere matches into it. I lit it and then tossed the flaming clay out of the back door. Within minutes, there was a thick grayish white blanket of smoke that began to surround the house.

As the homemade smoke screen filled the air, I pulled Danny close to me. Fighting back my tears, I looked him in the eyes and said, “Run, run as fast as you can, and if anyone tells you to come to them—don’t! Just keep running!”

Cal stood guard with a shotgun in his hands by the sliding doors. He paced in his steps; constantly trying to take peek between the bedroom doors used to replace the shattered glass.

As my eyes shifted from Cal’s nervous activity to Danny, I stuffed a crudely drawn map into his pants pocket, “This will guide you through the woods to the main road. You have to get to that road, Son!”

He looked me in the eyes as his were watering. Not from the gas that was slowly consuming the innards of the

house, but from being so scared that he would never see me again. “Daddy?” he asked, “what are you going to do?”

“Don’t worry about me” I said, “you need to get out of here.”

His face scrunched as tears rolled down his face. My heartstrings ached, but I kept my stature and told him “Danny, when you were born, my job became keeping you safe no matter what. Do you understand?”

He nodded reluctantly as he wiped away his tears, I could only empty my heart to him, “Son, I love you and your mom loved you, too... and no matter what happens, always remember that we only wanted the best for you.”

I hugged him one last time; holding him closer than I ever did before. My eyes swelled and I felt his tears seep into my shirt and caress my skin. From my lips to his ear, I said “I love you, Danny. I am so proud of you and I know you’ll grow to be a great man.”

From the pit of my stomach screamed a pain that echoed through every ounce of my body. An ache that called upon me to hold on to my only begotten son, somehow I knew this was our last goodbye. This was no way any parent should see off their child. To send them into the unknown, a heavy cloud of smoke that you could not guide them through by their side. As a father, this was the hardest part for me, and as I scribble this in my notebook, I can hope that he made it without me physically being there.

We opened the backdoors and Danny ran off into the heavy mist. He did as I told him, not looking and moving as fast as he could into the wooded shrouding. Cal and I stepped out into the gray cloud where I lit one of the

Molotov cocktails, throwing it as far as I could towards the front of the house. Cal ran into the kitchen and grabbed another cocktail; he lit the hanging rag and threw it from opposite side, aiming towards the front.

The two of us ran back into the house where we wrapped t-shirts around our faces to combat the gas. As our eyes watered, we peered out the windows and noticed that the smoke bomb was doing one hell of a job. A cloud of dark gray was all around the outside of the house and it was seemingly holding back the ground forces. If they were there, we couldn't make them out in dark gust.

For an hour or so, we stood our guard as the smoke weighed heavy like a fog around the house. The feds sent in their troops with infrared scopes as Cal and I fought against the gas canisters they fired into the house. Seemingly it was just tear gas, but as I write this, I can feel my muscles tighten, inching towards the point of almost paralysis.

Cal became brave, lighting another cocktail and tossing it out of the dining room window from the front. After he threw the fire bomb he attempted to take a shot, when I started hearing heavy fire. Looking over I watched the rounds rip through the house as one hit Cal in the chest. When the bullet penetrated, it knocked him back almost three feet before he fell to the ground.

They commenced fire as I scurried across the floor to where Cal was laid out. He twitched in agony as I pulled the shirt from his face, he breathed in and out—gasping and coughing. Cal trembled, hacking up bloody chunks of phlegm as he tried to speak to me. All I could do was urge him to stay quiet by shushing him, but it did no good. Even

though he couldn't mutter a single word, he used his final moments to spew his last reflexes of life.

As he tried to say something, we were surrounded by gun fire that was blasting through the house. I tried to keep him calm as glass rained down around us with bits of wood. Cal died on the floor of the dining room as debris were scattered by blind shots. I watched him as he coughed his last few breaths of chunked tissues saturated in sick crimson.

Looking into his eyes, I could see that glow was fading into a whiter shade of pale. Suddenly, I felt a burning fire from behind and the force knocked the wind out of me. Taken back in shock, I felt another burn going through my left shoulder. I became dizzy as my head spun in twisted circles in disorientation. Gasping for air, I looked down at Cal's dead body as I staggered backwards into the living room.

Clinching my gun, I crawled through the jagged debris on the floor, bleeding towards Danny's former room. I could smell my soft flesh burning from the borrowed rounds that were plunged into me. Completely surrounded by agents, the firing squads cut through the house from every side. Bullets screamed over my head as I made my way into the far bedroom, my hideaway equipped with a fireproof safe.

As I write what, seems to be my last words, I can only hope that Danny made it out to the main road. I am leaned in the corner, a bloody mess, while the foot soldiers outside continue to fire bullets through the windows. The inside of the house carries a thick, poisonous mist that is forcing me to cough as my nerves begin to slowly freeze. This constant

twitching occurs throughout me, I try to overcome the feeling of my muscles locking up. My eyes are burning out of my skull, and it is becoming harder to put this pen to the paper.

I hear the tanks coming closer to the house, like a slow storm of trains plowing towards me. Milton screeches over his loudspeaker to “tear it down” as I listen to the tank slam into the front of the house. Smashing into the porch and caving the dining room with a terrible sound, as if the world is crashing down around me. The other metal beast invades through the wall of the living room, tremors ripple beneath my weakening body. Milton is howling for his men to withdraw as the tanks pull back from the ruined structure. He calls for the tanks to fire.

Starting his countdown at “five!”

I open the door to the safe, ready to toss the book inside and locked it in before the cannons sound off. All I have left is hope...

“Four!”

The hope that this finds its way into the right hands...

“Three!”

I love you Diane...

“Two!”

I love you Danny...

“One!”

The Aftermath:

Thomas H. Willis' documented account was found in a fireproof safe amidst the ruins of the charred house. He was burned to death when tank fire ripped through the structure, causing the house to explode into a raging inferno. After the destruction of the main house, the other two houses were pillaged and burned as well. The official report from the DEA states the main house caught fire from within when Thomas Willis set off a homemade fire bomb to kill himself and the remaining people in the house.

It was not until two days into the search when the bodies of Diane Willis, Liz and Maggie May Mitchell were found beneath the wreckage. Their remains had been burnt so badly that a proper autopsy could not be conducted. When the news reached Harry Mitchell that his wife and child were killed in the raid, he broke down. Later that night at lights out, he hanged himself in his cell with a bed sheet. His position of involvement in this case remains questionable.

Danny made it through the woods and on to the main road where he was met by local police. After a short feud with federal agents, the child was taken to the sheriff's department. Diane's sister, Emily was immediately notified and she came to pick him up with her husband. They took custody of Danny and fought the DEA for information on the deaths of their family members. After months of getting no answers; they hired a young, liberal attorney named Seth Wellston and they took the U.S. Government to court in a wrongful death suit.

When the government came to court, they could not supply any proof that they had a search warrant or applied for one. Nor could they prove that the family was farming marijuana for illegal purposes. Ultimately, there was no evidence that they were justified in their use of such lethal force against the Willis'. Wellston fought tooth and nail to have certain pieces of evidence, such as the alleged diary and reports on the supposed Mexican cartel members to be admitted. The details on Harry Mitchell were not allowed to be admitted, and when asked about it by news outlets, it was mysteriously "missing". At almost every turn, the judge would refuse several of his requests for paperwork and witnesses.

Phil Lambert paid close attention to the trial and would inform his listeners of recent news daily. He would have attorney Wellston on his show as a regular guest, where Wellston would be as open as he could. Wellston made it no secret that the government was hiding information from the public and he encouraged citizens to speak out.

It almost seemed to be useless, but Wellston and his clients fought on tirelessly even with their backs pressed against the wall throughout the entire trial. The judge was openly siding with the government by denying subpoenaed witnesses and use of crucial evidence that the government labeled as "classified". Yet, after a three month long court battle, Danny was awarded 2.6 million dollars for pain and suffering by a jury of his peers. The jury made it clear that the use of force was unjustified.

After the trial, Lambert had the Sheriff of Redwood Valley, Mark Carter on the air; where he admitted that the

U.S. government had been trying to take over local law enforcement. Carter claimed that the goal was take property from certain land owners in and hand it over to the park services. Two days later, Carter was found deep in the woods with a single gunshot wound to the head. Despite the lack of evidence, Sheriff Carter's death was ruled out as a "hunting accident".

To this day, questions still remain about what really happened during those bloody days within the Emerald Triangle. File after file has either been listed as classified or missing—leaving mostly theories in its wake. Despite the government blockage, information has leaked out in the aftermath and voices like Phil Lambert have been able to put some pieces together.

The events of August 1996 have found their way into documentaries and on websites of concerned outspoken citizens. Much like in the assault on the Davidians in Waco, Texas, the truth has come out, but not all have come to be believers. In the end, the argument remains that there is not enough evidence to support their claims.

Harry Mitchell's testimony has yet to surface while the files on the Mexican cartel that Thomas Willis was supposedly dealing with, still remains to be "missing". The DEA admits that they found a fireproof safe in the wreckage; however, the contents of the safe are listed as classified and they claim no diary was found. No one other than a handful of people knows what exists within the safe. To this day, the dairy is widely regarded as a conspiracy theory, rumored by those who are often referred to as "tin foil hats".