
Interview: Barry Clausen

A firsthand look at eco-terrorism

Barry Clausen is an investigator who spent many months as a member of Earth First!, investigating its sabotage operations against the logging industry. These "actions" have cost hundreds of millions of dollars in damage to equipment, and have killed and maimed many loggers and sawyers who are the victims of EF! tree spiking.

Despite the fact that the activities which Earth First! openly takes credit for meet the strict definition of terrorist activity—as the term is used by the Department of Justice and the State Department—this organization has never been the target of serious investigation or prosecution by any agency of the U.S. government.

As Clausen describes, sabotage—or "ecotage," as it is called—is cleverly designed to allow EF! to take credit for the terrorism, but leave no incriminating evidence. Only skilled undercover work can pierce this screen.

But getting into the inner circles of EF! is not simple. Clausen recalled an incident, described in his book *Walking on the Edge* (reviewed in *EIR*, Nov. 11, 1994), which illustrates the problem. He had invited his girlfriend and her daughter to attend an EF! rally, commonly held on the eve of protest actions, and often feted by rock music bands. As they approached the site, they noticed that this was not a regular concert, but was some sort of dance. As they drew closer, their curiosity turned to shock as they realized that the dancers were men and women, moving in a circle, howling EF! chants, stark naked, with testicles and breasts painted black.

Clausen was interviewed by Leo F. Scanlon.

EIR: So, these are not impressionable students or overenthusiastic members of the Garden Club.

Clausen: Not at all. They also have something that is called the stump dance—they chant "Stumps suck, Earth First!" on many different occasions. An EF!er would want to talk about my book, for example, [and] would get on the stump. Then they do this war dance, it's almost an Indian ritualistic dance, it's a war dance, really, a victory dance. They call it a war dance.

You have to understand something. You don't just walk in and say, "Hi, I want to spike a tree." That's a no-no. You have to work your way up. I started off by carrying picket signs and petitions. Then I was asked if I wanted to become part of a "campaign," part of a human blockade to stop a logging truck. Now, standing in front of a running logging truck

is stupid, but you have to do those things, or you don't get to spike a tree. Next I became part of a ground support group for a tree sitting [a protest where EF! activists climb into trees about to be cut down]. Eventually I was going into the woods and confronting loggers with running chain saws and telling them they can't cut that tree.

You have to prove yourself as a warrior and work your way up, to the point that someone says, "Do you want to do this?" or "Would you be interested in being involved?"

EIR: You report that EF! activists who reach that level of involvement are highly trained in the art of sabotage, trained to levels of military specialty.

Clausen: Here again, you get back to a very elite group of people within EF! itself. I had to play everything very, very cautiously. At that point, at Baker Lake, they asked me to become involved in sabotaging a helicopter. Now I know that the guys that asked me would have done it, but the actual core group [the saboteurs] weren't the ones asking me. They were there, but they weren't the ones doing the talking. So, if something did happen, and somebody was caught, the core group could say, "We didn't have anything to do with it, we didn't advocate it." It's a process, and they understand how the laws work.

EIR: But the FBI would not agree to completing your investigation?

Clausen: You need "the blessing" of federal law enforcement officials who will prosecute based on evidence you develop, because you will be participating in a crime. [Local federal agent assigned to monitor environmentalist violence] Bob Winchell admitted that he lied to me; Ed Bodenlose in California also. They never intended to request approval [for the investigation]. It never happened.

Now, the FBI and ATF [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms] won't even talk to me. Sen. [Slade] Gordon requested Michael Bromwich, the inspector general of the Department of Justice, to do a thorough review of the information I have presented.

EIR: The response of the major corporations that are targeted by this activity is suspicious, at best.

Clausen: I can establish that Jake Kreilick has been to Weyerhaeuser corporate offices on at least five occasions. Kreilick is a key part of EF! and leader of the organization for years. I know he was under federal investigation quite some time ago. Nothing ever came of that either. Scott Marshall of Weyerhaeuser was actually scheduled to be at the Native Forest Network [NFN] conference at Missoula [see article, p. 32].

Another example: Just recently, Daishowa arranged a tour of their mill for a group from EF!, on the basis that EF! would attack Macmillan Bloedel [a competitor paper mill]. But today I read in a Vermont NFN newsletter [published in Australia] that NFN has announced a plan to attack Daishowa!