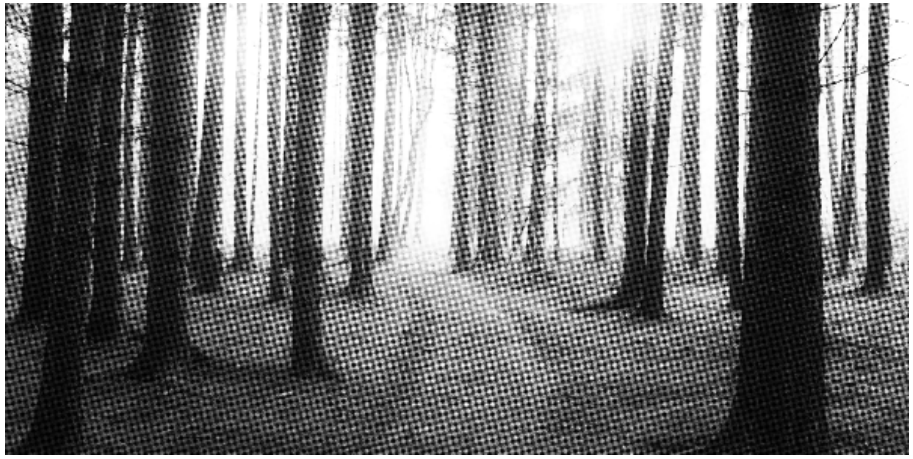
What exactly does it take to not get caught carrying out heavy actions like arson? […] For anyone who wants to carry out actions like this, but isn't doing so yet, I've sketched an outline of the steps I think are necessary to sustain hard-hitting attacks on domination.

No Trace Project / No trace, no case. A collection of tools to help anarchists and other rebels **understand** the capabilities of their enemies, **undermine** surveillance efforts, and ultimately **act** without getting caught.

Depending on your context, possession of certain documents may be criminalized or attract unwanted attention. Be careful about what zines you print and where you store them.

Developing Action Capacity

A Path



Developing Action Capacity: A Path

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Layout

No Trace Project

notrace.how/resources/#developing-action

mentalization—the need-to-know principle[20] can help here.

Affinity is the strongest foundation for a common project among these groups—while affinity within an action group is based on interpersonal experience, affinity between action groups is based more on affinity with the project than with each other. The long-term search for affinity beyond your action group is what makes this foundation possible. Informal organization can then grow between action groups, which is a model that has been experimented with since the '70s.[21] Informal organization is born and shaped by the pursuit of specific goals, such as preventing the construction of Cop City[22] through diffuse sabotage. "It doesn't have a name to defend or assert, only a project to bring about".[23]

This outline touches on what I think are the minimal steps necessary to develop a capacity for hard-hitting action, limited to the topic of acquiring skills. Much more is needed—learning other skills beyond this baseline, experimenting with informal organization while navigating its challenges, developing analyses to understand the changing terrain, studying the vulnerabilities of domination, and focusing on all the other aspects that contribute to sustaining and intensifying action.

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[21] https://elephanteditions.net/library/toward-a-generalised-attack#toc30

[22] *N.T.P. note:* "Cop City" is the name given to a planned police training center in Atlanta, United States.

[23] https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/avis-de-tempetes-to-start-over

test its reliability under the same conditions, and build in redundancy by using multiple delays on each device. Depending on the circumstances and terrain, you may even want to make a plan for noticing if any fires don't start, such as choosing an exit route that provides a line of sight and pausing along it until you see the light of the flames.

Recommended reading:

- A Recipe for Leaving No Trace[16]
- The Simplest Way to Burn a Vehicle[17]
- Warrior Up[18]

Connecting constellations

The next step in developing capacity for action requires going beyond one's own group. This is where things get really interesting: coordination between autonomous groups allows them to accomplish far more than they could on their own, while their autonomy wards off hierarchy and centralization.[19] Of course, conspiring with more people involves risk and must be balanced with the need for compart-

[16]https://web.archive.org/web/20240724045548/https://scenes.noblogs.org/post/2023/09/09/a-recipe-for-leaving-no-trace

[17]https://web.archive.org/web/20241005010510/https://scenes.noblogs.org/post/2023/08/21/the-simplest-way-to-burn-a-vehicle

[18]https://warriorup.noblogs.org

[19]https://dimanche.pm/english.html

[20]https://notrace.how/threat-library/mitigations/need-to-know-principle.html

> "We are not special. Our skills are not overly technical or advanced, and our tools are simple to acquire. If you are reading this, you are capable of doing what we do."[1]
>
> — *APD Patrol Car Torched in Lakewood*[2]

While I agree with this sentiment, the reader is left with many questions about how to develop such a capacity for action, even if they are motivated. What exactly does it take to not get caught carrying out heavy actions like arson? This is especially important in the long run; not getting caught for a single arson is one thing, but being able to continue carrying out attacks in the face of heightened repressive attention is quite another.

For anyone who wants to carry out actions like this, but isn't doing so yet, I've sketched an outline of the steps I think are necessary to sustain hard-hitting attacks on domination (limited to the topic of "operational" considerations, i.e., acquiring skills). This brief outline is intended to orient you and provide a "learning path"—each step has recommended reading that actually goes into the appropriate amount of depth on the subject. Use the Tails operating system[3] to visit these links, which runs from a USB drive and leaves no trace on your computer. What I've written here is by no means definitive, and I hope to spark a dialogue about any operational aspects I may

[1]*No Trace Project (N.T.P.) note:* Of course, this is not necessarily true, not everyone has the same capabilities.

[2]https://web.archive.org/web/20240725072755/https://scenes.noblogs.org/post/2024/02/10/apd-patrol-car-torched-in-lakewood

[3]https://tails.net

have neglected, as well as anything outside this scope that is important for sustaining and intensifying the capacity for action.

Deepening bonds

For anyone who doesn't already have an action group, deciding who to act with is the first obstacle to overcome. I prefer to act in groups of two or three; it's easier to maintain a high level of trust and agility with just a small handful of people. Most actions don't require more than three participants, and when they do, action groups can collaborate. I prefer not to act alone because some aspects of actions are less risky when there are at least two people (for example, having a lookout).

In deciding who to act with, there is a tension between flexibility and consistency. Acting in several different configurations allows you to develop trust and experience with more people, which makes you more resilient in the face of arrests, burnout, or interpersonal splits. On the other hand, acting in a more consistent configuration can make it easier to develop a higher capacity for action in a shorter period of time.

Action groups only form because someone takes the initiative to propose them to a comrade with whom they want to deepen affinity and trust.

Affinity

Deciding who to approach in your network should be based on a sense of affinity between you, as this will

an action (buying materials, doing reconnaissance, etc.), all the while mapping the suspect's network to find more suspects.

Detecting physical surveillance[14] is a skill that takes a lot of practice, so I recommend that you start learning it long before you actually need to use it for high-risk actions. If you are ever the target of an investigation, this is the only thing that will prevent the police from following you to an action or preparation for an action.

Recommended reading:

- Resources: Physical surveillance topic[15]

Action techniques

Of course, skills related to action techniques are also important. For example, there are many ways to start a fire. Some are better than others in terms of reliability and effectiveness, but your approach should always be adapted to the specific scenario (target, exit plan, expected response times, etc.) Whatever techniques you end up using, it's important to stay open to innovation rather than limiting yourself to following a guide.

Action technique is also related to operational security: for example, if you decide that the incendiary device(s) need a delay, it's critical to be very confident that the delay won't fail, as this would leave evidence for investigators to take samples from. Thoroughly

[14] https://notrace.how/threat-library/mitigations/surveillance-detection.html

[15] https://notrace.how/resources/#topic=physical-surveillance

Materializing your dreams

Before your action group engages in actions that will be more intensively investigated, it is especially important that you become competent in two operational security practices:

DNA minimization protocols

DNA minimization protocols[11] are necessary to avoid leaving evidence at a crime scene. However, these precautions are not perfect, so the action should be conducted in such a way as to leave nothing behind that could have DNA traces on it. I recommend learning and practicing this skill long before you actually need to use it for high-risk actions.

Recommended reading:

- Resources: DNA topic[12]

Surveillance detection

If there is no evidence left at crime scenes, and you have established practices that prevent targeted digital surveillance from providing leads, investigators will be forced to use physical surveillance to try to incriminate you. The main goal of physical surveillance is to surveil the suspect during an action (as they did for Jeff Luers[13]), and if that doesn't work, to surveil the suspect while they are preparing for

[11] https://notrace.how/threat-library/mitigations/dna-minimization-protocols.html

[12] https://notrace.how/resources/#topic=dna

[13] https://notrace.how/threat-library/repressive-operations/case-against-jeff-luers.html

determine what the action group decides to focus on. Affinity means sharing analysis, discovered through getting to know each other, that leads to prospects for action. It means knowing that you share goals and want to act in similar ways to pursue them.

The long-term exploration and deepening of affinity across a network, beyond a specific action group, opens up many more possibilities for the configuration of action groups to adapt over time, as well as for collaboration between them. I've chosen to use the term "action group" rather than "affinity group" to emphasize that affinity exists in many different constellations, each with its own potential.

Recommended reading:

- Archipelago: Affinity, Informal Organization, & Insurrectional Projects[4]

Trust

Trust is contextual—you may trust someone to be a good friend, but that is different from trusting them with your freedom. Deciding who to approach in your network should be based on trust that they can live with the possible consequences of their actions without betraying their comrades, even if it means a long prison sentence. Trust is qualitative in a way that can't be reduced to a simplistic formula. It's based on an intimate knowledge that can only come from singular experiences within a relationship. However, there are established practices for deepening trust that are still worthwhile.

[4] https://sproutdistro.com/catalog/zines/history/nothing-is-finished

Recommended reading:

- Confidence, Courage, Connection, Trust: A proposal for security culture[5]
- Stop Hunting Sheep: A Guide to Creating Safer Networks[6]

Laying the groundwork

Once there are two or three people who want to experiment with acting together, I recommend starting with actions that do not have particularly serious consequences if you get caught, such as breaking windows. This allows you to assess whether the configuration is a good fit, practice any skills that are new to anyone, establish operational approaches and a good "workflow" for the tasks involved, and develop an interpersonal dynamic that meets everyone's needs, all in a relatively low-stakes environment. Progressively increasing the intensity of the action also gives you the opportunity to practice moving through fear so that decision-making, communication, and execution in high-stress situations can remain unimpeded.

Operational security

"Operational security" means the practices that allow you to get away with crimes. I recommend that your action group first discuss each of the highlighted resources at the No Trace Project[7] before taking

[5]https://notrace.how/resources/#confidence
[6]https://notrace.how/resources/#stop-hunting
[7]https://notrace.how/resources/#highlighted-only

action, in an outdoor and device-free location. Many of these discussions are well suited for larger affinity constellations than your action group. This will take a considerable amount of time, but an in-depth discussion of these topics will provide a necessary foundation. Don't make the mistake of assuming that everyone is already on the same page. These conversations will also be an opportunity to discuss how you will prepare for any repression that may result from your actions.

Action planning

With this foundation in place, you are now in a strong position to begin action planning. As you gain experience, organizing and executing actions will become much more natural. What was initially a lot to keep track of will eventually become second nature. This is another reason why it's a good idea to start with actions that aren't particularly risky.

Recommended reading:

- How To Have A Fun Night To Forget:[8] This will give you a quick overview of the steps involved in taking action.
- Threat Library:[9] This will give you a framework for planning the operational security measures for a specific action (for example, what surveillance detection measures you will take before going to a meeting).
- Resources: Direct action topic[10]

[8]https://notrace.how/resources/#fun-night
[9]https://notrace.how/threat-library/zine.html
[10]https://notrace.how/resources/#topic=direct-action