

Introduction

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It's perhaps fitting that I write this introduction in jail- that graduate school of survival. Here you learn how to use toothpaste as glue, fashion a shiv out of a spoon and build intricate communication networks. Here too, you learn the only rehabilitation possible-hatred of oppression.

Steal This Book is, in a way, a manual of survival in the prison that is Amerika. It preaches jailbreak. It shows you where exactly how to place the dynamite that will destroy the walls. The first section-SURVIVE!-lays out a potential action program for our new Nation. The chapter headings spell out the demands for a free society. A community where the technology produces goods and services for whoever needs them, come who may. It calls on the Robin Hoods of Santa Barbara Forest to steal from the robber barons who own the castles of capitalism. It implies that the reader already is "ideologically set," in that he understands corporate feudalism as the only robbery worthy of being called "crime," for it is committed against the people as a whole. Whether the ways it describes to rip-off shit are legal or illegal is irrelevant. The dictionary of law is written by the bosses of order. Our moral dictionary says no heisting from each other. To steal from a brother or sister is evil. To not steal from the institutions that are the pillars of the Pig Empire is equally immoral.

Community within our Nation, chaos in theirs; that is the message of SURVIVE!

We cannot survive without learning to fight and that is the lesson in the second section. FIGHT! separates revolutionaries from outlaws. The purpose of part two is not to fuck the system, but destroy it. The weapons are carefully chosen. They are "home-made," in that they are designed for use in our unique electronic jungle. Here the uptown reviewer will find ample proof of our "violent" nature. But again, the dictionary of law fails us. Murder in a uniform is heroic, in a costume it is a crime. False advertisements win awards, forgers end up in jail. Inflated prices guarantee large profits while shoplifters are punished. Politicians conspire to create police riots and the victims are convicted in the courts. Students are gunned down and then indicted by suburban grand juries as the trouble-makers. A modern, highly mechanized army travels 9,000 miles to commit genocide against a small nation of great vision and then accuses its people of aggression. Slumlords allow rats to maim children and then complain of violence in the streets. Everything is topsy-turvy. If we internalize the language and imagery of the pigs, we will forever be fucked. Let me illustrate the point. Amerika was built on the slaughter of a people. That is its history. For years we watched movie after movie that demonstrated the white man's benevolence. Jimmy Stewart, the epitome of fairness, puts his arm around Cochise and tells how the Indians and the whites can live in peace if only both sides will be reasonable, responsible and rational (the three R's imperialists always teach the "natives"). "You will find good grazing land on the other side of the mountain," drawls the public relations man. "Take your people and go in peace." Cochise as well as millions of youngsters in the balcony of learning, were being dealt off the bottom of the deck. The Indians should have offed Jimmy Stewart in every picture and we should have cheered ourselves hoarse. Until we understand the nature of institutional violence and how it manipulates values and mores to maintain the power of the few, we will forever be imprisoned in the caves of ignorance. When we conclude that bank robbers rather than bankers should be the trustees of the universities, then we begin to think clearly. When we see the Army Mathematics Research and Development Center and the Bank of Amerika as cesspools of violence, filling the minds of our young with hatred, turning one against another, then we begin to think revolutionary.

Be clever using section two; clever as a snake. Dig the spirit of the struggle. Don't get hung up on a sacrifice trip. Revolution is not about suicide, it is about life. With your fingers probe the holiness

of your body and see that it was meant to live. Your body is just one in a mass of cuddly humanity. Become an internationalist and learn to respect all life. Make war on machines, and in particular the sterile machines of corporate death and the robots that guard them. The duty of a revolutionary is to make love and that means staying alive and free. That doesn't allow for cop-outs. Smoking dope and hanging up Che's picture is no more a commitment than drinking milk and collecting postage stamps. A revolution in consciousness is an empty high without a revolution in the distribution of power. We are not interested in the greening of Amerika except for the grass that will cover its grave.

Section three - LIBERATE! - concerns itself with efforts to free stuff (or at least make it cheap) in four cities. Sort of a quick U.S. on no dollars a day. It begins to scratch the potential for a national effort in this area. Since we are a nation of gypsies, dope on how to move around and dig in anywhere is always needed. Together we can expand this section. It is far from complete, as is the entire project. Incomplete chapters on how to identify police agents, steal a car, run day-care centers, conduct your own trial, organize a G.I. coffee house, start a rock and roll band and make neat clothes, are scattered all over the floor of the cell. The book as it now stands was completed in the late summer of 1970. For three months manuscripts made the rounds of every major publisher. In all, over 30 rejections occurred before the decision to publish the book ourselves was made, or rather made for us. Perhaps no other book in modern times presented such a dilemma. Everyone agreed the book would be a commercial success. But even greed had its limits, and the IRS and FBI following the manuscript with their little jive rap had a telling effect. Thirty "yeses" become thirty "noes" after "thinking it over." Liberals, who supposedly led the fight against censorship, talked of how the book "will end free speech."

Finally the day we were bringing the proofs to the printer, Grove consented to act as distributor. To pull a total solo trip, including distribution, would have been neat, but such an effort would be doomed from the start. We had tried it before and blew it. In fact, if anyone is interested in 4,000 1969 Yippie calendars, they've got a deal. Even with a distributor joining the fight, the battle will only begin when the books come off the press. There is a saying that "Freedom of the press belongs to those who own one." In past eras, this was probably the case, but now, high speed methods of typesetting, offset printing and a host of other developments have made substantial reductions in printing costs. Literally anyone is free to print their own works. In even the most repressive society imaginable, you can get away with some form of private publishing. Because Amerika allows this, does not make it the democracy Jefferson envisioned. Repressive tolerance is a real phenomenon. To talk of true freedom of the press, we must talk of the availability of the channels of communication that are designed to reach the entire population, or at least that segment of the population that might participate in such a dialogue. Freedom of the press belongs to those that own the distribution system. Perhaps that has always been the case, but in a mass society where nearly everyone is instantaneously plugged into a variety of national communications systems, wide-spread dissemination of the information is the crux of the matter. To make the claim that the right to print your own book means freedom of the press is to completely misunderstand the nature of a mass society. It is like making the claim that anyone with a pushcart can challenge Safeway supermarkets, or that any child can grow up to be president.

State legislators, librarians, PTA members, FBI agents, church-goers, and parents: a veritable legion of decency and order already is on the march. To get the book to you might be the biggest challenge we face. The next few months should prove really exciting.

Obviously such a project as Steal This Book could not have been carried out alone. Izak Haber shared the vision from the beginning. He did months of valuable research and contributed many of the survival techniques. Carole Ramer and Gus Reichbach of the New York Law Commune guided the book through its many stages. Anna Kaufman Moon did almost all the photographs. The cartoonists who have made contributions include Ski Williamson and Gilbert Sheldon. Tom Forcade, of the UPS, patiently did the editing. Bert Cohen of Concert Hall did the book's graphic design. Amber and John Wilcox set the type. Anita Hoffman and Lynn Borman helped me rewrite a number of sections. There are others who participated in the testing of many of the techniques demonstrated in the following pages and for obvious reasons have to remain anonymous. There were perhaps over 50 brothers and

sisters who played particularly vital roles in the grand conspiracy. Some of the many others are listed on the following page. We hope to keep the information up to date. If you have comments, law suits, suggestions or death threats, please send them to: Dear Abbie P.O. Box 213, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10003. Many of the tips might not work in your area, some might be obsolete by the time you get to try them out, and many addresses and phone numbers might be changed. If the reader becomes a participating researcher then we will have achieved our purpose.

Watch for a special edition called Steal This White House, complete with blueprints of underground passages, methods of jamming the communications network and a detailed map of the celebrated room where according to Tricia Nixon, "Daddy loves to listen to Mantovanni records, turn up the air conditioner full blast, sit by the fireplace, gaze out the window to the Washington Monument and meditate on those difficult problems that face all the peoples of this world."

December, 1970
Cook County Jail
Chicago

'FREE SPEECH IS THE RIGHT TO SHOUT
'THEATER' IN A CROWDED FIRE."

- A YIPPIE PROVERB



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