

Terror Watch

America's Homegrown Terrorists

By *Brandon Bosworth*

Enron CEO Kenneth Lay wasn't the only one pleading the Fifth Amendment on Capitol Hill in February. Testifying on February 13 before a House committee investigating terrorism committed in the U.S. in the name of environmentalism, former Earth Liberation Front (ELF) spokesman Craig Rosebraugh invoked the right against self-incrimination over 50 times. He even took the Fifth when asked if he was a U.S. citizen. At one point Representative George Nethercutt (R-WA) jokingly asked if Mr. Rosebraugh was "in any way related" to Mr. Lay. As you might have guessed, Rosebraugh took the Fifth on that one, too.

Craig Rosebraugh hasn't always been so hesitant to speak his mind. A scrawny, bespectacled 28-year-old with a shaved head, he first became involved with ELF and its sister group the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) in 1997. He claims the organizations contacted him anonymously with assorted statements and communiqués, which he then prepared as press releases. These releases were sent to the media, and Mr. Rosebraugh made himself available for interviews and speeches.

Who exactly were these shadowy people Mr. Rosebraugh was representing? ELF first reared its ugly head in England in 1992. By 1997 it had begun to operate in America. There are no formal headquarters or known internal structure, and most of its members seem to be high school or college students. But over the years, both ELF and ALF have been responsible for many serious acts of eco-

terrorism. According to James Jarboe, the FBI's top domestic terrorism officer, they are "the most active" and "cause the most damage" of any U.S. terrorist organization. He estimates that ELF and ALF have caused \$43 million in damage over the years. One of the most costly acts was the 1998 torching of a ski resort in Vail, Colorado that caused \$12 million in damages. In 1999, ELF members set fire to Michigan State University's Agriculture Hall to destroy academic research they found offensive. A million dollars of damage was done to a Eugene, Oregon car dealership when enviro-terrorists destroyed 36 trucks and SUVs. Last year, ALF firebombed the Coulston Foundation biomedical facility in New Mexico, causing another \$1 million in damages.

There's more. In his testimony to Congress, Richard Berman, executive director of the Center for Consumer Freedom, explained that "during the past three years, ELF and ALF have claimed responsibility for smashing bank windows, torching a chicken feed truck, burning a horse corral at a Bureau of Land Management facility...even setting bombs under meat delivery trucks." He noted that ELF and ALF took joint credit for the firebombing of a Tucson, Arizona McDonald's that occurred, ironically, on September 11, 2001. Mr. Berman estimates these groups are responsible for "well over 1,000 documented criminal acts in the U.S." ELF and ALF themselves admit to committing 137 illegal acts in North America in 2001 (25 since September 11), causing millions of dollars in damages.



Craig Rosebraugh of the Earth Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front.

Throughout their terror campaign, ELF and ALF could always count on the support of Craig Rosebraugh. He shrugs off the idea that he represented vandals, saying "if we are vandals, so were those who destroyed forever the gas chambers of Buchenwald and Auschwitz." Mr. Rosebraugh defends the burning of a luxury home in Boulder, Colorado on the grounds that "there is no reason...for someone to have...a multimillion-dollar home when there are people living in the same city who can't afford proper shelter." Do ELF and ALF expect to win new converts through terrorism? "That's not the immediate goal," according to Craig Rosebraugh. "The immediate goal is to cause economic damage."

As for the possibility of "physical harm that may come to the public," Mr. Rosebraugh says ELF and ALF "pose no

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threat, and they never have posed any threat." He claims "no one has ever been injured by the group's many actions." But he has encouraged others "to find a local Earth raper and make them pay.... Furriers, meat packers, bosses, developers, rich industry leaders are all Earth rapers."

Though Mr. Rosebraugh left out journalists, at least one of them has also been "made to pay" for alleged crimes against nature. British journalist Graham Hall, who made a documentary critical of ALF, was kidnapped at gunpoint in October 1999. Using a branding iron, his captors branded the letters "ALF"—each letter four inches high—onto his back. An ALF spokesman explained that "People who make their living this way have to expect from time to time to take the consequences of their actions."

More mainstream environmental groups have put some distance between themselves and ELF and ALF. Greenpeace executive director John Passacatando issued a statement reading, "If we define eco-terrorism as violence, violence to people or to property, we disavow it." Sierra Club spokesman Allen Mattison believes that by using property destruction as a tool, ELF and ALF are "alienating potential allies." How does Craig Rosebraugh feel about these criticisms? "Many individuals in the environmental community despise the ELF and its tactics out of some learned hypocritical white liberalism."

What would lead a vegan baker like Craig Rosebraugh into the arms of America's most damaging homegrown terrorists? While he didn't say anything to Congress besides "I'll take the Fifth," Rosebraugh did submit 11 pages of written testimony that sheds further light on his thinking. He claims to have been a patriotic, mainstream youth up until the Gulf War. Then Mr. Rosebraugh was "horrified at the slaughter of Iraqi civilians by the U.S. military" and became involved with the anti-war movement. That's when he "began to understand the disastrous relationship our modern society has with many animal nations."

Eco-saboteurs have wreaked millions of dollars worth of damage in the U.S. since 1997.

From there it was a short hop to left-wing revisionist history, in which "the origins of this country were based upon murder, exploitation, and ultimate genocide."

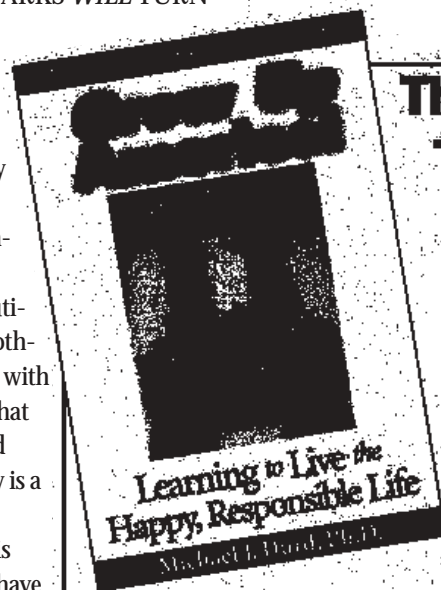
Rosebraugh now believes the "so-called 'Great American Revolution'" really "only served and benefited the privileged white male." And terrorism? In Rosebraugh's mind, "the U.S. government by far has been the most extreme terrorist organization in planetary history." His rambling screed ends with "ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE. LONG LIVE THE EARTH LIBERATION FRONT. LONG LIVE THE ANIMAL LIBERATION FRONT. LONG LIVE ALL THE SPARKS ATTEMPTING TO IGNITE THE REVOLUTION. SOONER OR LATER THE SPARKS WILL TURN INTO A FLAME!"

Not nearly enough is being done to blunt eco-terrorism. University labs, medical and agricultural researchers, loggers, home-builders, pharmaceutical companies, and others are now attacked with regularity. The fact that Congress finally held hearings in February is a good sign, but more needs to be done. It is shameful that there have been hardly any arrests for the countless crimes the ELF and ALF have been responsible for. Partly because these attacks are not widely reported in the media, there has been relatively

little public outcry against eco-terrorists. Even before September 11 if you said the word "terrorist" to the average American, the first thing to pop into his mind would be an image of some bearded, unkempt Arab; not a middle-class white kid. Terrorists came from overseas, not from Oregon.

While nothing ELF or ALF have done so far comes close to the magnitude of the attacks on the World Trade Center, how long will that remain true? Should we ignore these bombers, burglars, arsonists, and saboteurs among us because they remind some people of the romanticized radicals of the Baby Boomers' adolescence? For those who shrug off these junior terrorists, Representative Scott McInnis (R-CO) has a warning: "It would be a mistake to call them misguided youth, or trust-fund babies with nothing to do. They are hardened criminals."

Brandon Bosworth is a TAE associate editor.



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