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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.

Be Confident! + Forensic Hints



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tynesideanarchistarchive.wordpress.com/2020/07/26/flame-thrower

Layout

No Trace Project

notrace.how/resources/#confident-forensic

to get hold of a copy of “Without A Trace”,⁵ which is hopefully being updated and reprinted.

Happy Hunting and Good Luck,

Moriarty

⁵*N.T.P. note:* Although there have been multiple texts published under the name “Without A Trace”, we believe this is a reference to a 32-page publication signed *Moriarty* and available on our website.^a For more up-to-date information on forensics, police surveillance, and related topics, we recommend our Threat Library^b as a starting point.

^a<https://notrace.how/resources/#without-a-trace>

^b<https://notrace.how/threat-library>

Note from the No Trace Project:

Be Confident! was originally published in the 1986 London anarchist publication *Flamethrower*. *Forensic Hints* was originally published in 1985 in the 45th edition¹ of the South London anarchist squatter magazine *Crowbar*. It was then republished, augmented with additional details, in *Flamethrower*.

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We would like to thank the Tyneside Anarchist Archive² for scanning *Flamethrower* and making it available on their website.

¹<https://files.libcom.org/files/Crowbar45.pdf>

²<https://tynesideanarchistarchive.wordpress.com>

Be Confident!

Too often it is all too easy to get sucked into something that you are not really prepared for. The ugly old head of “peer group pressure” raises itself again. Your friends are going out on actions, so you feel that you have got to go out as well. You know that it has got to be done, you know how it is done and you know that people have done it and got away with it—but are you really ready for it?

It is up to YOU and no-one else to decide if you are prepared and if you can cope with being involved, can cope with a few months inside. It probably won't be your friends who push you deliberately into direct action without you being fully prepared (and if they did, then they shouldn't be your friends). It will probably be your own feelings that are encouraged by the successful and inspiring example of others. But are you really ready for it? Can you take the consequences of your action?

Being fully prepared is tactically as well as personally good sense. If you are feeling nervous (but don't forget that everyone feels nervous before an action) and unconfident, then that will increase the chances of you making a mistake... and mistakes get you caught. You have got to be fully confident of what you are doing before you go out and start to really hurt this stinking system.

It is wise, when you are starting, to go with (if you know any) experienced people and to start gradually. The odd

hopefully the action will need no claims as it will be obvious. These notes (whether by letter or phone) will just give the cops more forensics to work on, and the more that they have got, the worse it is for you. Also, responsibility notes are sometimes a bit of an ego trip—worth risking your freedom for?

It is important to be confident and cocky; never look suspicious, always try to look as though you are just taking a stroll and observing the stars. If you are appearing to be furtive, then you are increasing the chances of being picked up—so keep your nerve!

The best way to remove fingerprints is through white spirit or meths, as prints are based on grease which cannot be properly removed by just rubbing at them with a piece of cloth. A good way to avoid leaving fingerprints without using gloves (e.g. when writing a cheque) is by coating your fingertips with colourless nail varnish.⁴

Finally, forensics only serve to positively identify you if you are caught. **DON'T LET THAT HAPPEN.** If the action is successful, then you will want to boast about it, and it could soon get out of hand with everyone apart from the dog knowing what you do on dark nights. Don't take the risk... keep silent and stay that way. This article is only a very brief summary, and there is simply no substitute for common sense (the most vital ingredient of all!) For more detailed information, try

⁴*N.T.P. note:* Unfortunately, nowadays we also have to worry about DNA. For an overview of DNA forensics, see “DNA You Say? Burn Everything to Burn Longer: A Guide to Leaving No Traces.”^a

^a<https://notrace.how/resources/#dna-you-say>

If paint or any chemical such as petrol is used, traces of them will DEFINITELY end up on your clothing. For this reason, destroy everything that you have been wearing immediately afterwards. Traces of chemicals will also adhere to your skin, and especially under your fingernails, so have a very good shower and get your nailbrush out. These traces can also be detected in the place where you made the device(s), so choose empty houses or deserted land to do any construction work for the act of destruction.

SOME OTHER NOTES: Don't smoke—as well as being able to identify the brand, the cops can also identify your blood type from the spit on the butt. They can also take identifiable fingerprints off the butt, and, anyway, a lighted cigarette can be seen for a long way in the dark.

Wear a hat—as well as hiding part of your face and your hair style, it should prevent hair falling out. A hair sample in the lab can only prove that you were NOT involved.³

Make sure that your house is clean and there is nothing that can possibly connect you with the action (e.g. chemical traces, photographs of the building(s), etc.) Also don't forget to clear out other “illegal” items such as dope and stolen goods.

Responsibility notes might seem to be very important (this action has go to be understood in terms of the dialectic of the class struggle blah blah blah), but

³*No Trace Project (N.T.P.) note:* Nowadays, if the hair sample contains your DNA, it can unfortunately convince a judge that you were involved.

spot of superglue here, the hammer there, rather than blazing buildings everywhere. The best way to build up confidence is through successful actions, but don't become too foolhardy and begin to think “I can get away with anything”... you can, but only if you are careful.

Some people are acting purely for the struggle, other people are acting purely for their own ego—in many ways, both of these approaches are wrong. The struggle is not some object that can be externalised, divorced from our own everyday lives; we are the struggle and the struggle is us. Our own emancipation from the chains of capitalism must be our own act and we cannot, with the wave of a magical wand, emancipate everyone else.

But resisting for purely egotistical reasons is foolish for it ignores the social reality that constantly surrounds us. There is certainly nothing wrong with feeling personal satisfaction at a successful action, but if that sense of satisfaction is the sole aim of the action then you are condemning yourself to an island on your own, isolated from everyone else. So, as you go out, know why you are doing it, be fully prepared and be confident. And remember that it will work and you won't get caught.

Forensic Hints

This is going to be an article that explains the basic precautions that you should take if you intend to burn anything down. The filth have a wealth of scientific knowledge at their disposal, and if they consider it important enough, they will use it. Some forensics can actually be used on their own to track you down, such as fingerprints—but the police must have already got your fingerprints. Most forensics can only be used if someone is already caught, and their purpose will be to strengthen the case against you—so your first priority is not to get caught or even come under suspicion. If, for example, you are the only militant in a small town are already well known to the local filth, it is best to joyfully destroy elsewhere.

Next, and very importantly, is the people you do it with. Only go with good friends, who can be guaranteed to keep their mouths shut. NEVER get involved with someone you neither know or trust. All you are doing is lighting one very small match, but if caught you could go down for a very long time... think about it. So make sure that everyone involved you know very well and fully trust—and if you can, why not just do it on your own; then you do not have to worry about other people.

Your planning has to be very meticulous, but never write anything down (and if you are foolish enough to do so, remember that the filth can take impressions from the paper beneath the actual sheets that you are writing on).

NEVER use telephones: you never know who might be listening and each person's voice has a separate sound (however you try to disguise your voice print, it stays basically the same) which can be used in evidence against you. Make sure that everyone in the group knows exactly what is going on and what they have to do, especially if something goes wrong. Then, pick your target (it is a good idea to start with easier targets to build up your confidence—nothing is more confidence boosting than successful actions).

Then, make sure that no-one lives above it or too near to it, unless you want to face a charge of attempted (or actual) murder. Make sure that any fires you start will not be able to spread to neighbouring buildings, and that any combustible chemicals stored there will not prove to be too risky to other people (i.e. explosions, noxious fumes, etc.) Pick your method of entry, and make sure that it is out of sight (and don't forget to carefully examine the area for video cameras and security alarms). **DON'T TAKE ANY STUPID RISKS** (and that applies to everything that you do).

If you use any tools to break in with, remember that items such as boltcutters, crowbars, screwdrivers, etc., all leave identifying traces, just like the marks on a bullet, so afterwards thoroughly dispose of them. If any glass is smashed, tiny fragments will **DEFINITELY** lodge in your clothing and will be virtually impossible to remove (this was a very important piece of evidence against the Unilever defendants—thanks to glass fragments in their shoes, most of them are now in prison).