

Choosing Your Friends Wisely for Illegal Activities



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Layout

No Trace Project

notrace.how/resources/#choosing

We need to stress the importance of choosing your “friends” wisely. As we have seen, even cell members can turn into informers when the heat is on and fear has taken over their reasoning. Here are a few words on how to better choose the people that you take action with:

- Don't work with individuals who are involved in other criminal activity, especially if it is violent in nature. When these people are caught for unrelated activity, they will (and have) snitched on the other members to avoid other charges.¹
- Don't work with people who are not committed to the cause. When the stakes are high—as it is with any illegal direct action—trust your gut. If you are uncomfortable with any potential cell member—don't work with them. PERIOD.
- Don't allow trusted friends to “vouch” for others. You should have first hand experience working with every cell member before even approaching the subject of illegal direct action with him or her. Oftentimes friends are blinded to their friend's quirks, which might point to the fact that s/he is just plain not suited for this activity.
- Try to imagine potential cell members (and yourself) after they are caught and are being interrogated: How would they respond? Would the fear cause them to break? Could they handle the pressure of jail time or their parents?

And once a person finds people they think are of a high enough caliber to work with, next you want to:

- Make sure every one of them is familiar with police interrogation techniques and procedures so they can spot the lies of the authorities should they be apprehended.
- Make sure they all are ready to go to jail for 5 to 10 years, if the worst happens. All cell members should be able to discuss what would be the hardest thing for them to cope with should that happen—i.e. supporting children or non-human family members, pressure from parents to capitulate, fear of being beaten in jail or whatever. Beware of those activists who are so “hard” and say they could do jail time no problem—people like this turn out to be all talk way too quickly.

¹*No Trace Project note:* We do not think this is necessarily true.

Finally, even though it sounds strange, the cell should partake in some sort of ritual where everyone promises to other cell members to never talk to anyone (friends, lovers, cops, etc.) about the action, and that all information will never leave the confines of the active cell. This sort of “blood sibling” type ritual might be the one thing that helps weaker people through a hard spot after an arrest. It is important that all participants in an action know what's expected from them if the shit should hit the fan.

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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.