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Pretend you're watching this on TV, it plays out in a disjointed amalgamation of narration, effects, and action. He begins with brief dialog and moves into his rambling recitation.

"Heh!"

This type of thing is fun, but sometimes it's hard to take these kids seriously. As my friends reorganize the strike, a problem at hand, I let my mind wander a bit.

Open your eyes and see all the love in me! I got enough forever! Don't be afraid, to take all you need from me, and we'll be strong together oooooaaaah! And we'll be strong together! And we'll be strong together! Open your eyes and see all the love in me! I got enough forever! Don't be afraid, to take all you need from me, and we'll be strong together!

"Heh." I say to no one but myself, this time with even less enthusiasm. We move out as the little happy hardcore ravers in my head dance around and hug each other. I've never seen anyone outside of boy scouts prepare so much for something, and after all that they manage to find imperfections in their plan.

"That light's bright man." Paranoia sets in on the group :P

"Should we take it out?"

"Yeah."

It's funny how stressed out they can get over little things. I thought we were gonna have to split up in a mad panic and regroup at the rendezvous after such an unexpected obstacle. We should have just broken it last night. It's sort of ridiculous, this whole deal. They all say it's about animal rights and the next movement and all that. I don't know though. There aren't many people I've met that are more adamant about anything, so I give them respect for that I guess. The compassion aspect is legit; that's real. They care and all, but it comes down to self sacrifice and accepting the fact that you really can't go out to eat with everyone else anymore. Like them, you just have to care I guess. I have my own reasons--not that I don't care altogether.

I don't really know how any of these other kids think, or why they do what they do. It's definitely got something to do with growing up in the suburbs, looking for something to do, trying to figure out why the hell you hate it here so much.

Once you get past all the obvious reasons that you're unhappy, and actually start thinking, you realize that you're just sick of the same thing all the time. You're not any better than all the pathetic people that dwindle their lives away here. You're bored, and you're whinny. That's it kid. No matter who you are, someone is more needy, someone always has it worse.

Deep down it's hard to tell if any of them care about what they're doing. It depends on what you know. These things are always in the world, and a lot of it really is cruel. It's only when you're put face to face with them that you start to get into it and let it bother you. For most of them, they had to take a step on their own to get to that point, you have to do extra to get yourself angry. The first time they saw a leaflet they thought it was cool. Some of them wanted to make a difference, to do something, it didn't really matter what. They never really even thought about it that way before, and that moment had a big impact on their thinking. I don't know all the other things they thought. At first, I wanted to fight for the cause, to be part of it all, but now I know that just I wanted an excuse to do stuff like I saw Christian Slater do on television. I wanted to be like the Duke's of Hazard and drive around fast, and once in a

while throw a molotov cocktail and all.

Back when fire crackers still really kicked ass, the long summer days didn't leave too much to do in a constructive sense. We were too old for day camp, go away camp only lasted for so long, and that was only for who could afford it. Sports suck, that rules them out. Sailing is fun, but you had to go every day--Screw that. There were all kinds of community sponsored/related programs for kids our age, but nah. Thus, there was nothing to do. Jumping the back fence at the pool and harassing the life guards only entertained a young mind for so long. The guards at the beach looked better anyway. They didn't have anything to do either, so they let us hang out with them. When we weren't staring at the girl lifeguards, we built things out of sand (usually girl lifeguards), climbed on rocks, and threw stones into the water.

But even hot 19 year olds in swimming suits willing to talk to sixth graders with brand new skateboards could get boring. So inside we went. Television does indeed have no boundaries. Whatever time of day there is always something on TV. Never let fools who say otherwise lead you down the wrong path. They will end their lives bitter, broken, and alone.

We learned many things in those days. Sex came easy. What with MTV, HBO, and PBS, we had it all figured out. Already educated by analog television sets and TV Week; we would endure the coming school days by staring blankly at the board until our attention returned, and commence to throw things at each other. To the principal's office and beyond.

Someone got America Online, and the compiled files of the anarchist cookbook became our definitive guide to everything. All I wanted to do was make it smoke, but the alcohol lamp that came with my chemistry set exploded when I filled it with the insides of a pack of morning glories. A few months later, Brett's hand came apart while he was stuffing strike anywhere matches into a CO2 cartridge with a screwdriver. That ended that.

With *The Rescue*, *Red Dawn*, and *Toy Soldiers*, I set out on the rest of my life. By way of this and that I further developed my interests and beliefs. There's no room in life for killing, things don't make you happy, no one is perfect, and you and me are just like everyone else. But when all is said and done, wtf am I supposed to do with myself? What to do? What to do?

This is where I stop elaborating on my past, and answer that question. What to do?

We slowly crawl along the alley way. Our shoes make faint crunching sounds on the concrete. We emerge partially into the light, dark shapes silhouetted against the wall. Brian is first, he raises the slingshot and sights the target through the eye holes in his ski mask. He releases and his ball bearing penetrates the thick glass housing and the lamp goes out with a shower of sparks. The shatter of glass and the peace of the city broken by a thousand sounds all at once as the engine of the escape car parked on the opposite side comes to life and the loud slapping of our frantic sprinting feet echo off the buildings. We surge into the street, a torrent of angst, adrenaline and misplaced purpose. Tony, bounding fiercely at his target, puts a brick through the window of the shop. My heart thumping and hands trembling, I flick the cigarette lighter open and light the rag.

As he extends his arm past his head, preparing to throw the bottle, a loud stereophonic swooshing (the sound of flames moving through the air) drowns out everything else as the picture speed goes into slow motion. All action halts abruptly when his wrist snaps back and his chest protrudes forward in equilibrium. In small white letters, the following appears:

"March 11, 1999 02:23 A.M. Highland Park, Illinois: Adriana Furs"

There is a short pause. The action resumes in slow motion with the same swooshing. Immediately before the moment that he will release the bottle it

freezes. In large white letters, the following appears:

“WHY I WENT VEGAN”

There is another pause and the action resumes at normal speed.

I break out laughing and let the fire bomb fly through the window of the fur store. There is a barely audible sound of breaking glass before it is overwhelmed by the flooding rush of gasoline in ignition as the entire street is illuminated by the flames. I can see the gum spots on the sidewalk and the clothes on display in the windows across the street. I can't stop laughing as I jerk my head each way. Brian is first to the car. He struggles excitedly with the door handle and takes the passenger seat. Tony transfers the milk container of gasoline to his throwing hand, awkwardly performs a leaping spin for momentum, and lets it sail. At Brian's shouts, I stop gawking like a little kid and jump into the car. Tony's container meets the ground well inside, breaking open and the small blaze beginning to consume the shop nearly doubles. The flames reach the out from the window onto the front of the building.

Tony leaps into the car next to me in the back seat. We're already speeding away as I reach over his legs to close the door. My friends have serious, if excited indignance on their faces, like they just saved the world and all. I can't stop laughing. I'm not laughing at them, I know you have to live for something.

It's just the fun and everything makes me laugh.

“Heh.” I say, slouching down comfortably when I finally stop laughing.