

Sound Track of the film by Emile de Anronio-Mary Lampson-Haskell Wexler and the WEATHER UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION

SIDE 1

- Band 1 Statement by the Underground
- Band 2 Violence is necessary
H. Rap Brown, Malcolm X, M.L. King, Jr., F. Castro
- Band 3 The Viet War - Ho Chi Minh, N.T. Dinh, J. Ford
- Band 4 SDS, Chicago 1969, Days of Rage

SIDE 2

- Band 1 Attitudes of the Underground
- Band 2 Self Criticism
- Band 3 Puerto Rico-"Mingo Affair" (Miguel Algarin)
- Band 4 Making the film
- Band 5 We are professional revolutionaries
- Band 6 The West 11th Street Explosion

SIDE 3

- Band 1 Capitol Bombing - Returning medals
- Band 2 Fear and commitment
- Band 3 Class origin and class stance
- Band 4 The publication of The Praire Fire

SIDE 4

- Band 1 Make up of capatalistic power & the new revolution
- Band 2 The prison movement and Attica
- Band 3 It is the people who make the change
- Band 4 We are a small organization
- Band 5 Interview at a L.A. Unemployment Center
- Band 6 Why we are communists & speak collectively

AO Form No 110 (Rev. 5-68) Subpoena to Testify Before Grand Jury

United States District Court
FOR THE
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

EMILE de ANTONIO
MARY LAMPSON
HASKELL WEXLER

You are hereby commanded to appear in the United States District Court for the Central District of California at **Room 1140A, 1300 U.S. St., 312 North Spring Street** in the city of **Los Angeles** on the **12** day of **June** 1975 at **9:30** o'clock A. M. to testify before the Grand Jury and bring with you **any and all motion picture film, including, but not limited to all negatives, working copies and prints, and all sound tracks and tape recordings made in connection with the filming of such motion pictures, concerning a group known as the Weathermen or Weather Underground.**

This subpoena is issued on application of the **UNITED STATES.**

EDWARD M. KRITZMAN
Clerk

Date **May 22** 1975
By **William D. Keller**
United States Attorney

Robert J. Folis
Robert J. Folis
Deputy Clerk

213-688-2391

UNDERGROUND

Sound Track from the film by
Emile de Antonio,
Mary Lampson and Haskell Wexler

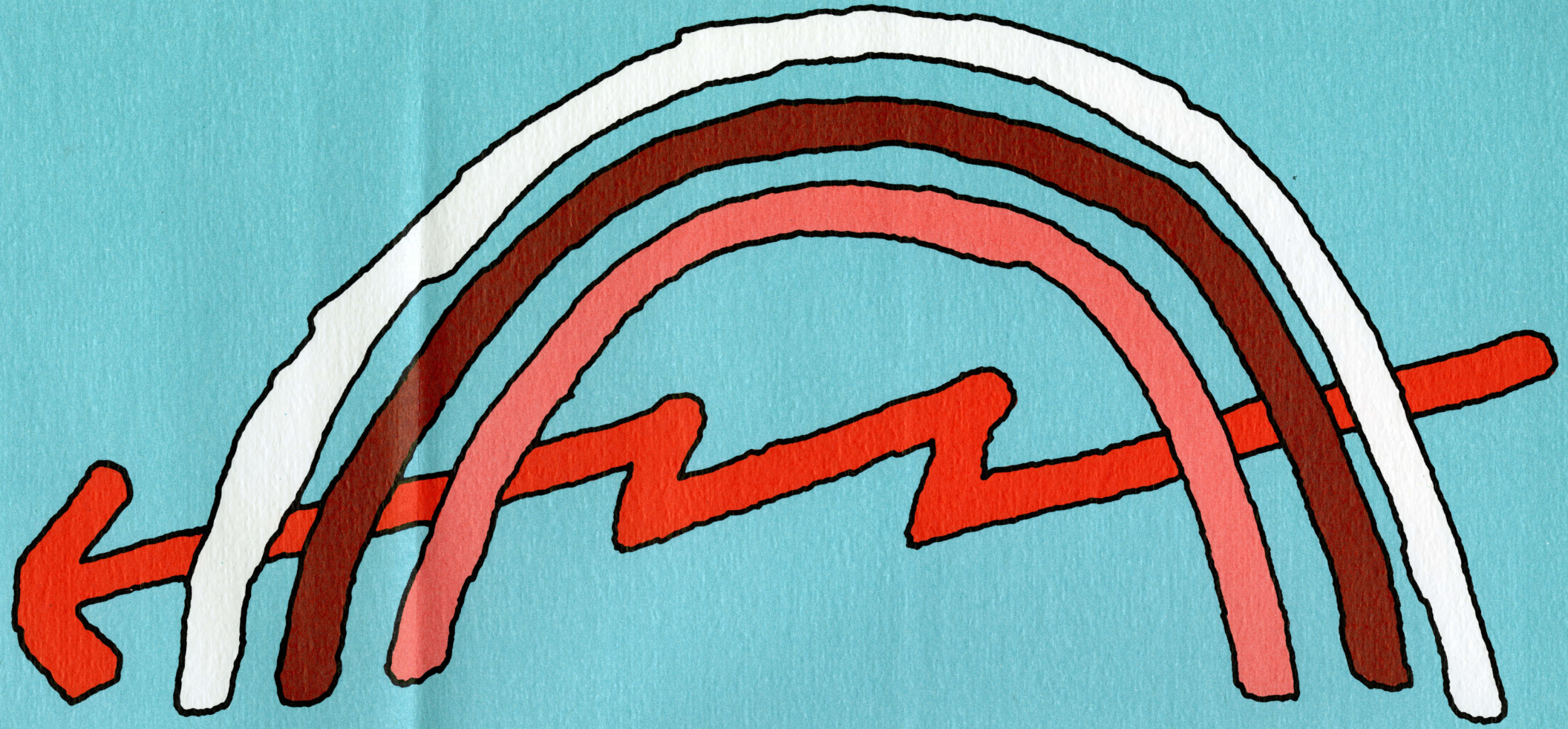
WITH THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND
Billy Ayers, Kathy Boudin, Bernardine Dohrn,
Jeff Jones and Cathy Wilkerson

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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UNDERGROUND A FILM BY EMILE ANTONIO, MARY LAMPSON, HASKELL WEXLER



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FOLKWAYS FD 5752

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UNDERGROUND

The complete sound track of the film by Emile de Antonio, Mary Lampson and Haskell Wexler with The Weather Underground Organization.

HOW IT BEGAN by Emile de Antonio

I have been making political films since 1961 when Dan Talbot and I planned *Point of Order*. My active political life had begun long before—in the late 30's when I was a student at Harvard. The bang that ended World War II sliced my marxism right down the middle. Praxis fell away. Without a party, without a machine for action, I hugely and self-indulgently savored the contradictions of cold war capitalism, its piety and hypocrisy, the opulent click of the putter in the White House. I was out to lunch. My hedonism and egoism weren't aberrational. A Marxist in the USA during the 50's was like a martian: no base, no solid space. Real change and revolution seemed a light year and a day away. Meanwhile, on with the party.

In 1960, my politics, revived and twice-born, coalesced with my work in film. A series of films, analytical and critical, were the result: *Point of Order*, 1963, on the Army-McCarthy Hearings; *Rush to Judgment*, 1967, an attack on the Warren Commission; *In the Year of the Pig*, 1969, the Indo-China wars; *America Is Hard to See*, 1970, the failure of liberal politics in the 1968 campaign; in 1971, *Millhouse: A White Comedy*, a political biography which got me on the 'enemies list'; and in 1972, *Painters Painting*, US painting from 1945 to 1970, real questions: art and politics, art vs. politics.

And then Watergate. Watergate was a crime in which the thief was paid to slink away; business; an internal affair of the US ruling class. The more things seemed to change, the less they did. Watergate proved the system worked, proved that it worked imperialism, racism, sexism, oppression anywhere. I felt tired.

Until 1974 when I read *Prairie Fire: Political Statement of the Weather Underground*. The Weather Underground? Our perception of them was formed by the media. McLuhan got it wrong: the message really is: whoever owns the media owns the message. So what we saw in the *Times* and CBS were trendy Wonder Bread reality sandwiches. Artificial coloring added. One-sided, sensationalist, all about 'crazed terrorists' and bombers. But the people who wrote and distributed *Prairie Fire* weren't crazed terrorists. Their voices were strong, analytical, rational. I wanted to make a film with them, collectively. And to find people who would be interested in making a new kind of didactic, revolutionary film. We formed a collective: Mary Lampson, Haskell Wexler and I. Forming is easier than being. Haskell worked as a cameraperson for four or five days; the collective dwindled to two and Mary and I spent most of a year making the film. With a lot of help from many people. This record is not the official voice of the Weather Underground; their writings are that. This record is the sound track of a film which we shot May 1, 1975. Since then, the Weather Underground has undoubtedly changed its position on certain issues, shifted slightly on others. Good signs, signs of acknowledging contradiction, of growth, of learning to try to make the revolution by passing through error by criticism/self-criticism. August 25, 1976.

UNDERGROUND

Sound Track from the film by
Emile de Antonio,
Mary Lampson and Haskell Wexler

WITH THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND
Billy Ayers, Kathy Boudin, Bernardine Dohrn,
Jeff Jones and Cathy Wilkerson

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Peter Biskind and Marc N. Weiss are both New York-based filmmakers and free-lance writers. Biskind has made films on Vietnam, the Bank of America burning in Isla Vista, the Santa Barbara oil spill, and the race war in Cairo, Illinois. He is working on a book about Hollywood and the Cold War. Weiss has made films on the U.S. economy, Nixon, political surveillance, and Tommy the Traveler, and has worked on several of deAntonio's films. He is currently involved with distribution of social documentaries.

by Peter Biskind
and Marc N. Weiss

*He's a real Weatherman
Ripping up the motherland
Making all his Weatherplans
For everyone*

*Knows just what he's fighting for
Victory for people's war
Trashes, bombs, kills pigs and
more*

The Weatherman.

(To the tune of the Beatles' "Nowhere Man")
—from the Weatherman Song Book

A lot of things have changed in Weatherland since that song was written in 1969. After five-and-a-half years, people have grown accustomed to them, used to seeing their faces on wanted

posters in the post office, saddened, perhaps, when they were papered over by garden variety bank robbers and disappointed when the FBI took them off the Ten Most Wanted List. People have even grown used to their bombings of public buildings, used to reading their communiques, which were eventually collected in a tasteful red volume suitable for coffee tables.

For a long time, it was their custom to detonate symbols of American power, to damage those monuments which seemed in their ponderous solidity to guarantee American predominance forever. They angrily retaliated against the savage displays of national arrogance from which the rest of us averted our eyes or protested in milder and more traditional ways. They bombed police cars in Chicago following the murder of Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in 1969. They bombed the Office of California Prisons in Sacramento after the murder of George Jackson in 1971. They bombed the New York State Department of Corrections after the Attica uprising in 1971. They bombed the U.S. Capitol in Washington after the invasion of Laos in 1971. They have carried out about 25 armed actions to date, most of them occurring in the period 1970 to 1972.

After 1972 they seemed to become less active. It looked like they were becoming just another faded feature of

the Sixties landscape, slowly disappearing from view like Huey Newton, or transformed beyond recognition like Rennie Davis.

*Then, in July 1974, they clandestinely published and distributed 5000 copies of *Prairie Fire*, a 150-page analysis of changing U.S. and world conditions. It was an urgent invitation to groups and organizers throughout the country to respond in the form of political discussion and renewed action. Its flyleaf bears the inscription: "A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire." In spring 1975, they issued another 25,000 copies of *Prairie Fire* and published the first volume of *Osawatomie*, a quarterly "journal" named after the Battle of Osawatomie in which John Brown's abolitionists defeated an army of slavers in 1856. The Weather organization, in other words, is alive and well in underground America, perhaps more vigorous, extensive and together than ever before. The latest government estimate says there are 37 Weatherpeople living underground; other sources place the figure much higher, but no one really knows.*

The Justice Department, for all its million-dollar appropriations, computers, wiretaps and grand juries, has been largely ineffectual in unearthing the members of the Weather Underground, which remains a perpetual embarrass-

ment to the legions of agents who devote their energies to their apprehension.

The latest joke on the FBI is a documentary film about the Weather Underground produced by Emile de Antonio, Mary Lampson and Haskell Wexler. The government was not amused. A congressman from Georgia, Larry McDonald, no doubt expressed the Justice Department's sentiments when he read into the *Congressional Record* this statement: "Mr. Speaker, the Weather Underground organization terrorists have taken responsibility for a whole series of bombings, including one right here in the Capitol and one in the State Department earlier this year. Now a group of Hollywood's left-wing crackpots are planning to do a propaganda puff piece on these criminals. The ringleader of the Hollywood crew is the notorious Emile de Antonio, the maker of a number of pseudo-documentary left-wing propaganda films, including one smearing the late Senator Joseph McCarthy and another supporting the Communist aggressors in Vietnam."

De Antonio had indeed "smeared" Joe McCarthy in his first film, *Point of Order* (although McCarthy is a relatively attractive figure compared to the film's portrait of invertebrate congresspeople and craven Army officers). And he had shamelessly gone on to make *Rush to Judgment* (an examination of the John Kennedy assassination), *In the Year of the Pig* (the most comprehensive film study of the 30-year anticolonial struggle in Vietnam) and *Millhouse: A White Comedy* (a film about Nixon, for which de Antonio was accorded the signal honor of being the only filmmaker on the former president's Enemies List).

No sooner had the FBI gotten wind of the film early this summer than it slapped the three filmmakers with subpoenas summoning them to appear, along with their negatives and tapes, before a grand jury in Los Angeles. They refused to cooperate and the Justice Department, somewhat mysteriously, withdrew the subpoenas ten days later.

The project itself began last fall, when de Antonio read *Prairie Fire*. "I had always been impressed with the tender loving care with which their bombings were executed. No one was ever hurt and they were all directed against the symbols of oppression and authority.

"I've always been a sort of half-baked radical most of my life. There was never anything to take hold of, to grab on to. What was left of the Sixties was very little, frankly, just shards and fragments, attitudes of the counterculture with no program, no organization. These are the people who are the direct line to the Sixties and to all those things in American society which are good. *Prairie Fire* impressed me. It represented a new phase, an attempt to extend the range of their politics, their activity, their influence."

If they were "coming out," de Antonio reasoned that a film would be the best way to do it. He sat down at his typewriter and pounded out a proposal, part stream-of-consciousness, part machine-gun prose. It speaks of a "film weapon" that would reach millions of people on TV: "The mood should be defiant and revolutionary, but not wise-ass or cocky. It should be didactic in the sense that it should open eyes and point directions for others." It would combine the analysis of *Prairie Fire* with stock footage documenting the events of the Sixties that generated the Weather Underground events almost forgotten in Gerald Ford's America. The film would sell on the strength of the Underground's undeniable dramatic appeal: "You have created a masterpiece of political theater which not only reveals the police state but that it's possible to beat it." And then, scribbled in: "It belongs on film. BANG, BANG, BANG!"

The proposal finished, de Antonio set out to contact the Weather Underground. "In this case," he recalled, "I approached the project with a certain lack of confidence. Would these people cooperate? Would it be possible to get in touch with them? There were a couple of young radicals I know who I just assumed would have the contacts.

"The first time, I approached this guy and said, 'I know you can get in touch with them. Can you get the machinery in operation to get a letter to them from me?' And he said, 'Yes.'

"But I never knew how those letters reached them. I wrote a letter, gave it to somebody, and then a message came back saying that they were interested in the proposal and that I would be hearing from them.

"At that point, a person known to me but whom I had never thought of in that connection came to me and said, 'Are you interested in meeting with these people?' And I said, 'Yes, I am.' That person then said, 'I'll meet you on the corner of so-and-so and so-and-so tomorrow afternoon.'"

The next day, de Antonio drove to the designated corner. He was not accustomed to taking security measures, but he practiced a few elementary precautions that he had picked up from movies, like driving down a dead-end street and turning around to make sure he wasn't being tailed. The procedure he followed that first day established the pattern for each of the subsequent meetings, and once the pattern had been set up, the same intermediary was used again and again. The intermediary never knew where the meetings between de Antonio and the Weatherpeople were to take place. He or she merely took de Antonio from one designated corner to another, and then left. Each corner was observable from any number of different directions. There were instructions in that place that would lead him to another place, where there would be new instructions, and so on. Each step of the way he could be observed to determine whether or not he was being followed. "It took a long time to get there, even though I didn't travel far."

On that first day, de Antonio met two members of the Underground. "I expected to meet crazy people, mad bombers, fanatics. And the first thing that absolutely overwhelmed me was that the people I met were so cool, relaxed. They were comfortable, self-possessed, light—everything I expected

them not to be."

They discussed de Antonio's proposal over dinner. "Right away, it was obvious to me that there were conditions to this film that were not only different from any film I had ever worked on, but that were different from anything anybody has worked on. The main condition was security. They insisted, and I agreed at once because it was apparent that it was a legitimate request, that they be in charge of security all the way down the line: all the meetings, the conditions of filming and, more importantly, that they would have final cut in a security sense. Any shots that revealed too much would be eliminated. Now this came hard to me because I'm a freewheeling, anarchistic type. I was always very bad at party discipline, wherever I was. But it was obvious that when you are dealing with people who are political fugitives, you can't flash their pictures around. Because you're simply doing the job of the police."

Later on, they arranged a system of direct phone contact. "Those conversations were very brief. We all had code names. In addition to their real names, they all had underground names which they used regularly. And in addition to their underground names, they had code names for this particular project, names that had not been used before and were never used again. Sometimes it got very confusing."

Subsequent meetings, like the first, were always held in public places—parks, restaurants, busy streets. The content of the film was worked out in detail, and they talked about who else would join the film crew. For a camera person, de Antonio had had Haskell Wexler in mind from the beginning. Wexler had several points to recommend him. He was widely acknowledged to be one of the best cinematographers in Hollywood (he won an Academy Award for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*); he had solid political credentials extending back to the late Forties when he made films for the left-wing United Electrical Workers, and continuing through the last 30 years with documentaries on civil rights, torture in Brazil, Allende, several films on

Vietnam and a feature, *Medium Cool*; he was able to contribute to the financing of the film (Wexler and de Antonio each put up \$5000).

Initially, Wexler was not thrilled with the idea of doing a film on the Weather Underground. "I wished it were something else. I'm basically a nonviolent person. I didn't know anything about the Weather Underground except what I read in the papers. They were strongly associated in my mind with violence."

Nevertheless, he agreed to meet with them and de Antonio. It was a more complicated logistical exercise than usual; the meeting was arranged in one part of the country and took place in another, some time later.

The meeting (Wexler described it as the "usual cloak-and-dagger kind of thing") was held in a park. They were sitting on a bench engrossed in conversation. Along came a stranger and sat down beside them. "My first instinct was to say, 'Let's get out of here,'" recalled de Antonio. "Haskell looked like he was about to say that too, when the Weather guy said, 'I'm very comfortable. Are you?' The filmmakers guessed that they were comfortable too, and the conversation continued on an innocuous level until the Weatherperson finally said, 'Don't you think it would be nice if we took a walk?'"

De Antonio told the story with a certain admiration. "The Weather guy was in total control of the situation. His instinct was correct. It wasn't instinct, it was training, discipline."

The Weatherpeople asked Wexler how he would shoot the film so that their faces would not be visible. Wexler explained: "We said we'd use every trick in the book except disguises. We felt disguise was untrue to the way they operate. They operate out in the streets, in the open, among people. So that we did not want to put ski masks on them, which are menacing, hostile symbols to begin with. We didn't want to make them look like they had just robbed the local A&P. We didn't want to camp them up with a lot of strange-

looking makeup which would make them look grotesque and thereby confirm the government's caricature of them as crazed terrorists."

The Weatherpeople wanted the filmmakers to understand that they would probably be called before a grand jury when the film project became public knowledge. They wanted de Antonio, Wexler and later Mary Lampson to take a position of absolute noncollaboration with any investigation that might ensue. Even though they knew they were risking jail, the filmmakers readily agreed.

For their part, de Antonio raised the question of guns—what would happen if the police burst in during the filming. "I said, 'Look, are you people going to be armed? Because if you are, I would like to be too.' Laughing, they replied, 'Don't be ridiculous. We're not going to be armed. If we're surrounded, we'll just come out.' Here we were, good front people for them. The cops still don't kill filmmakers in this country. They do in Chile but not here. Not yet. Of course, I can't guarantee what the Weatherpeople would do in a different situation."

By the end of the meeting, Wexler was convinced. It remained only for de Antonio to bring a third person into the crew who would be responsible for the sound and editing and participate in the filmed exchanges.

Mary Lampson was a natural choice. She had worked with de Antonio on his last three films. She would be interested in the project, she could be trusted and, at 29, she was roughly the same age as the Weatherpeople.

Nevertheless, it was a difficult decision for her. Although she had worked on some important films, including *Millhouse* and Cinda Firestone's *Attica*, she had never, by her own description, been a political activist.

Lampson recalled hearing about the Days of Rage in October 1969, when hundreds of Weatherpeople took part in a series of violent attacks on police and property in Chicago. "I thought they were crazy, although I can re-

member sitting around with friends of mine and talking about doing that kind of stuff. We had gone on peaceful marches and not gotten anywhere. We had a tremendous sense of frustration and didn't know what to do about it. So although I don't think I ever would have gone out and done that, I understood what it was about."

The following month, she was at a massive antiwar rally in Washington. A group of several thousand people broke away from the marchers and moved toward the Justice Department to protest the continuing trial of the Chicago 7. Lampson recalled: "You knew that those people were going to get maced and tear-gassed and beaten and I can remember standing there and debating whether to go or not. I didn't go."

Now, five years later, Lampson stood nervously on another street corner thinking about which way she should go. To help her decide, a meeting had been arranged. There she confessed to the Weatherperson sitting across from her that she had never been a terribly political person. "I told him, 'I didn't agree with some of the things you did before. I still probably don't agree with some of the things. How do you feel about having someone involved in this that's certainly at a different stage?' That was a welcome thing, that's what they wanted. The film was to be a dialogue. They wanted us to challenge them and they wanted to challenge us. Once I saw what it was going to be like, well, then there was no doubt in my mind that I wanted to do it."

It had been six months since de Antonio had sat down to read *Prairie Fire*. Now all the arrangements had been made. Wexler, anticipating long hours of hand holding a heavy camera, did his customary arm exercises.

The filmmakers were told to go to a certain place and wait for a phone call. The call would furnish them with instructions that "would set in motion a very carefully planned and elaborate series of moves," eventually bringing them to the "safe house" where the filming would take place.

Hours passed. "I was in a high energy state and irritable," de Antonio said. "Every time the phone would ring, I would run to pick it up. It would be somebody saying we hadn't paid the laundry bill."

The waiting continued through the night and into the next day. When the call finally came—after nearly two days—everything went like clockwork. The filmmakers piled into their car and drove to the first contact point, where they were told how to get to the rendezvous point. There they were picked up, given specially blackened glasses to wear and driven to the safe house.

"We were so heavily loaded down with equipment," recalled de Antonio, "that every time we made a turn, the tire would scrape against the body of the car. We wondered if we would make it or not. While we were driving, I said to them, 'Don't you think any policeman who sees three people wearing dark glasses in a car is going to be suspicious of the car?' So they said, 'Okay, take yours off.' I took my glasses off and closed my eyes. I never opened them once."

When they arrived, the filmmakers were led from the car into the house. The equipment was unloaded and the car stashed.

A safe house is a house with no history. It is anonymous. Books had been put on the shelves, soap and towels in the bathroom, sheets on the bed—all the props necessary to make it look lived in and livable for the three days they would spend there. The windows had been sealed up so that nobody could look in—or out.

"That night," recalled de Antonio, "I don't think anyone slept too well. I mean, there we were in that strange safe house. Believe me, a safe house may be safe but it sure is strange."

The next morning, they set up a large piece of scrim—a gauzy material that would be used to conceal the details of faces but hopefully allow gestures and even lip movements to be seen. They taped up the posters they had brought

with them—Ho, Allende, Fidel—and did those things that filmmakers do like look for the fuse box, figure out where to place the lights and so on. Everything was ready.

"We still didn't know who was going to be there," de Antonio said. "We never asked. We had placed ourselves implicitly in their trust. We knew they would do the right thing, so we anticipated it would be the national leadership of the organization. The door opened and in walked five people: Bernardine Dohrn, Bill Ayers, Cathy Wilkerson, Jeff Jones and Kathy Boudin."

"We shook hands," Lampson remembered. "Everybody was extremely nervous and we all sat down around this table. There was silence for a moment. Then, all at once, everyone just totally and spontaneously started to laugh and clap their hands. We were finally all together."

Was this the first time these five Weatherpeople had seen each other in a long while? "We tried to avoid knowing that," replied de Antonio, "so I can't give you an answer to that question. It's the kind of question I wouldn't answer even if I knew what the answer was. We were operating on a need-to-know basis. We never asked them if they belonged to the same collective or not. We didn't ask them how many collectives there were. All that kind of information is highly useful to the police."

"They themselves at the time described the filming as one of the most dangerous things they'd ever done. They had to anticipate that every mistake I made, or Haskell made, or Mary made, would be a mistake they made. Every mistake they make leads to their arrest or death."

There was an immediate good feeling in the room, Lampson recalled, and as they sat and talked about where to begin, she suddenly realized what an incredible moment it was. "We were sitting in this room with these people, doing this."

De Antonio felt it too. "You sud-

denly felt, you know, Christ, look at these people. You could almost see them on the wanted posters. There was a kind of thrill and excitement about being there with them.

"This was like sitting with Robin Hood. I mean, these people are fugitives, the whole state was against them. Now they themselves reject the myth that's grown up around them but people who live on the outside can't help but be aware of it. We had to break through that romance and show that their history is our history."

Take One

The Weather Underground has a keen sense of their own history. They speak for a whole generation when, in *Prairie Fire*, they describe their own development this way: "We inherited a deadening ideology of conformity and gradualism. Our first protests were law-abiding and peaceful. But we came to see that change is violently opposed every step of the way. We stood up and defied property, the state and the law, in street demonstrations and outrageous actions. Militant confrontation politics transformed us; we broke with a powerless past. As our own protest elicited tear gas, prison and bullets, we recognized the need to fight and the terrible cost of not doing all we possibly can."

In 1969, as SDS began to crumble, the Weatherman faction set out on a new and dangerous course. They singled out the Black Panthers and Third World guerrilla struggles as the vanguard; they came to believe in "the strategic necessity to build an underground movement, to learn to fight through fighting," in short, "to prepare and build the armed struggle."

The significant events of the early days, the Days of Rage (October 1969), the Flint War Council (December 1969), grew out of a reckless rage, a feeling that blind destruction was an expression of genuine revolutionary fervor.

In March 1970, because of a technical error, a bomb exploded in a townhouse in New York City, killing three Weatherpeople: Diana Oughton, Ted Gold and Terry Robbins. Two women, Kathy Boudin and Cathy Wilkerson, escaped the burning house and went underground. Within hours, the entire organization disappeared.

Now, five years later, a woman sat in front of a camera and said: "My name is Bernardine Dohrn. For a long time I watched the political developments of the Sixties taking place, especially in the South. I thought about joining them but I knew that taking the first step would change my life. And I hesitated for a long time. The first demonstration I took part in was an anti-HUAC demonstration, and then increasingly I became involved in organizing work in Chicago. I joined the open-housing drives for equal housing rights that took place on the West Side of Chicago in 1966. I helped organize rent strikes. This was for SCLC when Martin Luther King was in Chicago. At the height of the student movement I joined SDS. This was long after I was a student myself. I was elected national officer of SDS and traveled for two years as an organizer and speaker. During this time, I had the opportunity of meeting with the Vietnamese and the Cubans. This experience in particular made me a full-time revolutionary and really changed my own idea of myself and what the revolution was going to be."

Cathy Wilkerson spoke next: "In my freshman year of college in 1962, I went to a picket line outside of Woolworth's, in Cambridge, Maryland. There I heard Gloria Richardson speak, and that was the beginning of realizing that there was a struggle going on that had deep importance for everybody's life, including mine. But I was still somewhat of a spectator until 1964 when I went on a picket line against segregated schools in Chester, Pennsylvania, and was arrested for the first time and found that even the jails are segregated. But mainly I found out that there are masses of black people in this country who are fighting for

their freedom and that they are going to win."

Each of the others spoke in turn. Bill Ayers and Jeff Jones described the events that had shaped their lives and given direction to their politics. Ayers had been arrested at a draft board sit-in and taught at a community school before becoming active on Ohio and Michigan campuses for SDS; Jones, an antiwar activist from Philadelphia, had traveled to Indochina in 1967 and met with representatives of the NLF. Kathy Boudin completed the introductions. "I think the turning point in my life came when I went to Cleveland with an SDS organizers' project in 1964. One of the kinds of work that we did there was to try to organize a movement of women who were on welfare, to demand adequate living, housing and food for children. We used to go down to the welfare department and ask people if they needed any help and wanted to see the caseworker because it was hard to do that alone. Being on welfare is like being in captivity. One day, a woman asked me to come down with her to the welfare department. I went to pick her up. She lived in Hough.

Hough is the place where people were rioting because of lack of food, lack of housing. The day after the riots happened, I picked her up and her two children, and we drove down Hough Avenue. Hough Avenue was lined that day with jeeps, tanks, soldiers and rifles.

"She turned on the radio real loud and started to sing and we drove down through the middle of the tanks to the welfare department. She looked at me and she said, 'We're gonna get our welfare today and my people gonna get what we need.' I went to Cleveland to organize and teach, and it turned out that the people who I was working with, and in the struggle with, were people that taught me about the possibility of change in this country."

Take Two

The initial attempts at filming did

not go well. Both the filmmakers and the Weatherpeople were nervous. "One of the problems in the beginning," recalled de Antonio, "was that we were being overpolite with one another. It would have been easy if we were the usual media. They would have been able to act as they have in the past with the media—very tough, everything on their own terms. But when there's any solitude involved, you're a little more careful of yourself, you're a little more hesitant, a little more withdrawn, and this applied to all eight of us. One of them put it better than anybody: 'We want it to be our best and we want you to be your best.'"

The situation was unnatural for everybody in the room. No one had photographed the Weatherpeople for five years; they were not accustomed to being looked at, particularly in the way a camera looks at you. The fact that the project had been in the planning stage for six months created an almost unbearable sense of anticipation, a feeling that a great deal was riding on each word.

Moreover, in years of meetings and collective work, they had developed a style of discourse that was contrary to the requirements of film. They were used to speaking at great length, to developing their ideas in a leisurely fashion without interruption. But a magazine of film only lasts ten minutes.

As Lampson described it: "Ten minutes would go by and everybody's getting oiled up and then, boom. The roll was over, we had to stop, change rolls and start over again. It totally destroyed the atmosphere that had been built up. We always bounced back to the fact that here we were in this room with these machines and these lights."

De Antonio described the first frustrating attempts at filming. "We had a long horizontal mirror. Haskell shot into that, a long slow pan across us, continuing to one of them, Jeff Jones, behind the scrim. The others were seated next to him. Jeff identified himself and then, pointing to the others, identified them one by one. But in saying, 'I'm Jeff Jones,' he said more than 'I

am Jeff Jones,' and as he said it, he realized he had made certain errors and he corrected himself. So we went back and did it again. By the time we were on the third round of filming ourselves and looking at ourselves in the mirror, there was a certain awkwardness that was extremely inhibiting. You know, it was the feeling that we were doing it for the fourth time. Finally, Jeff got so frustrated that, quite spontaneously, he hit out at the scrim with his hand and said, 'I'm not accustomed to talking with something in front of me.' We all felt that way, that we had a wall between us, both literally and figuratively."

As the atmosphere became more relaxed, they began to discuss Vietnam, a logical point of departure, since the war was a touchstone for the Weather organization as it was for other sectors of the New Left. They accused the media and liberals of aiding the Ford administration in rewriting the history of the Sixties in order to convince people that a whole decade of militancy—from Selma to Mayday—had been a failure. They insisted that, on the contrary, the Peace Movement had made a material contribution to the Vietnamese victory.

According to the Weather Underground, the purpose of this effort to reinterpret our recent past is to call a halt to the revolution in consciousness that the New Left indeed achieved and to deflect attention from what they see as the terminal crisis of American capitalism. If Americans are to accept the new economic order—rising prices, loss of jobs, a lower standard of living—being imposed from above by the banks, corporations and their administration flunkies, they must be convinced that they are powerless to control their own lives, powerless to resist, powerless to fight.

The Weather Underground sees the Sixties as a watershed in the American political experience. Racism was exposed and fought; women, youth, blacks, Indians and Latinos recovered their own identities and struggled to

free themselves from the economic, political and psychic snares of male-dominated melting-pot liberalism; young women and men rejected the dominant values of conformity, materialism and security; white middle-class youth discovered that imperialism was not just a term in history books but that it could be used without quotation marks to describe the political realities of mid-century America.

Moreover, all these revelations hung together. As *Prairie Fire* put it: "We also came to recognize that issues which once seemed separate had a relationship to one another. Imperialism was 'discovered' as a whole, one system.

This was a tremendous breakthrough—it made sense of the world and our own experience. The same school which tracked students by sex, race and class into the appropriate niche, turned out to own slums in the black community and to develop antipersonnel weapons and strategies against revolution—to be in fact a tool of the corporations and the military."

At the same time that it became apparent that imperialism was woven out of whole cloth, the cloth itself began to fray. Vietnam, according to *Prairie Fire*, taught us that "the U.S. imperial system is not permanently superior, not invulnerable even at the height of its power, not loved by the people of the world, not satisfying the needs of the great majority of the U.S. people."

After the morning session was over, they broke for lunch, which consisted of salads and sandwiches. "The Vietnamese influence on them was extraordinary," recalled de

Weather film

Antonio. "They used chopsticks and drank tea most of the time. You will hear slurping sounds on the sound track that sound like someone taking a leak. It's the pouring of tea from a distance."

While they were eating lunch and later during the filming, they were startled by sounds from the street. "We heard the noise of backfires or motorcycles, noises that one ordinarily hears that have no meaning. Under the conditions of being in a closed space with the leaders of the Weather Underground, noises like backfires become magnified, as they must for anyone who's lived underground for a long time, let alone for the few days we were. In your mind, everything becomes something it isn't."

When they resumed the filming, the filmmakers posed certain questions that the Weatherpeople were hesitant to answer fully. De Antonio wanted them to give a detailed description of an action. He wanted to know how a target was selected, who was chosen to go, how the action was carried out, what kinds of mistakes were made, how the mistakes were remedied.

In response, they described the bombing of the U.S. Capitol Building in 1971. This sequence, edited for inclusion in the film, reflects the peculiar constraints of life underground, which force the film into a modernist, almost Bressonian mold. The traditional documentary forms are turned inside out. The filmmakers, de Antonio and Lampson, are almost constantly in view, peering intently at the camera, while the visual center of interest is absent. The Weatherpeople in-

trude almost like obstructions, as the backs of their heads obscure first one part of the screen and then another. The camera flits about the frame, picking up significant details, like Dohrn's bracelet or Lampson's teacup, but avoids what we want to see: their faces. Meanwhile, on the soundtrack, Jeff Jones describes the Capitol bombing in matter-of-fact tones.

"The organization chose the Capitol," says Jones, partly to dramatize "the fact that Congress was completely in Nixon's pocket. There was nobody in Congress that was taking an honest, principled position against the war in Vietnam."

"Several people volunteered to do it. To get past security, they carried the explosive materials in on their bodies in a certain way." With the aid of a map of the building they located an obscure room behind a barbershop, where they assembled the bomb. "As they were putting it in the place where it was supposed to go, it fell. There was a slanted ledge where they thought there was a shelf. When they realized what had happened—and that they were still there—they took a couple of deep breaths and came out. That evening, members of the organization alerted the press that the action was going to take place. And then it didn't happen. It didn't go off. The fall had in some way affected it and there was no explosion. So, the organization made a series of quick calls around the country and came up with a plan, which was to take a much smaller device and go back in, and put it on top of the one that had been placed there the day before. Sort of like a little starter motor. The second time in was tremendously more dangerous

and more difficult, because they had called in and already claimed they were going to do it. The people who did it were really making a very strong statement about their commitment to ending the war. So they went back in, and they put the little one on it. It worked. It ignited the big one."

Another potentially sensitive area was the role they played in helping Timothy Leary escape from prison, in view of Leary's current collaboration with the FBI.

According to the transcripts of their tapes, de Antonio said to the Weatherpeople: "I told you that if we ever made this film, I'd like to talk about something like Tim Leary, which is not exactly one of your high points, is it?"

Weather Underground: Laughter.

Bernardine Dohrn: "It was a lot of fun. To free anybody from prison is a wonderful experience; it is our intention to have the capability to do that a lot more."

De Antonio: "You sprung the wrong guy."

Bill Ayers: "I don't think you could spring the wrong guy. I think that freeing people from prison is a noble and a good thing to do, and something to be pleased with. Besides, it was a frame-up. He got ten years for one joint—maybe."

Jeff Jones: "Then he turned on us—under tremendous pressure from the state. And that's wrong."

Bernardine Dohrn: "I think that was his best self, that moment when he identified himself with the revolutionary forces in the world and actually risked his life to get out of prison, and he did that very self-consciously. And as an informer for the state, trying to

save his own hide, it's pathetic, and so he's been made to be his weaker self. He lost."

Their moderation on the question of Leary is perhaps not surprising in the light of their generally conciliatory attitude toward other groups on the left and their strong emphasis on the necessity of unity. Mary Lampson put it this way: "They used to think that everybody who wasn't willing to do what they did was wrong and chickenshit, and they ended up cutting themselves off from the broad movement. It's not like that anymore. The townhouse explosion had a lasting impact on them; it made them rethink their exclusive reliance on armed struggle, which they referred to in their 'New Morning' communique as the 'military error.' There are lots of levels of struggle, from day care to filmmaking."

"In the course of preparing for armed struggle in late 1969," they wrote in *Prairie Fire*, "we began mistaking friends for enemies. We applied the strictest standards of willingness to risk everything; we attacked those who could not come along the whole way, sometimes just because they were not ready to support everything we said and did. We did not learn from meaningful criticisms from comrades." They now see their task as waging a two-front war against imperialism—both underground and aboveground: "Our goal for this period is to help build a mass anti-imperialist movement and to build the armed struggle, the guerrilla forces. Legal and clandestine struggle are both necessary: agitation and attack, peaceful methods and violent methods, sometimes organizing the people step-by-step and sometimes taking a

leap through action to a new level. Mass work and armed struggle are united in revolution: Each needs to support and affirm and complement the other."

The first day's shooting lasted until early evening. After dinner, de Antonio, Lampson and Wexler evaluated the results. "I guess we were worried," recalled Lampson, "that the stuff we had gotten that first day was too rhetorical, too impersonal."

"We were afraid we were approaching the problems in a much too abstract way, that it was too much like a discussion of *Prairie Fire*. We felt that a lot of the conversation was stilted, that it took too long a time to express certain ideas and that it was very fragmentary. We knew they were really interesting people—from one personal contact with them, and I think we were unsure as to whether we had gotten that on film or not."

Haskell Wexler was frustrated because the film did not lend itself to a visual treatment. "Your whole idea ordinarily when you shoot people is to show people, show the eyes, show the mouth, show the expression. And the whole task here was to put yourself into reverse. Don't show this, don't show that. So for a while it was a good game, but then it got boring. There was nothing to shoot, nothing to see. A lot of times I just closed my eyes."

Chuckling, he went on, "We might as well have done a radio show! We could have gotten five dingalings from Hollywood Boulevard and photographed them behind a scrim and then dubbed in a soundtrack that the Underground would have sent us on a cassette."

And not have risked anybody's life.

"You know, I was in Chicago for the Days of Rage, only I didn't know at the time that it was the Days of Rage. I thought it was going to be an ordinary antiwar march. I was near the front, walking behind some people who started all the fracas. One of the people who was there was one of the people we were filming. I told him that at the time I was really shocked, because I had marched in a lot of peace marches and wherever there was any violence, it had always come from the people along the curb and never from the marchers. But in this case, the people I was marching with all of a sudden looked like they went bananas. They started to throw rocks and they did it right in front of the police, too, which I thought was kind of dumb.

"But I changed my mind about a lot of things during the filming," Wexler continued. "They were good people, dedicated people, very sensitive to one another and to us as people and not just as political beings. And I sensed that it was not an act that they were able to turn on for special occasions. It seemed very much a part of the way they were all the time."

"The next morning when we got up it was dark," de Antonio said. "The sight of all that fucking film gear lying around was depressing as hell. We hadn't taken anything down. You see that camera and the tripod and the lights and all that stuff, and you think, 'Man, we're going to go through this all over again.'

"And that's when they came

in from another room, where they'd slept, very much on the up—they were very big on the up—and said, 'Now we have to have a critique on everything we've done,' which apparently they had decided to do in a meeting they had held the night before while we were having ours."

They discussed what it had been like the first day. The Weatherpeople made it clear that it had not been what they anticipated. It was decided that the physical arrangement of the shots would be changed in order to dispense with the scrim. The Weatherpeople would face the film crew directly with Wexler shooting into a mirror, so that only their backs were revealed.

This criticism generated a discussion of the filmmaking process, during which it became clear that each group had, to an extent, different priorities.

One of the areas of disagreement was over the Weatherpeople's use of political rhetoric. "As any filmmakers would," Lampson said, "we kept pushing them to be more specific and not so rhetorical: 'Get more concrete, get more personal.' And they resisted because they didn't want the film to be an exposé of the Weather Underground. They didn't want it to be too personal—what kind of toothpaste or deodorant Bernardine Dohrn uses—the kind of thing that the media is always doing. They wanted the film to be about their ideas, a tool around which people can organize and be organized.

"But I had always had an aversion to words like 'imperialism' and 'capitalism.' I had never really understood what

those words meant and I had never trusted people who threw them around freely. But when you really know what you mean when you use those words — as I found they did when I listened to them—the words can be very useful. The struggle is to constantly redefine those terms and make them mean something. And that's the purpose of the movie.

"Of course, those words must be attached to life, to lifestyle, because that's where politics is finally measured, in what you do. That's why we felt that those personal things were very important. We tried to convince them that if they trusted us enough, we would not abuse that element, not sensationalize it. We felt that these were precisely the kinds of things it was important to get into, to explain to people where they came from, personally and politically."

De Antonio explained, "None of these people just dropped from the sky and said, 'I'm Lenin' or 'I'm Mao.' Every one of them has a long personal history, and when they finally did agree to speak about themselves, they talked about their childhoods, the kinds of homes they were brought up in. Every one of them speaks with a certain bitterness about having tried to deal with the system, as they all did in the beginning."

One question seemed to bridge the personal and the political. "Haskell suddenly asked an overwhelming question," recalled de Antonio. "He said, 'When you go out on an action, are you afraid?' That was a big moment, because fear is an intensely personal thing and they responded in a uniquely personal way. They

stressed the fact that you aren't politically mature until you recognize your fear and then you can both use it and understand it. It's the sort of mad person who pretends to experience no fear that becomes dangerous."

Jeff Jones answered Wexler this way: "Fear, yes. Every time, I think, for all of us. I know for me, every time I see a policeman I have this rush of adrenalin. And I take a defensive stance, in a martial-art type of sense. I mean, not a fighting posture but an alert posture. I remind myself who I am, what my name is, what my various numbers are, where I'm going, where I've been. That's an interesting way to live. There are risks every day. I wake up in the morning and I wonder how many times I'm going to be nervous today, 'cause it happens every day.

"Once, about a year after I went underground, I was standing on the sidewalk next to this orange juice stand, and suddenly two police cars screeched to a halt in front of me. The cops jumped out with their guns drawn, grabbed me and threw me into the back of a paddy wagon. I didn't know if they knew who I was or what. We went a couple of blocks; the paddy wagon stopped, the door opened, a guy looked in and said, 'That's not him.' They'd mistaken me for somebody else. The cops were very apologetic and offered to drive me home. I said, 'No thanks,' and walked away.

"And then there's the other side of it, which is that we definitely feel good about what we're doing, what we've done, and right now it would be pretty hard to feel any better, 'cause we feel there's been a victory

in Vietnam, which is a victory for the American people. We certainly identify it as a victory for ourselves. It's something that we fought for for ten years. I'd have to have my foot run over by a police car to feel bad today."

Cathy Wilkerson: "The other thing to say about fear is, I think, that because of the nature of American society, a lot of people wake up that way, like the people in Appalachia who fear the day that the strip miners are going to come by, or people who are in prison. That fear is everywhere. And the government means no good by the people. It only means bad, only means hurt."

Bernardine Dohrn: "I was a much more fearful person growing up in this society than I am now because now the fear is real fear, it's not paranoia, it's not fear of the unknown. It's a very tangible thing. And that doesn't make it go away at all.

"We have a strong ethic that has been very important in our survival, that fear is an open subject. When someone is afraid in a situation they have an obligation to say so because it's often based on a real thing, and we'll figure out later if it was right or not. We have really tried to discourage all the posturing kinds of things that might make you say, 'It's my problem, I've got to deal with it,' rather than this is probably a real thing and we should all act on it."

Wexler asked them what it was like to live underground. He associated the word with a claustrophobic existence, with someone hiding in a basement, fed through a slot in the door—a fugitive in essentially a defensive posture. The Weather-

people stressed that this could not be further from the truth. They circulate freely. Many have aboveground jobs and they do aboveground organizing as well.

"There is something that is not in the film," said de Antonio, "and that's the fashion in which we parted. We all held hands and they gave us presents. It sounds corny to say a group of people sat around in the middle of a room and held hands but it was a very moving experience. The most touching thing in the whole film for me was that the men and women of the Weather Underground had made a very beautiful quilt which they gave to me, a political quilt with a political message. It says: THE FUTURE WILL BE WHAT WE THE PEOPLE STRUGGLE TO MAKE IT. It is a message which I happen to accept and believe very strongly and it's one which they are believing and living.

"When we were done," de Antonio went on, "they loaded the car; then we were led out to the car and put into it. Again, they employed various methods to make sure that we did not observe which way we were going.

"When we arrived at the destination, we all shook hands and kissed. Then our driver got out; there was an enormous ahhh, like the deflation of a tire, an audible gasp. And then we got the hell out of there.

"As we drove back, we all started laughing and making jokes about the funny things that had happened during the shooting. Like, I remember after it was all over, one of them offered me a joint and I thought, 'I can't smoke that, it's breaking the law!'

"We were very nervous be-

cause we had all the film, unsanitized. We had no idea that the film revealed anything but we knew that there would be mistakes. And Haskell kept saying, 'Look, I just know any number of places where Bill or Kathy would turn around and get a full shot, or I would drop the camera beneath the scrim and you get a shot of four or five people, crystal clear.'

The next major problem was the lab, getting the film processed and printed without blowing the whole operation. "The lab represented a major security risk," continued de Antonio. "There's a kind of police mentality around labs because the FBI hangs around them. During the days of Vietnam, the largest single customer of the labs was no single studio or network; it was the U.S. government, turning out propaganda shit by the millions of feet. Movielab, where my office was, had two whole floors where you needed FBI clearance to get on the floors. All you would need is some executive who doesn't want to lose the business, to call it to the attention of the LAPD or the FBI. Or a lab technician. Lab technicians are technicians. They want to see film the way they're accustomed to seeing it, especially when it's shot by Haskell Wexler. They expect sharp, clear images. Now lab technicians don't look at film unless it's porn, or unless it's weird. This would be weird. 'What is all this stuff?' they'd say. It would look like some sort of fogging, or a light leak. What it was, of course, was the large piece of scrim that we were shooting through.

"So the lab was a risk. When we got ready to have the film processed, we thought of all the

possible alternatives. It was too dangerous to take the film out of the country, because what we had, then, was one copy, the negative, unsanitized. If it got seized, we'd be finished. We thought of taking it out of the L.A. area. Where would we take it? Would we offer to pay cash, thousands of dollars for developing? That was wild! That would draw attention to you at once. They would certainly look at the film carefully because they would think it was some kind of superporn or something illegal. Only illegal people pay with cash. We live in a credit economy.

"Going into a lab using a false name or somebody else's name would be to set up another of those situations in which you were unknown and therefore people would look at you. It seemed that, finally, the most normal thing to do was to give it to Haskell's lab in L.A. Haskell has a solid commercial reputation in L.A. That was the main factor. He had a company that puts thousands of feet of color film through the lab every week. It would be going through so fast that, in the normal course of events, nobody would see anything. The secret of underground activity is, everything as normal as possible. So, in this case, normal as possible meant putting it through the lab as Haskell's film.

"That was the precaution," de Antonio said. "Any attention brought to that film would have been a lack of precaution. Put it through the way we would put through a Royal Crown Cola commercial.

"Now, of course, a day or so after we put the film in, an executive from the lab called me and said, 'There's something

radically wrong with this film. We just started developing it; the very beginning, where the people are looking in the mirror, is very clear, but everything after that is fogged. You can't see the faces.' So I said, my heart in my mouth, 'That's the way it's supposed to be. Just keep developing it in your normal way.' Then they got hold of Haskell, who of course told them the same thing. So we got away with it. Barely.

"When we finally got the stuff back from the lab and started looking at the fucking film, we almost died. Those people, from time to time, a glimpse here and a glimpse there, were clear as hell. Before we began shooting, Haskell looked through the lens, I looked through the lens, the Weatherpeople looked through the lens—and all of us felt that nothing could be revealed. We even shot some tests on videotape—and the quality of video being what it is, we were absolutely certain that nobody would see anything. But when we looked at the processed film, you could really see them. This was why the immediate priority was staying up day and night sanitizing the film.

"At this point we had the sense that the thing was just about blown and that the FBI was on to us. We found a place where there was an editing machine and Mary and I just disappeared and we went over it practically a frame at a time. And Mary would say, 'That's better than any mug shot!' We never emerged from the place we were in until all the film was looked at, cut and destroyed."

We asked de Antonio about the sound, which is a complicated problem, because in the editing process the sound has

to be transferred from the quarter-inch tape on which it is originally recorded to 16mm magnetic track (basically recording tape the size of 16mm film). "It was hairy. Say I took the quarter-inch tape personally to a transfer house and said to the guy, 'Look, I want to transfer all this sound myself, with earphones, and I don't want anybody near me. I want your guarantee that you're not going to listen to it.'

"All the guy would have to do was routinely turn up the sound and there would be a voice saying, 'I am Kathy Boudin. I joined SDS in 1965.' But it was abnormal. It was weird. Why does a guy want to go into a transfer house on a hot day and do this fucking thing himself, when he's paying the full rate?

"So I made up a story. I said, 'Look, there's a new kind of analysis. Existential Transactional Analysis. And we're under severe legal restrictions because this was a group session, in the charge of an analyst, and we could not get permission to finish the film unless we guaranteed absolute secrecy each step of the way. If anyone found out about the film, the doctor and the patients would withdraw and we'd have spent all this money. For nothing.' He understood it. It was convincing. There was no problem."

But about a week after the film came out of the lab, the filmmakers were sure the FBI was on to them. The FBI had staked out Wexler's house. "There was a car out front that was supposedly having its tire fixed," Wexler explained, "with a couple of guys looking so much like cops, you wouldn't believe it. They were just sort

of working around the tire—so then I knew something was going on. And then later my son saw a guy out in front of the house taking pictures of the car, of the house, and so forth. Obviously an FBI guy, you know, the way he was dressed. And then I saw a guy up on the hill with binoculars, watching the house. It seemed like the FBI was sending people around just to make sure I knew they were watching. They didn't even bother to be surreptitious. If someone wanted to take a picture of the cars in front of my house, they could just go by with a Minox and click off a couple of shots, but to stand out in the middle of the street with a Polaroid — that's a little much!"

"We were sitting up at night biting our fingernails," continued de Antonio, "saying, 'Where the hell was the leak?' Everything seemed airtight. You know, you started getting those terrible ideas that the FBI was omnipotent and omniscient. Which we know is not true. There are two great mistakes: One is to think that they know everything; the other is to think that they know nothing. The truth is in the middle. The truth is they are very thorough. Every time you talk to them you make a mistake.

"We spent days and nights reconstructing how the FBI found out that we were up to something. We exhausted every possibility the human mind can think of. We worried that x, y or z had happened. We even went into the realm of the insane, speculating that the sound studio was suspicious and that they had some kind of an outlet off the transfer machine, that they were making a secret quarter-inch tape for the FBI."

Their most likely mistake turned out to be something much more obvious. The day after they left the safe house, Lampson, Wexler and two Weatherpeople turned up at Martin Luther King Hospital in Los Angeles, where a doctors' strike was in progress. They only stayed for ten minutes, leaving when they were questioned by a hospital administrator, but that was apparently long enough. There was a rotating video camera on the hospital roof, scanning the crowd, and the chances are good that they were photographed by the LAPD as well. "My guess," said de Antonio, "is that the LAPD didn't know who they had. By the time they took the pictures to the Red Squad and the FBI, we'd had time to get the film processed and out of the lab."

The filmmakers thought the attempt to film at Martin Luther King was foolhardy but they were overruled by the Weatherpeople, who apparently felt the risk of discovery was small compared to the dividends—the chance to speak to striking doctors and the opportunity to show on film that they could move freely aboveground.

FBI surveillance continued after de Antonio and Lampson returned to New York. Friends and families were interrogated. De Antonio finally called the New York office of the FBI and told them, "Get your fucking gumshoes off my back." The next day, as if in response, he, Lampson and Wexler were subpoenaed before a federal grand jury in Los Angeles and ordered to appear on June 12th. They were told to bring with them "any and all motion picture film, including but not limited to all negatives, working copies and prints, and all sound tracks and sound recordings

made in connection with the filming of such motion pictures, concerning a group known as the Weathermen or Weather Underground."

The three filmmakers admitted to the press that they were, in fact, engaged in making a film on the Weather Underground but would refuse to cooperate with the grand jury, arguing that the subpoenas violated their First Amendment rights and constituted a particularly noxious form of prior restraint. For this act of defiance, they would risk a contempt citation and jail for the term of the grand jury.

They quickly gathered around them a formidable array of legal talent. Lampson's attorney, Leonard Boudin (father of Kathy Boudin), had successfully defended Daniel Ellsberg and the Harrisburg 7. De Antonio's attorney, Harvard law professor Charles Nesson, had worked with Boudin on the Ellsberg and Harrisburg cases, secured a parole for Daniel Berrigan and is currently working on the appeal in the Edelin abortion case in Boston. Michael Kennedy, Wexler's attorney, had represented members of the Weather organization in Detroit and San Francisco and defended Los Siete de la Raza. Boudin, Nesson and Kennedy were joined by ACLU attorney Mark Rosenbaum, who is currently suing the U.S. government on behalf of Jane Fonda.

Within two days, Eleanore Kennedy, film producer Bert Schneider and the ACLU of Southern California mobilized an impressive roster of 43 Hollywood personalities to sign a statement in defense of "the right of people to make a film about any subject, and specifically, the right of these people to make a film about the

Weather Underground Organization."

The list included Hal Ashby, Warren Beatty, Harry Belafonte, Peter Bogdanovich, Jeff Bridges, Mel Brooks, Peter Davis, William Friedkin, Shirley MacLaine, Jack Nicholson, Arthur Penn, Rip Torn, Robert Towne, Jon Voight, Robert Wise and Paul Williams, as well as Stanley Sheinbaum of the ACLU.

The subpoenas were withdrawn.

Four months later Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert C. Bonner said: "At this point it is extremely unlikely that new subpoenas would be issued to the filmmakers." Bonner declined to comment on the reasons the subpoenas were withdrawn.

Lawyer Leonard Boudin is of the opinion that the whole operation was poorly thought out. "They operated from the hip," he told us, "the way they did when they indicted Egbal Ahmad for conspiracy to kidnap Henry Kissinger. Or when they filed a criminal complaint against Dan Ellsberg the night before the Supreme Court argument in the *New York Times* case. It's that kind of fast moving thing, without thinking what will happen if there's a fight back. I don't think John Mitchell ever thought that the *New York Times* was not going to capitulate, when those powerful calls came from Mitchell himself and Robert Mardian. The government did not anticipate the fact that its basic power would be challenged."

Michael Kennedy explained it this way: "In the good old Nixon days, a Weather grand jury like this one would have been handled by Guy Goodwin and his representatives from

the Internal Security Division of the Justice Department. And what they would do is get a liaison in the local U.S. Attorney's office, wherever they happened to set the circus up. That was not done in this case. Bonner is a local man. We heard through two sources that Bonner got jumped on very hard by Justice for having moved so precipitously. There was a tactical fuckup by him and the local FBI office in that they should have waited, put on a very good surveillance instead of a sloppy surveillance, and not called a grand jury at all, hoping that the filmmakers would lead them to the fugitives."

The withdrawal of the subpoenas leaves Lampson, Wexler and de Antonio in a legal limbo, subject to a variety of possible indictments, including conspiracy to harbor fugitives. Although they will continue to remain under FBI surveillance, their lawyers feel that it is unlikely they will be resubpoenaed, because legal and political conditions are not favorable to a government victory.

Legally, the case is unusual because it is perhaps the first time that the federal government has attempted to suppress a documentary film, especially before it is finished. The government, of course, denies that it wishes to suppress the film, nor does it concede that First Amendment issues are at stake. But, as Charles Nesson put it: "Our situation was one in which, effectively, the government had put its foot on the typewriter. The subpoena was prior restraint that would really have stopped the production process." Or, as Haskell Wexler put it at a press conference in Los Angeles: "What the government is demanding is

shown no signs of wavering. Haskell Wexler was cautiously optimistic: "People are still sensitive enough to the way things are to know that if they come out to sign a public statement like this in our defense, the possibility exists of some kind of pressure being exerted against them. It did take a certain amount of courage. I don't think it was just because people learned the lessons of the Fifties. I think they learned the lessons of the younger people who showed that defiance of the establishment isn't always death to those who defy. Sometimes you can come out and you can win."

And Bert Schneider, who made most of the phone calls to rally support, put it more bluntly: "The only way to fight oppression is aggressively. You should fight back right away. The government will harass people, will intimidate people, will fuck them over just so far as people will let them. We have to learn to mobilize ourselves to fight repression every step of the way. As soon as it shows its head, you've got to be there to chop it off."

The most notable exceptions to the enthusiastic declaration of solidarity were unexpected: Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden, who had worked with Wexler on *Introduction to the Enemy*. Hayden, one of the founders of SDS, felt that as a candidate for the Senate (running against John Tunney in the California Democratic primary) it was necessary to issue his own statement. He protested the "harassment" of the filmmakers and placed it in context of the government's other attempts to block the disclosure of embarrassing information like the Pentagon Papers. But he failed

to mention the Weather Underground by name.

Hayden insisted he had never accepted the Weather analysis of the American political situation, and still doesn't. "The original theory of Weatherman," he argued, "was that we were in a situation of virtual fascism, because of Nixon's policies and because of popular opinion being adjusted to these policies. And therefore, the only recourse, in their view, was resistance against this closed system. That's proven, I think, to be a fear that did not unfold. The democratic process came through.

"We're not living under a police state, precisely because people can be reached by political methods, by organizing, by education and so on. So what's the sense of blowing up? If you're doing political work of a legal nature and you're identified with Weather politics, aren't you bringing grand jury and police heat down on you? The dilemma of those who politically support the Weather Underground is, how can they advocate both legal and illegal activity simultaneously without bringing enormous strains and contradictions to an organization?"

Hayden's optimism may be premature. It remains to be seen whether events of the last few years can be parlayed into any significant social change through electoral politics. Many of those who are identified with Weather politics would probably agree that the Weather analysis which predicted the imminence of fascism was incorrect. But they would argue that the breathing space we now enjoy was created

by just those kinds of extra legal protests and resistance Hayden disparages. "We are up against the ruling class," they say in *Prairie Fire*, "and it makes no sense to ask them to reform themselves."

And what of the film now? Work was resumed after a brief interval pending assessment of the government's intentions. It is scheduled for a November 7th release.

We asked de Antonio what he anticipates. "Obviously, the main political aim is to get the film made," he replied. "What can the government do now but subpoena us again or come with a search warrant to get the film. We've gone through all this with our lawyers, and we're prepared for any eventuality."

With mock indignation, he went on: "They'd be creamed if they came and took it. If the government were to destroy the footage, we would be outraged! This film is private property. I mean, are we living under capitalism or not?"

SIDE 1

BAND 1—Jeff Jones: We're in a house...
Bernardine Dohrn: The reason we're underground...
Kathy Boudin: Many people think that we...
Mary Lampson: Because most people...
K.B.: Being forced...
M.L., K.B., M.L.: They're after you...
Billy Ayers: We think of building an...
J.J.: We're a group of people...
Cathy Wilkerson: We all were produced by...

BAND 2—H. Rap Brown: I say that violence...
Cathy Wilkerson: I remember really...
Malcolm X: I hope I haven't put anybody...
B.D.: My name is...
M. L. King Jr. (Chicago 1966): We're going to march...
B.D.: Black people of Chicago...
Fidel Castro (rally in Havana)...
K.B.: My name is...
B.A.: My name is...

BAND 3—Anti-war demonstration (Pentagon Oct., 1967): Peace now...
J.J.: As long as we've been...
"The War Is Over" song...
Ho Chi Minh: (1966) Comrades and friends, what...
Nguyen Thi Dinh, Phil Ochs, President Ford (1975): Today, America...
J.J.: We are not...
B.D.: Everything the U.S. had...
B.A.: I do think that the most...
B.D.: This belief...
B.A.: What you do doesn't make...
B.D.: The lessons of the war...
K.B.: You need this war...
B.D.: Both political parties...
J.J. (Chicago 1968): Power belongs to the young...

BAND 4—...
B.D.: SDS came out of conditions...
Jonathan Lerner (Chicago Oct., 1969): We no longer simply...
Chicago Statue bombing...
B.D.: We tried everything...
J.J.: I believe that there's...
B.D.: I would say that we...
Mayor Richard Daley: What right has anyone...
B.D.: I think Rap Brown...
K.B.: Very quickly after the...
B.D.: Not only was it not...

SIDE 2

BAND 1—Emile de Antonio: Mary and I found...
 B.A.: There was a period of time...C.W.: One
 of the things that...B.D.: Imperialism has as...
 C.W.: One of the hardest...B.A.: It was really
 the women...E.d.A.: The Days of Rage was...
 B.D.: The next acts were...Fred Hampton (ad-
 dressing a rally in Chicago 1969): Bobby Seale
 is going through...Deborah Johnson: Someone
 came into the...Edward Hanrahan: The imme-
 diate...D.J.: I heard the pigs say...Reporter:
 Sergeant Groth described...B.D. (press confer-
 ence Chicago Dec., 1969): it's two and a half...
 B.A.: At that time...Reporter...B.D.: Well,
 we'll march...R: If there...
 BAND 2—B.A.: I think that we...M.L.: Do
 you...B.D.: We believe in...J.J.: For a suc-
 cessful...B.D.: Our actions...

BAND 3—Police Detective (N.Y.C. June 1975):
 One copy was...B.D.: Puerto Rico is a...poem
 "Mongo Affair"...B.D.: Puerto Rico has a long
 ...P.D.: The letters were...

BAND 4—B.D.: We get CBS...J.J.: It certainly
 seemed...B.A.: I find all of...M.L.: The prob-
 lem is we're...J.J.: I feel like I've...B.D.:
 Here we are...E.d.A.: And we, no matter...

BAND 5—B.D.: There is no question...E.d.A.:
 That's what makes...K.D.: What is the best...
 E.d.A.: By telling us how...J.J.: We're scien-
 tists...C.W.: The point of view...B.D.: So, it
 definitely...B.A.: I think that we agreed...

BAND 6—K.B.: There's a poem that...Fireman
 (N.Y.C. March 6, 1970): As far as we can...
 B.D.: It was a long...J.J.: The people who

were...B.D.: Everybody looked at the...C.W.:
 And from that...K.B.: One of the amazing...B.D.:
 People that we went...M.L.: Can you tell...
 C.W.: Ted Gold, Terry Robbins...B.D.: Diana
 was a teacher...E.d.A.: Who chose...B.A.:
 Terry was an...B.D.: He knew every...C.W.:
 Terry had dropped...B.D.: Terry was a New
 York...J.J., B.D.: It wasn't the...B.A.:
 Every year on...C.W.: One of the errors...
 B.A.: Mistakes were made...C.W.: We saw
 going...K.B.: "For Assata Shakur" Underground
 is not...

SIDE 3

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BAND 1—E.d.A.: What about a specific...
 Chief of Police WDC (March 1, 1971): The voice
 sounded...J.J.: We put a lot of...E.d.A.: Can
 you give us...B.A.: I think it's important...H.W.,
 B.A., J.J.: Several people volunteered...Judy
 Gumbo: The Weather Underground...Senator Mike
 Mansfield: It was outrageous...Vietnam Vets
 (Capitol Steps, Spring, 1971): My name is...

BAND 2—Haskell Wexler: I would like...J.J.:
 Fear? Yes...B.D.: I mean, it's...J.J.: I had an
 experience...B.D.: We have a very strong...
 C.W.: The other thing...B.D.: I was much more
 ...J.J.: In the underground...

BAND 3—E.d.A.: I mean, what the...B.A.: Well,
 there are two...B.D.: We came out of...

BAND 4—J.J.: On a little press...B.D.: So our
 attempt was...J.J.: Three-quarters of the copies
 ...B.A.: And rather than working for...J.J.:
 We just started...B.D.: It wasn't just a...J.J.:
 I think one of the...C.W.: We spent a lot of...
 J.J.: When you're putting...B.A.: I think it's a
 common...

SIDE 4

BAND 1—B.D.: I think you could start...Pete
 Seeger, "Solidarity Forever"...B.D.: If there
 were any way...B.A.: We do think there's a...

BAND 2—Flip Crawley (Attica Prison, Sept. 1971):
 We no longer sish...B.D.: One of the most beau-
 tiful...L. D. Barkley: We are men. We...F.C.:
 We are not...B.D.: The Attica Brothers...State
 Trooper: Put your hands on...

BAND 3—M.L.: I find I agree with...B.D.:
 Well, it's not a personal...B.A.: There are
 many levels on...B.D.: Well, I think the
 revolutionary...

BAND 4—M.L.: How many people...B.D.:
 Well, we're a very small...K.B.: As we have
 ...B.D.: It's not a trick...

BAND 5—J.J.: I want to ask you about...
 Middle aged Man: yes...J.J., M.A.M.: All
 these people that...Black Woman: I do...K.B.,
 B.W., Middle aged White Woman: If this coun-
 try...K.B.: What does socialism...M.A.W.W.:
 Well, unless I'm mistaken...B.D.: Our job as...
 B.W.: The things I want...J.J., B.W.: Survive?
 ...K.B.: What do you think?...B.D.: When
 you look for an...K.B., In Spanish, B.D.: We
 are not fortunate...Young Dominican Man: I
 can't take a...B.A.: What we're seeing...J.J.:
 Why haven't the popular...B.D.: poem "Venom"
 ...B.A.: If you really have...B.D.: If you look
 at...

BAND 6—B.D.: There's a relationship...B.A.:
 We think of communism...C.W.: More and more
 people...Y.D.M., B.A.: That we're seeing
 rumblings...J.J.: Why haven't the popular...
 B.D.: "Venom": I wonder about the...B.A.: If
 you really have ...B.D.: If you look at it...
 B.A.: A real obligation of... "There's a New
 World Coming"...B.A.: That same process...