

THE PERMACULTURE ALTERNATIVE

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I grew up in a little village in which there were no rich people, nor any poor. You had no fear of starving, nor any hope of becoming rich. We were all on one social level. If you were without something, you never had to worry about whether you would eat or not. My family members were the bakers there. We just supplied bread at no charge to people who couldn't buy bread. That sort of thing went on all the time. Then money started to accumulate, and we got a totally detached class of people.

There are plenty of resources in the world for everybody. There is land, food -- everything. The fact that some of the people are trying to accumulate these resources is the reason for the problems we have today. This centralization of resources has extended to the centralization of energy, which is causing our acid rain; and the centralized control of transport, which has resulted in our freeways.

We are attempting to provide opportunities for people to come out of this system.

What went wrong with the whole alternative movement was that it didn't offer an alternative. I have spoken to many persons who have said, "I wish I could do what you are doing. Can you employ me?"

I would have to say, "No, I can't, because what I am in isn't employment."

Increasingly, though, I have been able to say, "While I cannot employ you, I can give you a job in which you can earn your way, and you can leave your present job right now." We have been able to do that lately.

So we provide an alternative. But I know of few cases where the alternative isn't struggling just to look after itself. In most cases, it is not even feeding itself. Our action, if it is vigorous, completely changes that.

We ask, "What is your present employment?"

He answers, "I'm in this travel agency."

"Great! You can earn your money with us as a travel agent."

You might also earn your money with us as an accountant, or something else. We are now able to offer more opportunities of that sort.

In Tagari, we are not becoming our town's employer. Instead, we are changing our status from that of employee to that of a sharer in enterpris-

es. What we are up to is providing the alternative for the person who would rather work with a jolly mob of people, laughing and giggling and packaging seed, and who know what they are up to, and who they are dealing with, and where the money goes.

Outside of what we are doing we haven't seen any great signs of an alternative appearing. Yet it is going to have to. I think the whole situation is ready for it. We just haven't thought of half the things we can do yet. Tagari handles a minute amount of enterprises because they are a minute community.

Most of the cities in Australia now have Permaculture associations. We have set up city farms. We get gifts of land into the Institute and transfer it to people within the cities, and so on. Many of those Permaculture people are heavily involved in work in the cities. On one hand, they are consultants; and on the other hand they participate in structuring the local social milieu. Some of them are working hard in the center of the town, and they won't come out.

So we want to support these people.

Anyone can begin a travel agency. Somebody right here can earn a living locally doing all that booking, and it would be very handy. Our consultants must do a lot of flying. How many are you flying to China? Twenty. What is it going to cost them in fares? Twenty people at \$2,000 is how much? The normal agency fee is about 15%. \$6,000 just to book their flight. To whom do we want to give that money? Give it to somebody who belongs to this group of people, where all the profit is not just going to the top, and never coming out anywhere in rural areas.

That is just an example of the hundreds of trips we must make. We are leaving here for directions north, south, east and west. Other people are coming here and leaving here. So we need a travel agent. But that is not a full time job. That keeps one of the people here digging the garden most of the time, and occasionally being a travel agent. What would you pay someone to take over the digging of your garden? \$7 an hour? As a travel agent, you may book for anyone, of course. Then, if the business grows, you can pay two gardeners and a travel agent.

Everything we have done, we did the hard

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way. We had to study to become a travel agent. Now if we had known a travel agent, we could have operated as a local office. But we didn't. We had to learn how to become a travel agent. If we had known a real estate agent, we could have opened a local office.

The real estate business, as a function of Permaculture, doesn't necessarily give us any additional ownership of land. But it gives us a measure of control over what happens across a lot of land. That is what we want to achieve.

I would like people in America to take greater advantage of this real estate business. Somewhere in the consultancy may be -- there often is -- a qualified real estate person, or a person who might know someone who is qualified, whom they can appoint as an agent. Then you could operate Permaculture real estate branch offices.

It was two years before we could start to become real estate agents. Now we have found six real estate agents who are living as hippies. So we can get one straight away. They had become sick of the business -- just selling graziers more land. So they got out and went to live in the bush. But they still qualify as real estate agents. Real estate agents can also manage properties, earning management fees, getting paid perhaps \$1,000 or \$2,000 a year just to manage the hiring, and to oversee the property. They don't take any risk. They just do the leasing and management of the properties. A local real estate agent can spend the most of his time digging the garden, and occasionally driving down the road just to see that nobody is bulldozing up the trees, and that people are pruning the orchards on time, and so on. There is quite a range of employment opportunity here.

We are going to need someone right here to manufacture Yeoman's plow. What you do is put the components out to three small manufacturers. Somebody makes the shoe, and somebody else makes the shank. A couple of kids who have nothing else to do, an unemployed group, makes the frame, and they do ten at a time. If they can make the shanks, good. Our manufacturer then bolts the parts together, and we order the plows from him. He prints up a little brochure on the plow, and appoints distributors. That is all there is to it.

Our designers become the distributors. All they need to carry about is these little brochures that they hand out to their clients. Whenever a plow is wanted, one is broken down and packaged through to the client.

If you get smart, you might do all the manufacturing of it yourself. If you don't want to make shoes and discs and things out of special steel, you contract that part out. You might care to send out a card just to see if anyone wants to pre-order such a plow. If you get ten pre-orders, then you contract parts for ten. I point out that everything we do can be started without any capital, or with very little capital.

How do you open a publishing business? You issue cards soliciting pre-orders, and you get your money in. You then spend all the money you get for pre-orders on printing. Remember that what you get for pre-orders is the retail price. So for every book you sell on pre-order, you will be able to print additional copies. What you have then is an additional supply of books, all yours, all paid for, after authors, editors, etc., get their percentage.

Our business is to teach people self-sufficiency. We do not handle anything that doesn't promote self-reliance. I don't see any necessity for any of our people to be running around looking for money. There is more money than we can handle right in these systems, if we manage them ourselves. But if we leave the management to others, there is none in it. In Australia, we have been able to distribute Permaculture Two through our own people. That is what we want to do.

Now what about seed and seed companies? Let me tell you about the Self-Reliance Seed Company [now replaced by Phoenix Seed Co.-Ed.]. It deals only in open-pollinated seeds. It deals only in varieties from which people can save their own seed. It will collect seed from anywhere in the world. If we ever set up a seed farm in Australia, we could get sprayed. So we must never set up a large seed farm. We break it up. What we want is for everybody here to say what seed they will grow, and what seed they will collect. What we are proposing to do is to print Self-reliance Seed Company envelopes to be issued with a rubber stamp that says, for example,

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Queen Anne's Lace. The grower requests 200 envelopes, and is sent the stamp and envelopes. The grower then collects the seed, fills the envelopes, and stamps them Queen Anne's Lace; and he receives what amounts to the price before retail. In this way the money returns to the grower, to the person who goes into the forest and collects the seed of the red oak. Nobody else gets a large margin. This person gets the grower's margin and the packager's margin.

You will need a seed cataloger, who is really a publisher. It is normal for seed companies to list three packet sizes. You want a good handful of seed for a person who has a big garden. For the urban gardener, you want 10 carefully selected seeds -- 10 zucchini, for example -- for the urban gardener wants only 10 seeds.

We are not putting other good seed companies out of business. What we want is our seed. We want pea tree seed; we want all the Chinese seeds, the medicinal herbs. In our catalog, we list those open-pollinated seed companies, such as Johnny's Selected Seeds and Kent Whealy's Seed Savers Exchange. Our catalog advertises their wares, free of charge. If they would list ours, that would be good, too. Then we might agree to break into different sections of the market. The seed that we want is Permaculture Seed.

Every seed company that ever starts has to buy seed to begin. So in the back of the catalog, you ask for growers to supply seed. You get into a garden movement, thereby involving many small growers. With very short-lived seeds, you give the collector's address, and the dates under which he will directly mail.

The other thing that can come out of this is seed exchanges, which are free. The only person who makes any money out of the seed exchange is the cataloger, who makes a charge for printing it up.

In the front of the catalog is a listing of the seed for sale, and in the back, is the Permaculture seed available as exchange. You only want one seed catalog for the United States. That really is a national job. I will tell you who wants to do packaging too -- that is the Watts' Self-Help Group.

The Institute can get free seed from anywhere in the world, but these seeds cannot be sold.

They can only be given to a grower for the purpose of starting his own supply. Then he can sell the seed from what he grows

Every seed we sell has instructions on how to save your own seed. We are selling self-reliance. What I hope will happen is that the seed exchange path will expand and expand, and that the selling aspect will reduce and reduce. There will always be a few people who want to buy their seed. I would hope that the amount we are putting out to the growers will reduce and reduce, so that eventually every plant wanted will be grown locally in the United States and elsewhere.

What we really want to do is to build up everywhere the important species for Permaculture, because there are many varieties we cannot get anywhere now. This catalog will list all the plants we ever want. These plants will be listed under Bee Forages, Chicken Forages, Cattle Forages, Deer Forages, Fireproof Plants, etc., and listed by zone.

You ask for a feed-back from the people getting the seed. If something is unsatisfactory, you inform the grower about what has happened. You just normally refund the full price of the packet, if it is unsatisfactory, and inform your grower. If your grower is a responsible person, he will refund you. If not, find another grower.

You know Thompson and Morgan Seed Company? They have about the largest seed catalog. Do you know what they operate out of? You say, probably a square block area? That's what I thought! They occupy a house smaller than any house around here, just a little old house, and little old ladies with spectacles are there in a tiny room. You can't get in there because there is just room for the lady and the chair. This place is beside the Essex Road, just out of London. I didn't believe it! I drove past it five times. I knew I was dealing with the world's largest international seed company, and I drove past it and parked, and eventually went to this little house to ask where it was, and that was it! There were bags of seeds in the porch, little old ladies everywhere. Children, during their school holidays were hired. That is (or was) the Thompson and Morgan Seed Company.

Because we are the middle class, people who have our wits about us, and who are well educat-

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ed, we have to initiate things and take action. Then we pass it off.

While perhaps we can't give you \$2,000 very often, we will give you the ability to earn a quarter of a million dollars fairly often. Then when you get too much action, you pass it off. You pass it off, because you see further places to go.

We decided as a policy, we would never give money away. Instead, we give enablements away. We will fund a college to teach an aboriginal gardener. We will not give the aborigines money. We will give orange trees to aborigines; we won't give them the money to buy orange trees. We give fishhooks, not fish. That is critically important. It is giving people self-reliance.

If you have someone who wants to start a Permaculture nursery, you can get the standard design on the nursery from us. Then you can build a standard for America. The nursery should be functional. The plants in the Permaculture section of the nursery should be placed in functional groups.

If you are setting up an aquaculture nursery, put a few tanks around your yard. If you throw the whole lot in the pond, you come out with one dominant species. So in the nursery, it is best to use stock ponds. On all the plants we sell, we indicate which is rampant, and how to deal with it.

Now what sort of hardware, and what sort of rights should we be looking for? We want good retrofit materials. So we are interested in glass, in ducting, in squirrel cage fans, and automatic opening vents, sealants, insulation. Look through the solar catalog. Pick out things that you think might be critically important in what we are doing and recommending to clients. Then go to the manufacturer and say, "Can I get distribution? would like distribution, prefer manufacture, but will be happy with retail."

Another sort of hardware that interests us is small processing hardware. Here is the big missing category. You can buy anything to produce anything you want, buy any little chipper, plow, seeder, bagger, but you can't find processing hardware. We want pressers, oil seed extractors, juicers, stills, dryers, all those things that are the real bases of self-sufficiency on a small site. Keep your eye out for things in this category.

In India, there are very good oil presses being

produced by a manufacturer who may own the rights to it. He just might be overjoyed if you would walk into his shop and say, "Send us three of these and give us the American rights." You would then find a casting firm, perhaps in the alternative. Then you would contract out the screws and things for turning to repetition engineers. Finally, you would assemble it and get it on the market here.

Then there are little things, little bits of handy gear like a twigger, which is a bit of bent wire. You can give the manufacturing of this to a small group in an urban center. What they have to do is keep cutting the wire off and bending it. It is very handy. Our Sheltered Workshops in Tasmania make it. You can make the first twigger. Make it work, then hand the twigger over to a little group as their item. We invented it and gave it to a shelter group. They were perfectly capable of doing that so there are little things like that which we call hand off. They can be listed in the back of the seed catalog.

Another thing we need is a good bench still, made up of ordinary glass -- pitted glass will do. We also need a field still that can be carried into a field and set up for the crude distillation of perhaps a ton of material, which will allow you to distill mint oils.

A husker-grinder is another essential item. I have never seen a really good one except the Ripple Flow. All these that we have are either very slow, heat-generating, or high-energy things. If Permaculture obtains the rights to the manufacture of the husker-grinder, we've gotten it for all of us. That's the important thing. We can start to manufacture it right away, everywhere, on a local basis.

Now the whole idea of this is that you don't produce something for export to India or to Australia. In every case, we make it our policy to manufacture within range of the users. Well-off clients should be encouraged to put in a facility for the district. There is no point in having 5,000 husking systems all going parallel to each other. There is no point in having Geoff Wallace's plow on every farm. It should be on hire for the district, because a person only wants it for half an hour, sometimes two hours.

We need grain cleaners, seed cleaners, both

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for threshing and cleaning. This is an item someone may need to reinvent.

Let's look at something else now. We went to Toyota and said, "We have 51 consultants in the field. We own 17 Toyotas. What kind of deal will you give us if we register these as a fleet, and then everybody transfers to Toyotas?" Toyota has a range of vehicles, and they run well under rough conditions. We also have a design engineering group capable of making things for those Toyotas that cut the petrol consumption, or other attachments that take alcohol-gas, or they can make anything you wish. Toyota offered us 15% off the list price. Then we went to the taxation people and they told us that the Institute didn't have to pay sales tax.

There is no hope we can set up a vehicle manufacturing plant. What we can do is set up an arrangement with a present manufacturer and start to replace the bits until we have replaced most of the parts we are interested in. We do the same things with a tractor, so that our tractors will not break down. For a client who is starting with grassland and wants to progress to forest, a small eight to 20 horse-power tractor is a useful tool. He can run over the grassland, making dumps where he is putting his trees, and working the grassland, building up rapidly to really rich tree soils.

So what you need is a hardware assessment and selection group to run the whole of that business. You are going to have a lot of designers in this country. These groups who go into the manufacturing and supplying of these items have a really wonderful opportunity for marketing something absolutely specific to the requirements of Permaculture. Tanks are another hardware item that seems to be lacking here in America. The most useful size is quite shallow. It is 15 to 18 inches deep, and four to six feet in diameter, reachable to the center. That size tank is extraordinarily useful. You can produce a condition suitable for bulb growing by just laying an inch of water over it, saturating the soil. You can set up a pond with six or twelve inches of soil. These tanks are constructed of precast concrete, which is the best material for this purpose. They do not need a drain hole. Once they are full of water, you can't move them. They will then weigh may-

be a thousand pounds. They are made easily from a mold. This would be a good product for a group of people to make. They are excellent as stock tanks -- for watering stock, small stock, or poultry. They can be ramped up for small stock. Catfish would grow in them, and tadpoles and little fish. If I were setting up an aquaculture nursery, I would set it up with 40 or 50 of these.

We have, among Tagari members, a split. We have a group of Luddites. Ludd was the leader of a group of men who went out with sledge hammers and broke up machinery. There are people in our group who have an instinctive distaste for computers. We have other people in our group who see a tremendous benefit in having computers. There is a package now you can get for \$300 that fits on your Apple computer. It is coupled with the ham idea. It requires a ham radio's license. Anywhere on the face of the globe these little units listen for each other. Any one of these can talk to any one of the others, or automatically shunt. If you want to talk to anybody, to ask a question, or make a transfer through deal or barter, you put the data into the computer and press a button and it goes out to this one which catches it and stores it. There need be no one at home. If you are there, it can handle your answers within two seconds. If you are not at home, it stores the information until you put the answer in, and then it goes back. This operates across Canada now.

If you want a bee plant list from the stored information, the list comes back, and the computer records the name of the person who asked for it. An automatic account comes up in their name. There is a charge for the service only. There is no paper work involved, no lists being mailed.

As an example, say that Bruce has agreed to handle the lists and has an Apple computer and one of these devices. You can phone in your order to the local person who also has this device, and you say, "Give me a bee list for an alkaline hillside facing south in Timbuktu." This person puts it through to Bruce's computer. You are identified as to who you are, and Bruce's computer sends the information back. The local person whom you contacted says, "Here it is." That should be within two seconds, because what you are asking for is stored. You have your list, and

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alongside your name in Bruce's computer comes up the fact that you have sent for that list. Therefore you are charged \$4. The charge comes back on your list, so you know what you owe. This is a very good way to trade and barter.

I had a message one night. I said, "Get your tape recorder." They got a tape recorder out and I gave them the whole story on seed patenting legislation in Australia and the way it was being edged in without anybody knowing. They relayed this tape to every state. It was also relayed to a group whose job is quick tape copying. They can do it in seconds. Then this group started mailing this information to all organic gardening groups, and we had Australia alerted the next morning. Thousands of notes were pouring in to politicians. We've that sort of organizational level in Australia, and have had for a long time.

We also have local radio programs that run regularly -- Permaculture half-hour programs -- and they are commonly reaching six to 12 million people weekly.

We are feared and respected, because we can bring the local government down, the state government. And we are prepared to do so. We jammed the parliamentary switchboard into Tasmania Parliament for a week, and they convened at midnight and changed legislation and got it out to us through radio because they couldn't get in or out by way of the lines to the Parliament house. It was for the purpose of stopping an evil substance from being sprayed over the farmlands from the air.

So what I'm telling you is if you do cooperate and stop chopping up the whole system into little bunches of people, which is a big feature of the American alternative, if you do speak with one voice, brother, you are a loud voice.

We have a Permaculture association that operates on a weekly schedule, linking up with six key points across the whole nation. You ring in to one of these key points if you have a message that you want to go out to the whole nation. We contact central, which sends the message out to all six key points, and all these key points have local dissemination groups. This is absolutely easy. It takes a person willing to spend one evening a week sitting in at the telephone and ringing all six points. He can jack them into each oth-

er. He rings and asks if there is anything you want to say to everybody that's that important, and you generally say, "Not tonight."

"OK. We have a message coming in for you...." The whole thing is dealt with within two hours. You don't use it for chatting.

Now you might have an important national message to go out, and you say, "Yes, to all stations this message ..." And that can go on tape and go out to all stations. In addition, our fast tape copying service group, called the Down to Earth Association will fast tape copy the message and send it to all members, who then get it to the local programs on all radio stations, and so it goes out to the man in the street that evening.

The specialty of the Down to Earth Association is working with media. Their tapes go to all sorts of people on both sides of the media -- on the government side of the media, and on the private side -- and these messages go out in their programs. They say, "We just got an interesting tape in which you might care to hear..." and it goes out to all the people in Melbourne. A lot of people tune into that station. It is Public Access. We have other people within such services and they can do other linking-calls.

The people who are voluntarily performing these services have to be persuaded. They have to be people like ourselves, who believe that what we are doing is ethical and good.

If we think something dangerous is going to happen, we have state emergency services. When that spray was coming, I rang the State Emergency Service and said, "I want you to put out a call for all pregnant women, all farms with animals, to stay indoors tomorrow."

They said, "Why?"

I said, "Here is why ... So you get all animals under cover over the whole state and all pregnant women under cover across whole state."

The State Emergency Service went into action. They cannot refuse to tell a population of a present danger. You do that a few times, and it becomes very embarrassing. Either they have to refuse to act, which is illegal; or if they act, it is very embarrassing. Those messages have to go out. These are tactics we have successfully used to shift whole national and state policy.

So we don't let something like seed legislation

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die. There are fighting groups set up in all Permaculture associations. Independently of the Permaculture association, as a result of the radio broadcasts, other people have set up fighting groups against these legislations.

Then we set up the act of defiance, the Self-Reliance Seed Company. Don't let it die. They give in, because it is too embarrassing, too public, too much voice, too much action against them. There is no use giving them information. That's just news. You give them the action basis.

Now you people here in this country are a set of individuals who are perfectly capable of operating in your own way. So I expect that you will get on with your jobs. That Bill Mollison happens to be anywhere doesn't matter. If he gets run over or drops out of sight in London, it is just another person. I don't want to be personally in charge of anything here. I would very much like you to adopt the attitude that you are forming a university of minds, a companionship; and I don't want any stratification happening in this network. That's what I want to say. Be sure to give people jobs, and be sure those jobs do not stratify. Our system will be superseded if it succeeds. It can go wrong if it succeeds, too. If that happens, other people will come and attack it and say they will be glad when we get out of it.

It looks as though what we are trying to do has to be done. I think it is awfully important. I can see in my life there is nothing else worth doing. I think it's life or death, and I'm hitting hard on the life side, if I can. That may be a hard decision for you to make, because it doesn't give you much. And I don't expect all of you to make that decision. But some of you may. The main thing we have to do is to get people within their own home country competent on their own ground, with a lot of support systems, right where they are.

Permaculture associations are spreading right into center of research and other establishments, and who knows what funnels out? There are Permaculture Associations all over Australia, and we didn't set more than about half of them up. They share species. They visit each other's places. They share housework cooperatives. Some of them who live in the city of Perth have identified every large useful tree in that city, found a fantastic resource of Permaculture value, found

things we didn't even know existed, such as dragon's blood trees and South African wild plums. They will conduct anyone on a tour of the city to show them those trees, so people can see what they look like. They collect seed from these trees. They have a free seed exchange between themselves. They are powerhouses. Some of these groups number over 200 people in quite small districts. Often from the ranks of those associations come the next designers. They carry out a fantastic number of functions; you can pass off an enormous amount of work to those people. One group produces the *Permaculture Quarterly*, and how they do it, I don't know. [*This has since failed. Ed.*] It is a very big job they are doing.

There are more than 30 associations sending newsletters in, and some of them have meetings that as many as 200 people commonly attend.

The Permaculture association has taken over some really downtrodden sheep country, and they have moved in on it with thousands of seeds. God only knows what they are doing.

Housework cooperatives have begun within one of the associations. Seven women with small children -- and some who went through that nearly went crazy on their own -- meet on Saturdays, and they absolutely bang, bang the house. They clean it from top to bottom. Then they go out and do the same with the garden. They do this on each person's place with small children. Now they find they have very little to do. It gives people with small children a slight break in complete madness.

You know, when you have three little kids you can never get that housework done, and it drives you crazy looking at it. They also do the same for people newly moved into the district. They go, the whole group -- there may be a hundred of them turn up -- and they just say, "What do you want done?" And they do it. They bring trailers and trucks and tractors, and clean up all the old cars, take them to the dump, stack the wood, make the place look good. Then they have a big party. All that is going on happily in the world.

So what we are trying to do is get a lot of nice people together. If somebody is not nice, you drop them out of a cooperative net. Really, in some ways, I wouldn't like to cross some of the

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Permaculture people, because some of the 70 toughest gangs in Watts cooperate with us.

Did I ever tell you about Watts? As the last thing, just before we close this section, let me tell you about Watts.

When I was in California talking to the Tree People, a reporter came in, a woman to interview me. She sounded scared about tomorrow. So I asked, "What are you going to be doing?"

She said, "I am going to interview a remarkable person down in Watts." I had heard of Watts she said, "I'm really scared about how I am going, to get in there, but, you know, I've got to go."

I said, "I'll go down with you. I don't mind."

And she said, "Oh, great! great! great!"

I said, "I'll throw myself in front of you and you can run, you know."

So down we went. It was about as we thought. There were a lot of gentlemen about, and ladies about, and it was a pretty tough looking place. We walked through something that made you feel as if you were coming past the executioner. It was like a place in London, a jewelry place where you go to sell a smuggled jewel, and you just pass a lot of heavies lying about with bulging pockets. They opened several doors, and little things opening and closing. As you are led in, your escape is cut off. Sitting in this place is a man called Barney Mull. He is a big Watts fellow. There he sits -- Barney. He said, "Come in!" All around the wall there are people who are wiping the skin from scars, holes in them, and big heavy pockets.

We got in there. We asked what this was?

He said he was a Bahai and that he had been a debt collector in Watts with a group of heavies, collecting rents from the people of Watts. That meant he had a group of agents under his control. He was collecting rentals, sometimes for churches and places that owned property in Watts. Then his family broke up, and he became an alcoholic. He lost his wife. When he became an alcoholic he became suicidal. He thought the best way to die was to walk into Watts, because he would surely die.

But while he was in the hospital as an alcoholic, a black doctor came and said to him, "Man, I got news for you, you get out of here or you are dead. If you come here and stay in as an alcohol-

ic, you are dead." And he said, "I'm going to get you out tonight." This black doctor got him out and sent him away, because he knew that where he was nearly all alcoholics died.

So he went down to Watts. He thought he would die in Watts, because what he had done in Watts preyed on his conscience. So he went down to Watts and he lay down in a little thing still there, a little porch in front of a square building that was deserted, locked, and nailed up, and the porch measurement was about five feet by eight. He lay in there for eight years drinking wine, and never getting out except to go across to the pub get more wine on his relief check and come back with his wine and drink. So he didn't buy any food.

But he didn't starve, because all the little children going around Watts, little toughies, many of them in gangs of five and that, used to break their sandwiches in half and feed him, sit down and give him bottles of pop, and give him an apple occasionally. The children of Watts fed him for eight years. So, while he was in terrible condition physically, he was still alive at the end of eight years.

One day he decided to stand up. He got up and stopped these little kids and he said, "Listen! I owe you my life! Now life means nothing to me," he says, "My life is yours, I give you my life. You gave me my life. It's yours." He said, "I will never take any risks with it; I'll never get married to anybody -- nothing. I belong to you, to you -- see?"

These were tough little mobs. I mean they control the streets And when the mob is full, My God, they're armed! So he said, "We are going to do something. What's wrong here?"

And they said, "Well, we haven't any money; we got nothin' to do."

So he got this little mob, and they took him over, and in effect elected him boss. The porch was his office for the next couple of years. He started the Watts Self-Help Group.

So then he sits down with his mob, and they decide to go take over the next street. This is a tough proposition. Gang war. He worked out a strategy, which he still uses. He fitted them out with different colored baseball caps and things so everybody can see each other and know exactly where they are in the district. They drive in

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fast in a green van, so they are right in the middle of the next gang's territory. They pile out. The war chiefs, the four of them in the yellow hats, go and stand with their back to a corner, looking at each other so everybody's back is covered all the way.

So he has a scouting team out. Then he sends out some little green hats, and the little green hats start walking down the street. Barney and some other heavies come around this way. Sure enough, the gang pounces and surrounds these little green-hatted kids. They got 'em. And at that point the yellow hats see where the action is, and they point in that direction so all the rest knows where it is, and they start to walk down this side of them. Barney is coming up the other side, and the little green hats are surrounded. Two lots of heavies are standing around the gang. Finally Barney said to them -- you see, everybody was standing there like this, and everybody's pockets were full of pistols, knives, shotguns -- he says, "OK, you're dead!" He says, "You're dead! We got'cha. You're dead." He said, "We came here to kill ya, and we're going to kill ya." And the little kids, stiff like this, 'cause they know they got guns in their backs and guns in front of them, guns on the other side, and they are out-manuevered. They recognized some of the yellow hat boys, 'cause they might be Chino, you know -- the real killers in the next block, or they might be from this site. So they start walking like this -- got to be as macho as they can.

So they all start walking up and down like this. And the gang chief walks up and down too, you see. So they come to a deal. He's going to send his top man in at night and they are going to negotiate a deal, because they are dead, and their lives are ours. We've killed 'em.

Slowly, Barney has taken over 70 gangs that run the whole bloody district, run the employment and they run the gardens. If you want war, we got war.

So this is the Watts Self-Help Group. You have never been amongst a more hellion movement in all your life.

Barney and I are going to meet them. We are going to sit in a whitewashed room with four windows and people in arms. Everything in view,

hands on the table. When the new gang chief comes in, he comes in with a shotgun and the darkness all around. He has his heavies behind him, and they got people across the street in cars. They check out every corner of that room to see that nobody is laying an ambush. And they throw all their scouts out to see they are not ambushed. They come in to start dealing. Or, they could open fire through the windows and kill us. That's their choice.

So they start dealing, and they go on dealing. You know, you're going to treat these people fairly. Fairness and openness are all they understand. And minding the boss on the line is all they understand, because they are getting shot every night. Maybe 46 cops go out just to wipe out seven of them. They got their knives when they go out, and they go out together with shotguns. The cops have determined this seven has to die tonight. So they are at war all the time. That's in Watts, in Los Angeles.

Want to come and help us? You already got to be dead before that, you see.

Oh, the newspaper reporter? Yes, she interviewed him and left, and Barney and I went on. And I took him out and introduced him to some Mexican groups whom I met independently -- they were walking up and down the street.

So, Barney doesn't drink any more, doesn't touch drink.

The firms around there have given him thousands of dollars. He counts it and then returns nearly all of it, and he has gone from 15% self-finance to 85% self-finance. He's gotten accountants working for him. All the firms would give him all their money to hold for them, because they can't operate unless they have money.

Did I see Watts tower?

Yea, but I was looking at a little porch near Watts tower, more than at Watts tower. I was looking at an area that was already taken over; I was looking at a lot of little gardens and green things.

Barney is dead. He was shot not long after I left there. But he had counted himself dead years before, and we must all count our-selves dead before we tackle real risks.