



# Union *of* Arsonists

The Flammable Estates *of the* Rich  
*and the* Class War Fires *of* Liberation





*Fires Never Extinguished: <http://firesneverextinguished.blogspot.com/>*

# Preface

This text was taken from *Fires Never Extinguished*, a journal run by the Phoenix Class War Council. While the details provided in this article are focused on the Phoenix metropolitan area I found it easy to feel a resonance with the overall theme.

Who, as a worker, hasn't dreamed of putting the torch to their place of employment? What other recourse is there to take against bosses and managers who treat workers, those perceived to be beneath them, as if they are simply another mechanical feature of their factory, devoid of emotion, needs and desires? In what other ways are we able to manifest the rage and frustration we feel as we are subjected to the horror that is the assembly line, the cubicle, the kitchen, day in and day out?

Are we to demand better working conditions, better pay, so that we are able to feel more comfortable in our misery? As a friend once said, if you fight in a cage and win, are you not still fucking caged? We can always threaten to quit, or walk out if we're feeling particularly brave, but at this very moment there are thousands of unemployed workers waiting in line to fill your position. We, the workers, are the *disposable* class.

We have come to a point in which every option available to us within the legal framework of the state is insufficient in granting us any reprieve. Make no mistake, we are immersed in a social war in which our very lives are at stake, and there is no better time than now to choose sides.

Do we resign ourselves to the misery of the workplace, the numbing drudgery we will be required to endure over the next 50 years or so before the state *allows* us to stop working? Or do we find respite in a rag and a match, coming to terms with the fact that, for us, there is no choice but complete and total freedom?

I say: *light that shit the fuck up!*

— R

Who says the local news is all crap these days? News Channel 3, always a shimmering example of journalistic excellence, has been kind enough to give us rich-hating anti-capitalists more kindling for the bonfires this week by offering up a guided tour of two of the most expensive homes (estates?) in the Valley:

In the photo gallery below we tour two of the most exclusive (and expensive) properties currently on the market in metro Phoenix. An eight bedroom, 12,000 square foot abode nestled on 40 acres in Paradise Valley and a 25,000 square foot villa with a bargain price of \$24.9 million.

Get a look while you can at the wealth of the rich parasites that enjoy the good life while those of us down here suffer foreclosure, precarity, unwanted unemployment, soaring health care costs and repossessions, along with all manner of other humiliations from which the rich are immune. With Arizona now scoring the second highest rate of poverty in the country, it's more enraging than ever to see such opulence on open display.

Enjoy the tour. Take it all in. The 20 car garage. The acres of green grass. The huge master bedroom. Maybe make a few notes on your brief foray into the foyers of the rich and spoiled:

5 acre estate with 35,000 sq. ft. under roof & 25,000 sq. ft. ac/heated. Flooring of 6 ft. marble slabs from Italy, library with \$350,000 Pierre Lange mahogany cabinetry, \$1,200,000 Avia high tech security & sound equipment, a 13 seat mahogany theatre with true movie projection & D-box chairs that move with the movie action. 2 swimming pools and 20 car garage including a \$400,000 "show garage."

I was told by someone who would know the other day that the rich and powerful in the Valley often complain that their possessions regularly get pilfered by the many workers required to maintain their irresponsible and exploitative lifestyles. Presumably the quick-handed disappear them when the owner is sunning by his Olympic-sized pool. Or perhaps they return in the summer when

those with the money are safely chilling in their beach houses far from Phoenix's scorching weather. If you have more than one home, you can't be in all of them at once. That's a risk you take being rich, I suppose.

Which reminds me, did they ever catch those Paradise Valley "rock burglars"? Last I heard they had successfully managed over 300 break-ins resulting in more than ten million dollars worth of crap that rich people have being re-appropriated from the undeserving dresser drawers of the Valley's spoiled rich. It's nice to know that they get robbed, though, isn't it? Coming in through the master bedroom window, broken with a rock (hence the "rock burglars" name), is apparently the way to go according to the newspapers. There's no security system at that end of the house usually, it seems. Again, that's straight out of the papers. Hopefully it creeps those rich bastards out knowing the proles have rifled through their intimates.

Of course, getting a job working for rich people seems to work just as well as a means of procuring their stuff. Or, if you can hold your nose that long, even just getting to know them works. That was the case for antique thief Matthew Walker, who plead guilty this week to acquiring many of the prized possessions of the wealthy in his area simply by hanging around them so much. This guy managed to take prized heirlooms and other items passed down, like their illegitimate wealth, from one generation of rich scum to the next. Good for him. Caught now, unfortunately, but it's still more evidence that the rich are far from secure in their persons and items. When the cops came to his house and matched a stolen serial number to the 52 inch tv mounted on the wall, Walker claimed it was a set up. Nice. Fuck their tv and fuck the cops.

Those who say the luxuries enjoyed by the rich are the just reward for a life of hard work are off their rockers. One doesn't have a hard time imagining that they have never walked a thousand miles to stand on a street corner, ducking la poli-migra, and cleaning pools or mowing lawns in the blistering sun. Or tried to hold a job (which they hate anyway) while on work release from one of Sheriff Joe's gulags, suffering after work the routine indignity of waiting in line at gunpoint to sleep in the summer heat in his outdoor jail, all because Phoenix doesn't have a decent public transportation system.

Maybe they have never slaved away for nine or ten hours in a windowless call center, fielding pointless calls or following shitty leads in hopes of making the rent this month. Or maybe they've never spent ten hours in the cab of a truck passing the endless hours and miles bringing consumer goods they can't afford to the bars and restaurants of the wealthy and their even more spoiled children.

If hard work was the key to success under capitalism, the women fishing coins off dead bodies for twelve hours a day at the mouth of the Ganges River would rule the planet. Or those guys who dismantle the beached ships in Asia. They'd be everyone's boss. And don't forget those kids who rummage through the piles of the West's discarded computers for toxic metals. We'd be cleaning their Ferraris if hard work made the world go around.

Make no mistake, this is not a defense of work. Nor the alleged nobility of the small-headed, broad-shouldered laborer portrayed by communist painters in grand Soviet murals. You know, the worker works, the Party thinks. No, for sure, my sympathies are with the slackers and the shirkers. With the folks who know what "it fell off the truck" means and don't say a word to the boss. And with the ones who clock their friends in and out so they can sleep off last night's party. Long live those who still defend the siesta, sadly long ago now a Southwest memory for most of us, dominated by the boss's time clock as we are. When I worked at the post office the time clock was divided up into one hundred segments per hour instead of sixty. Want to know crazy? Try calculating your 15 minute break in 36 second segments.

Take another example: Domino's worker Jamal Thomas. A trainee for an assistant manager position, he complained that he was jumped by hoodlums outside work one night and beaten. In true corporate form, his bosses accused him of violating security protocols during his beatdown because the front door was unlocked as it took place. Broken in the brawl, Thomas's jaw was wired shut and he couldn't eat solid food or talk for six weeks. He was fired. According to his family he turned bitter at this insult. Understandably so.

But, the police say, Thomas didn't take this affront laying down. Keeping his key and his dignity, Thomas visited various Domino's

locations “in uniform claiming to be a member of a secret Domino’s unit that measured employee satisfaction.” He was scoping out targets. Oh, the irony! And what creativity -- although surely not of the kind his bosses could appreciate. Nope, dressing up and pretending to be an employee satisfaction monitor, visiting various locations and scouting the best targets, and then setting them to the torch -- using their own pizza boxes as kindling! -- that clearly is the kind of creativity that, while inspired by Domino’s, can never be contained by it.

And isn’t that all our experience, in a way? Because no matter how much or how well you do a job like that, your only thanks is more of the same. An assistant manager position, with the small bump in pay and the freedom to play some solitaire from time to time in the office -- that’s your prize in this system. No personal development. No chance to control the real substance of your life. No choice in what you make, where you make it, when and how. No control over what’s done with it. And the cherry on top is that most of what we are forced to make is crap anyhow. “Time to make the donuts”, as the old commercial used to say. Always time to make the donuts. Who wants control over it anyhow? Better to burn it down. Making pizzas at Domino’s can never be a fulfilling vocation. In a time of mass layoffs, is it too much to ask for meaningful unemployment?

I can remember a conversation I had -- more like an argument -- with another class war anarchist who had mistaken me for a hardcore primitivist because of a pin I was wearing. Never bothering to see the Durruti pin on the other side, he proceeded to launch into me with a tirade about the dignity of work. How pleased were the janitors he was organizing, he said, when they had finished cleaning a room! What dignity in work! What pride! Bullshit! For most of us, the only dignity at work is ending the day with some intact.

There’s a saying that goes like this: “That’s an idea so ridiculous only an intellectual could believe it.” Well, it’s the same with the organizers of the working class. The bosses are right about us. We hate work, we hate our jobs and we hate them. They are right to distrust us. Pride in work as we know it is an idea so ridiculous only a union organizer could believe it because the truth of the workweek is something quite different. Biting your tongue, hiding

in the bathroom, grabbing a smoke or pretending to be doing something are the most common activities at any modern job.

Working in a call center and get hung up on? Let it hang there for a few minutes. No need to rush. Just let that dial tone ring for a bit and grab back part of your life a few minutes at a time. That's the reality. Who would want to democratize most of this? Can you imagine the drudgery of the Slurpee committee meeting at the collectivized 7-11? Surely better just to put it to the torch and be done with all illusions. No thanks, budding union bureaucrats: the arsonist is a much better shop steward these days.

And there is no escape for most of us from the drudgery of work and the liberal way it wastes our time and energies. Landlords and grocery stores, mechanics and credit card companies can be strict masters and if you can't refuse work, the best you can do is try to get the most out of it you can, for your own ends. If that's not possible, may as well burn it down. Thomas caused more than a million dollars in damage. As a point of reference, take out the mythic Vail arsons and this guy's up there with the ELF on average and maybe rivals the black bloc rampages through any number of North American streets this year, not that there's anything wrong with them. Different strokes for different folks.

It is natural for us to hate hard work (i.e., compelled work), but for the defenders of the rich, as they always do, to say that it is only hard work that separates the family living out of their car from the millionaire on the mountain is obscene. Likewise the Dominoes assistant manager from the Paradise Valley mansion. Even most the rich don't believe it. The myth of mobility and hard work isn't meant for them. Commenting on why he collaborated with Oliver Stone on his most recent remake of his classic 80's Wall Street attack movie, Anthony Scaramucci, hedge fund director and founder Skybridge Capital said, "[Oliver Stone] believes that the lower quartile of society is suffering in a megalomaniacal capitalist society — and you know, he's probably right on some of the stuff he's saying."

Which reminds me, there were two forklift drivers killed in the last two weeks in Phoenix. Crushed underneath them. This is something close to my heart, having occasion to drive a forklift at work with



some regularity myself. Those things are fucking dangerous. But with the slashing of budgets and the paring of workforces, you can bet that the speedup that is work life under the new never-ending crisis is to blame. More work to be done with less workers means doing it faster, cutting corners, or not having proper assistance. Profits are up, payrolls are down, and more of us are six feet under every day. And trust me, crushed under a forklift is not a death that any of those rich bastards on the mountain will suffer, sadly.

But where are the funerals for these “heroes” of the new crisis capitalism? The people who against their will, against their health and against their human desire to be free, make this economy run, despite being largely locked out of its largess and surely denied its mansions and limos, except to clean and maintain them. Workers killed on the job for the most part are lucky to get a blurb that mentions their name in the paper if they meet their end on the clock. No funeral processions, no media helicopters hovering over cemeteries, no grieving husbands or wives. No plastic-featured anchorman breaking into our regular programming.

Not, that is, unless you are a cop worker or a soldier worker. Only the workers that protect the ruling class are worthy of mention or thanks in this country. The only exception perhaps comes from the pandering politicians in election year, hoping as they do that some of us will accept this bullshit title of “hard working American” in exchange for the acceptance of heightened social war on others, often of color, in other countries, migrants, prisoners, et cetera.

But when it comes to the cops and soldiers, we get treated to a fete for fit for an angel! There is no investigation. Just how many complaints did that cop have against him? How many civilians did that soldier kill? Quite relevant and related questions these days as more and more of these fucked up veterans come back and join police forces. Once there, their violently short tempers set the tone for the rest of the force. And of course lacking entirely from public discussion when one of these killer-workers gets killed is a critical assessment of the role that cops and soldiers play in the maintenance of everyday order, itself a long, slow murder for most of us. All is forgiven and nothing is remembered when the sacrifice is for the State and Capital.

I know I'm not the only one who looks up at those houses on Camelback Mountain while driving to work and hopes for a landslide or a brushfire or, hell, a meteor strike to erase that whole disgusting scene from my view, likewise relinquishing the stranglehold they have on so many of us. Or maybe, more satisfying, for the fiery justice of a people no longer willing to be exploited, tagged, imprisoned, tracked, beaten, mocked, marginalized and pushed around just so some rich asshole can have a mountainside resort for a second or third home.

We all resist in our own small ways everyday, trying against the odds and against the reality of our no-vacation, low pay jobs, to carve out for ourselves a little bit of dignity and autonomy against a system determined to crush us or -- at best -- to throw us some crumbs if we agree to mind-numbing labor day in and day out. Assistant manager, indeed.

So thanks to Channel 3 for that kindling. Whenever I see those rich bastards and their gilded estates, it just fires me up even more. Sometimes not every article has to end with a grand philosophical point. Today I just felt like a good ol' rant was in order. Those mansions make me think of a day, hopefully not far off, when it will all explode and we'll look up to a long torchlit march up those hills and to the liberating fires of a new day, free at last from work and those who make us do it. Drinks on them in the rec rooms first, of course.



THERE IS NO ESCAPE FOR MOST OF US FROM THE DRUDGERY OF WORK AND THE LIBERAL WAY IT WASTES OUR TIME AND ENERGIES. LANDLORDS AND GROCERY STORES, MECHANICS AND CREDIT CARD COMPANIES CAN BE STRICT MASTERS AND IF YOU CAN'T REFUSE WORK, THE BEST YOU CAN DO IS TRY TO GET THE MOST OUT OF IT YOU CAN, FOR YOUR OWN ENDS.

IF THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, MAY AS WELL BURN IT DOWN.



RISE  
LIKE  
LIONS

<http://riselikelions.info>