

THE 'STOP COP CITY' DOMESTIC TERROR CHARGES ECHO PAST REPRESSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS

The use of domestic terrorism charges against the environmental and animal liberation movements set important precedents for the repression Atlanta's 'Stop Cop City' movement faces today.

BY [CHRIS HEDGES](#) JUNE 9, 2023

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The demonstrators are protesting from a broad range of ideologies and coalitions called for solidarity with the "Stop Cop

"City" movement in Atlanta on March 28, 2023, in front of the Department of Justice in Washington DC, United States. Photo by Celal Gunes/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images



The movement to Stop Cop City in Atlanta has brought environmental defenders and police abolitionists together to fight a mega-project that would demolish the historic Weelaunee Forest to create a massive urban warfare training facility. For standing up for people and the planet, more than 40 Cop City activists have been struck with domestic terrorism charges. Will Potter, author of *Green Is the New Red*, joins *The Chris Hedges Report* to place the repression of Cop City activists in a longer history of labeling environmental activists as ‘domestic terrorists.’

Will Potter is an investigative journalist whose work has focused on social justice and environmental movements, and attacks on civil rights post-9/11. He is the author of *Green Is the New Red*, among other books.

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TRANSCRIPT

The following is a rushed transcript and may contain errors. A proofread version will be made available as soon as possible.

Speaker 1:

(singing)

Chris Hedges:

When police in Atlanta stormed a music festival in March being held by activists protesting Cop City, the proposed \$90 million police and firefighter training center that would be built on forest land, 23 of the activists were arrested and one, Tortuguita, a 26-year-old Indigenous environmental activist and community organizer was shot and killed. Those who were arrested were accused of carrying out acts of vandalism and arson at a Cop City construction site over a mile from the music festival under George's domestic terror statute, although none of the arrest warrants tie any of the defendants directly to any illegal acts.

Cop City is yet another complex designed by the corporate state to train police in urban warfare. The plans include military-grade training facilities, a mock city to practice urban warfare, explosives, testing areas, dozens of shooting ranges, and a Black Hawk helicopter landing pad. "It is a war base

where police will learn military-like maneuvers to kill Black people and control our bodies and movements,” Kwame Olufemi of Community Movement Builders points out. “The facility includes shooting ranges, plans for bomb testing, and will practice tear gas deployment. They are practicing how to make sure poor and working class people stay in line so when the police kill us in the streets again like they did to Rashard Brooks in 2020, they can control our protests and community response to how they continually murder our people,” he said.

But just as ominous as the militarization of domestic police forces and training complexes to turn police into internal armies of occupation is the use of terrorism laws to charge and imprison activists, protestors and dissidents. Former Chicago Tribune reporter Will Potter, in his book, *Green is the New Red*, documents how terrorism laws are used to crush dissent, especially dissent carried out by animal rights and environmental activists. He likens the campaign to McCarthyism in the 1950s and warns that we are on the cusp of cementing into place a police state.

Potter, who became a vegan when he was a student at the University of Texas, participated in a canvassing campaign organized by a group called Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty while working at the Tribune. The goal was to close down the laboratory of Huntingdon Life Sciences, which still uses animals for testing. The organizers were arrested for trespassing, and then Potter got a firsthand look at what was happening to civil liberties in the United States. Two FBI agents appeared at Potter’s apartment demanding information about the group. If he refused to cooperate, he was told his name would be included on the domestic terrorist list. Potter would eventually leave the paper to report on the government’s intimidation of activists, including nonviolent activists who spoke out against the corporate state and the seizure of political and economic power

by the 1%. Joining me to discuss the Orwellian world being erected around us is Will Potter.

You open the book in the Chicago Tribune newsroom. We both come out of the newspaper industry. I think we both worked at one point in the Dallas Morning News, and there's a story, you're sent out to cover the killing of a child. And I think for those who don't come out of that environment, they don't understand the cynicism, maybe even numbness that takes place in those newsrooms and how difficult that is if you actually care. I mean, I always say there's two types of reporters, the ones who care and the ones who don't. That's the real divide in a newsroom. It's not politics. But let's just open with that since we both come from that environment.

Will Potter:

Yeah, I think that's a great observation. I mean, it's something that journalists, we rarely ever talk about. That kind of environment is one in which in order to survive just the onslaught of daily news and blood and guts and violence and kind of despair that comes with it, you have to really get a hardened shell. And I think that's kind of fetishized a little bit in journalism. We embrace that machismo and just kind of push full steam ahead without acknowledging trauma and acknowledging some of these things that we encounter. And that's certainly an environment I felt I encountered at multiple newspapers. Like you said, I think like a lot of people, you go into news with ideas about making a difference in the world, educating the public, allowing and creating an environment for change and social change to happen. But it can be quite crushing and cynical, as well.

Chris Hedges:

Well, those news organizations will beat that out of you if you let them.

Will Potter:

Very quickly.

Chris Hedges:

Very quickly. Exactly. Let's talk about the Huntingdon Labs. You were just handing out leaflets, I think, or something. I mean, it was pretty innocuous.

Will Potter:

Yeah.

Chris Hedges:

Explain what it was, why it's important, and then I want to go in, because this was a pivotal moment in the animal rights movement.

Will Potter:

It was. This was a pivotal campaign, and in that moment when the FBI agents came to my door, that time period was pivotal in the campaign, also. And so as a little bit of background, this laboratory had been exposed multiple times by undercover investigators working with groups like PETA, and they had documented egregious acts of cruelty, things like punching beagle puppies repeatedly in the face because the technicians were frustrated at their small veins to get an injection or

dissecting a monkey that was still alive. And all of this was caught on video and was used in a very savvy way to mobilize and push forward this emerging movement.

What was different about this campaign compared to other animal rights or other protest campaigns is they operated quite differently. I mean, they were not intended on having signs and banners outside of the laboratory because they knew the lab didn't care. The people in the lab didn't care and the people investing in this lab didn't care. So they started targeting the finances of this company. They went after everyone from UPS to toilet paper suppliers. Anyone who had business in any way with the laboratory was the target of protests. Sometimes this was kind of spontaneous demonstrations, sometimes this was as simple as people anonymously putting stickers or wheat paste or breaking out a window. I mean, the campaign was really that diverse, from these really kind of small, seemingly insignificant acts of sabotage or even harassment to mass protests outside the laboratories.

What happened is that it was so incredibly successful internationally that it brought the campaign near bankruptcy. And as that was happening, these corporations mobilized their allies in Congress and they worked together behind closed doors in order to label these protest groups as terrorists and ultimately to convict them and send them to prison as terrorists, as well.

Chris Hedges:

And we should be clear, so Huntingdon, which still exists under another name, but it's Envigo I think is who bought up-

Will Potter:

That's right.

Chris Hedges:

Right. So at the time, it was killing between 71,000 and 180,000 animals a year, and these animals were being killed to test for household cleaners, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, and food ingredients for major companies such as Procter and Gamble, Colgate, Palmolive. In the book, you write about the two kind of major organizations that confront of animal activists. One is the underground organization, that's groups like Animal Liberation Front, and then the aboveground groups. And the underground groups I think at one point invaded the labs and caused significant damage. And the aboveground groups, the ones who ended up being prosecuted, engaged in nonviolent activity and organizing. But the relationship between those two groups, we'll get into it later, but the ones who engaged in nonviolent traditional organizing ended up in essence being charged for the crimes of the underground organizers, even though they had nothing to do with it. But talk about those relationships.

Will Potter:

That's really the heart of this entire protest campaign and the heart of why I think this case sets such a dangerous precedent for social movements. In the sixties in the anti-war movement, there was a phrase among activists that, "We didn't do it but we dug it," meaning I was not engaged or I don't know who was engaged in illegal protest activity against the war, but it was loosely in the name of the same cause and it was nonviolent, and so I will support it. And that was the mentality of Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty. And specifically they ran a website, and on this website everything related to the campaign was published. Everything from those stickerings and wheat

pastings that I mentioned all the way up to groups like the Animal Liberation Front doing things like stealing animals from laboratories and breaking into facilities connected to HLS, and also property destruction, vandalism, sabotage. In the scheme of this protest movement, though, there were no targeting of human beings. I mean, this is something that Animal Liberation Front has made sure of for decades and something the organizers of SHAC were very passionate about.

Chris Hedges:

SHAC, by the way, is Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty.

Will Potter:

That's right.

Chris Hedges:

That's the organization that was organized to confront Huntingdon.

Will Potter:

They're the ones who were organizing this protest campaign. And really by organizing, the government said this was a couple of people in a house in Philadelphia and in New Jersey that were running a website. And as news came in on the website, there was a real intensity around this at the time. I mean, this was kind of pre-social media. In a lot of ways, I would argue this was one of the first digital campaigns of this new era that relied heavily and even almost exclusively on online organizing. And so what the government argued, as you indicated, is that by the

SHAC organizers, by the aboveground lawful groups saying through their words and their website that they support the ideology of those crimes and they also support people doing them, they thought that this was all legitimate in the name of this struggle, the government argued that this created a conspiracy and that conspiracy created an environment that allowed the illegal activity to take place.

So in other words, the people who ran the website were never accused at any point of doing any of the illegal things that were on the website or for that matter, the legal things that were on the website, but the government in this ambitious court case argued that they needed to be held responsible for creating a criminal conspiracy under the Animal Enterprise Protection Act. So these activists were convicted of animal enterprise terrorism, is the name of the charge, conspiracy to commit that and conspiracy to violate the telecommunications law, which means that they were collaborating across state lines in order to protest this multinational company.

Chris Hedges:

So in your book, you write that the reason terrorism laws, this of course was in the wake of 9/11, the reason terrorism laws were employed against animal rights activists was because the corporations were being hurt. And they essentially prodded the political leadership in both parties, beholden to corporate money, of course, to declare these kinds of activities, even nonviolent activities, as acts of terrorism. They also, through tremendous resources, surveillance resources at these groups, I think if I remember correctly, in your book you say it's the longest criminal investigation by the FBI in US history or something. You write about a woman, her name, she went by the name Anna. Her real name was Zoe Elizabeth Voss, a paid FBI informant. We saw this with Muslims after 9/11, where she

provided the money, the logistics, at one point a cabin that the FBI wired to essentially prod people to discuss carrying out a bombing that never took place.

There's this one poor 26-year-old kid who kind of falls for her and it was entrapment. I think he ended up spending a decade in prison, but the FBI withheld 2,500 pages of evidence. And so he got a what, a 20-year sentence roughly and served 10. You write that the FBI is estimated to have had 15,000 informants in these environmental and animal rights groups. Let's talk about the tactics that were employed against these groups.

Will Potter:

I think the most important tactic is the recognition of the power of language. And that's something that began really in the 1980s when industry groups made up, I mean they actually invented the term ecoterrorism and they were quite proud of it. And for the next several decades, as you know, there was an international focus on terrorism in a very different context. So in that time through the eighties and nineties, there wasn't a lot of headway on these corporate efforts. I mean, there were gains being made, without a doubt, but what I found in my research is that after September 11th, the infrastructure and the strategies that were being developed and honed for decades leading up to 9/11 were implemented incredibly quickly and boldly after the attack, to the point where as first responders were still trying to clear survivors from the rubble after 9/11, you had multiple members of Congress speculating that the terrorist attacks were the work of environmentalists or animal rights activists. I mean, that's the kind of climate that these groups created.

In that climate where the unreasonable becomes reasonable, where you're blaming nonviolent groups or saboteurs for the most costly loss of life in US history, in that environment, they

were able to kind of manipulate other structures to push this agenda. And what I would kind of summarize is that they really did this in three ways. There were three parts to their playbook. There were legal efforts, there were legislative efforts such as creating new terrorism laws and new protest restrictions, and then there was what I would call extra legal or operating outside of the law. And that's where some of these informant tactics come in.

The FBI has been called to the carpet multiple times by their Inspector General's office and oversight boards for the rampant misuse of informants. And that certainly has taken place in the animal rights and environmental movements, but this has also been corporate-driven, as in corporations hiring private investigators in mercenary firms that operate outside of the very little restrictions that the FBI has to pursue activists and to create dossiers on them. We've seen this not just in the campaigns we've talked about so far, but also in things like the Standing Rock protest and the Keystone Pipeline protests where these major corporations are sitting down, and I literally have some of the documents showing it, that they give PowerPoint presentations to law enforcement. They identify protestors, they recommend prison sentences in specific criminal statutes that can be used to go after their opposition. At really every step of the way, these corporate groups have sat down and worked in lockstep with the FBI and with those mercenary companies.

Chris Hedges:

Yeah. Well, you talk about fusion centers, so these are state programs that essentially collate or put together information coming from various law enforcement agencies, but they also work, as you point out in the book, with these corporate security firms. When I went to Standing Rock or you couldn't, they blocked the roads, and the people blocking the roads were

wearing Kevlar vests and carrying long-barrelled weapons with no identification. They were private security drawn from police, drawn from military. And so there's this kind of centrifugal force where all of these entities are coming together to target these activists with tremendous amounts of resources. The film *The Animal People* is a documentary about this campaign, and in that documentary you show or there's an attempt to show the staggering kind of sums of money and manpower that's been put in to crush these groups.

Will Potter:

Oh, the amount of resources is just, it's unbelievable. I mean, as you all with this show, you're monitoring social movements and protest campaigns and you know how little resources these activists have. And so as one of the defendants, one of the protestors put it, when you see those court papers that say the United States versus Will or versus Chris or whatever it is, it really is that full weight of the US government combined with the full weight of the corporate state. In addition to some of the things you've mentioned like how this was the largest domestic terrorism investigation in US history, they've thrown just an ungodly amount of money into making these policies happen.

One thing that I would throw out is when these activists were awaiting prison sentences on the Huntingdon campaign, so they were already convicted under this ambitious previous law called the Animal Enterprise Protection Act. They were already being sentenced to prison as terrorists for a protest campaign. And politicians and members of Congress and also these corporate representatives were simultaneously arguing, "Our hands are tied. We need more power, we need more money, we need more funding, police resources." And like you said, I think you put it quite well, that there is this kind of centrifugal force that emerges of this revolving door of state agencies and private

sector, and really that's what's happened with this issue. Those forces together have worked over the last several decades to turn nonviolent protestors into the FBI's, "Number one domestic terrorism threat." And it's really because of their money and influence.

Chris Hedges:

They also have twisted the courts. Maybe you can talk about the terrorism enhancement laws. These can add 20 years to sentences. They can, in some cases, quadruple sentences. And let's be clear, these are nonviolent crimes.

Will Potter:

And this was something, the terrorism enhancement is something that was passed by Congress after the Oklahoma City bombings by right wing groups who killed, up until that time, was the most civilians that had ever been targeted. So in this kind of specter of fear of violence, that's when this provision was passed. And instead, it's been deployed to elevate the sentences of nonviolent environmental protestors that were convicted, for instance, as part of the Earth Liberation front. Those sentences not only are exacerbated by the terrorism enhancement, but it also redefines who these prisoners are.

I saw that personally visiting prisoners after they've been sentenced, and also in my interviews with countless former prisoners, that their experience once they've been classified that way is quite different. These activists in general have very little priors. They have no serious criminal history, and yet after being sentenced for their protest activity, they can end up in medium or even maximum security facilities. They are called red tagged by the BOP, by the Bureau of Prisons, and red carded.

That means they have to sometimes carry and wear a large red card identifying them as a high risk terrorism inmate. They're treated differently by guards, they're singled out.

The ramifications of this in terms of from a human rights perspective extend far beyond just the disproportionate and I would call malicious sentencing of these protestors. It really redefines them. And I think that's, to me, one of the most surprising takeaways of this language of terrorism is that even though it began as a public relations maneuver, it's completely taken on a life of its own to the point where it's worked its way into bureaucracies within power that kind of self-replicate these systems after people have even been convicted.

Chris Hedges:

Well, they're put in management control units. I went out to Marion, Illinois, and I know you went out there as well in the book, which replaced Alcatraz as the kind of supermax prison. Now we have in Florence the kind of latest iteration of that. But I went out to visit Daniel Hale, who leaked the drone papers, and he, again, it's a nonviolent crime. In fact, he shouldn't even be in prison, but he, like these activists, was placed in a high security prison in the middle of farmland, the middle of nowhere, but in a special, highly restrictive unit. And that's what's happened to many of these activists.

Will Potter:

To be clear, I think when people, in my experience, start hearing about things like this, there's a tendency to either think one, that can't be true because this is the United States, or similarly, something like, "Well, this only happens in X, Y, or Z other country that has a disdain for human rights." And the truth is

that there's actually a long history of using political prisons in the United States in these types of cases, including for social movements that we now regard by members of Congress even in these kind of heroic terms, the anti-war movement, the Black liberation Movement, the American Indian movement, all have been targeted. And many of those protestors ended up in experimental prisons.

What's I think significant here is these communications management units were opened as clearly, explicitly political prisons for political prisoners, targeting prisoners because of their communications and their ideology. People were sent there because of their, "Anti-corporate and anti-government beliefs," according to government documents. And as this is happening, it further codifies and cements political repression. It is stabilizing and really introducing what are quite extreme tactics of destroying and subverting social movements, and has turned them into something that's now part of the official government apparatus. And these CMUs, these secretive prisons are now being codified into the law, and they are receiving more and more prisoners every year. What started as an, "Extreme response by the government for dangerous and violent prisoners," is now being used against people that are very far from that. And I think that's the mission creep that we see and that you're really pointing to here.

Chris Hedges:

Yeah. We just have a few minutes left right in there about the loyalty oaths that mainstream environmental groups, Sierra Club, Greenpeace, National Wildlife Federation, were kind of called upon to denounce these underground groups, which unfortunately most of them rapidly did or quite willingly did. But let's talk about where we are now. This has created the foundation for a very frightening kind of police state where any

kind of dissent becomes terrorism. And that's why I opened with the incident in Cop City.

Will Potter:

And that's exactly why I've been following Cop City so closely as well, because the dynamics that we've talked about are really starkly on display in that campaign. Not just the repressive tactics, but the movement tactics, as well. I mean, it's a similar dynamic to that Huntingdon Life Sciences campaign where in the Cop City protest, you have people that are protesting, writing letters, working with church groups, running websites, doing free concerts like you mentioned, offering free childcare, food, all of these kind of multiple aspects of movement organizing. And then you also have people that have sabotaged property and broken the law.

And what the state has done in this case is argue that all of it, the entire campaign is reflective of domestic terrorism, anarchism and threats to public safety. So that dynamic is still at play. So is that, I think it's right to call a loyalty oath that's being put on mainstream organizations. If you run a national group, it's understandable why it would be tempting to come out and publicly condemn someone who vandalized a bulldozer because you run a nonprofit, you have donations and staff, and you're not involved in protest activity like that, and you certainly don't want to be at risk threatened by the FBI. And that's the type of fear that they prey into.

And what happens, though, is when more mainstream and established groups start making public comments about the radicals with Cop City or the Anarchists, which is the kind of classic boogeyman that has rolled out, it drives a wedge. And I think in terms of state repression, the intention is to drive a wedge between these social movements inside themselves,

between the aboveground and the more radical groups, and then to drive a wedge between Cop City protestors and everyone else in the more liberal or mainstream left. And they do that by really tightening the screws on mainstream organizations that have something to lose.

Chris Hedges:

Yeah. Although as you point out in your book, these nonviolent protestors ultimately get charged for acts they did not commit. I'm not going to go into the details. People should read the book and watch *The Animal People*, the documentary, but they weren't even physically there. They didn't even know these things were happening in many cases, but they're charged.

Will Potter:

In the Cop City case, it gets even more just kind of surreal. I mean, you have bond hearings where protestors are being denied and police are pointing to mud on their shoes as evidence-

Chris Hedges:

Right, right, right.

Will Potter:

[inaudible 00:30:33]

Chris Hedges:

That's right, muddy clothes.

Will Potter:

Muddy clothes, black hoodies. The raids of some of these activists that happened recently in Georgia, the warrant, I have to tell you, I don't think either of us would look very good if we were raided, Chris. I mean, our bookshelves can be quite incriminating. And that's the type of stuff that they're listing in these warrants and then dragging into court as evidence of illegal activity. And I think that's why it's so important for mainstream organizations to fight back militantly against what is happening right now. Staying silent has never protected social justice groups from political repression like this, period. Historically, it has never worked. It has never worked to try to cozy up to corporations or to politicians hoping that they're not going to be targeted in the backlash, because what happens every single time is at the point you become truly effective, at the point you become a true threat to business as usual is when the full weight of that apparatus is deployed.

So I think that what we're seeing in Cop City, I'm not going to say I'm optimistic or hopeful yet. I mean, I am a journalist after all, but it is quite inspiring, I'll say, to see church groups, community groups, and the diversity of voices that have come out against Cop City. And to me, I think that's really the best defense that we can have against these tactics is bringing everyone under the tent and saying very loudly that we're part of this same movement, the same cause, and we're not going to be singled out as terrorists to stop us.

Chris Hedges:

Great. I want to thank The Real News Network and its production team, Cameron Granadino, Adam Coley, Dwayne Gladden, David Hebdon, and Kayla Rivara. You can find me at chrishedges.substack.com.

Speaker 4:

And the Chris Hedges report gets some extra time now with a few minutes of bonus material with Chris and his guest.

Chris Hedges:

So in this second part, I want to ask you about the underground/aboveground groups. I was very involved in the Occupy movement and very critical of the black bloc and critical of property destruction, because I thought it was effectively used by the police and the state to demonize the Occupy movement. And it didn't achieve much, especially in cities like Oakland, where throwing a trash can through a window in a Oakland is... Ishmael Reed, who lives in Oakland said, "If they want to throw a trash can through a window, why don't they go up to La Jolla where the rich people live and throw a trash can through," Mitt Romney apparently has some kind of estate up there, his place.

So I've always been very critical. The other thing, and I think this is captured in your book, and it was something that I often said to Occupy activists, is you just go back and read COINTELPRO. That's kind of the primer on how it works. They have so many resources that the only effective strategy is transparency and the kind of the azan provokatörs, they love the black bloc because they could cover their faces so they couldn't be identified. But you're much more forgiving to the underground groups. But I just wanted you to address that.

Will Potter:

Yeah, I think those are valid critiques. I feel like the more I've been immersed in this for so many years now, the more I've

kind of come to believe one, how little I know about ultimately what tactics work and what don't, but to a greater point, seeing the response of the FBI and the state to a wide range of protest activity. So I think that the argument could be made that seeing property destruction like you see in a black bloc protest, it could give the immediate pretext in that moment for a political crackdown on those groups of spreading to other movements at that time. But what I've seen more broadly is that the repression that activists experience seems to have very little to do with the legality or the tenor of their actual tactics, if that makes sense.

So for instance, the underground groups who have done things like break into laboratories, steal animals, burn down buildings, I mean, at some cases these are very serious property crimes that someone could have been hurt. But what we've seen in the last few years is the FBI and the industry, I guess on the animal rights side of things more broadly, has focused on national groups. They've been much more concerned with undercover investigators in criminalizing photography and people that document animal abuse on farms.

And so I guess to respond to your question, I see that there is kind of a spectrum that exists in protest activity, and really the determining factor of whether any of that activity is going to be hit with intense state repression is whether it starts moving the needle. I feel a little bit naive, I'll admit, in the last few years to see how quickly, rapidly and forcefully these tactics have been deployed against activists who had no sensible connection whatsoever to anything illegal. Right? I mean, for years, that's what they said in going after the Animal Liberation Front and Earth Liberation Front. "We have to crack down on these radicals. We have to go after the black bloc."

And what we're seeing is that the FBI seems much less concerned with that on the whole right now than it does about

true movement building. So I don't know where this goes from here. I don't know if those tactics are going away. I feel like anytime that there is a heavy-handed or a violent response from the state, we might see protest tactics like that, but we're also seeing in Cop City, I think a lot more sophistication and movement creation and bringing lots of different people together and not, I guess I'll say not turning some people off with some of those tactics that you mentioned.

Chris Hedges:

I want to talk about what's happened. At the end, the movement, the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty Movement does cripple the lab, but it's bailed out, and then eventually it merges with other laboratories, Harlan Labs, NDA Analytics, et cetera, and creates this new super company, Envigo. What's the lesson from that?

Will Potter:

Well, it's kind of a similar story from your time in Occupy, right? That they're too big to fail. That's what the industry said with HLS, with vivisection industry, but also just all these diverse industries that have something to do with animals rallied behind them because they said, "If HLS falls, if this lab falls, everybody's going to be vulnerable." And I think that kind of too big to fail mentality is what caused people to rally behind such an abusive, corrupt facility as this one. And it also really speaks to just the overwhelming power of these industries.

My work focuses on political repression, which is pretty dark and depressing beat, but you also see the strength of social movements. And in this case, the industry was absolutely terrified about a protest campaign that was being run by a half a

dozen people, allegedly in the United States with a couple of computers and who were bringing a multinational company to the point where it's kicked off the New York Stock Exchange and kicked down to the pink sheets in the market makers. I mean, this was the power of this movement, and it just rattled them to their core. And I think that fear is still there. I mean, that's why we still, there isn't a campaign like this happening right now, but I think you're still seeing this level of repression and kind of paranoia by corporations because they know it's possible and they know this is always right around the corner.

Chris Hedges:

Well, they also know what they're doing, which is why they hide it.

Will Potter:

Oh, without a doubt. Without a doubt. Jon Stewart used to do a good bit on his show called Evil or Stupid, where he would debate something and be like, "Oh, this is happening because they're so horribly evil." And then the other guy would say, "Oh no, it's because they're so stupid." And I kind of do that a lot with this issue, but I think I firmly come down on the side of evil. I have to say that after seeing this for so long, there is nothing unintentional about any of these maneuvers. There's some people that are just following orders. But as you mentioned with the SHAC case, when that was happening in New Jersey, Chris Christie was one of the people that was really trying to make a name off of it, just to give you an idea. And these are political opportunists. They've used this war on activism to make a name for themselves as being tough on crime or tough on terrorism and to catapult their careers.

I think we're still going to be seeing that for quite some time. In the fallout of January 6th and the rise of fascist groups internationally, more and more people are going to be fighting back because we don't have a choice but to fight back against it. And I think that state apparatus is going to be employed against them, as well.

Chris Hedges:

Great. That was Will Potter. His book is Green is the New Red, and you can see the documentary, which he is in, The Animal People, it's on, where is it? On Amazon?

Will Potter:

Yeah, you can watch it on all the streaming stuff.

Chris Hedges:

All the streamings have it. Yeah, it's a great documentary. Thanks, Will.