



WORKS

Guns, Cars, Autonomy Anon (2014)

*The following is a transcript of a conversation between two friends shortly after the insurgency in Ferguson, Missouri. **Bart** was there and **Nikola** wasn't, but both have participated in anti-police uprisings in the last several years on the West Coast and in the Midwest. We're publishing this in an effort to explore the complexities of recent events in the United States, but also to contribute to the ongoing discussions and attacks against the existing order, everywhere.*

Nikola: One of the most interesting experiments by rebels in the Bay Area in the past years was the establishment of Oscar Grant Plaza (the home of Occupy Oakland also known as the Oakland Commune) as a police-free zone in the fall of 2011. The logistics of this experiment were actually fairly simple: whenever the police attempted to enter the encampment, a crowd would gather around them and force them to leave. At times this meant screaming, while at others it was merely a matter of informing the officers that they would have a riot on their hands if they intruded. People at the encampment took several measures to defend themselves from the presence of the police. Materially, communards stockpiled materials to build barricades and projectiles to be used against any unwanted police presence. They re-appropriated police barricades for their own purposes and built barricades of their own. They tore up the paving stones of the plaza to be hurled at police raiders. Culturally, the police-free environment reproduced itself by fostering hostility toward the police, and a culture of street-based resistance to them. When the camp fell under siege, the cops and their stations fell victim to a chaotic wave of retribution. As demonstrations and riots against the police reach their limits in time, we consistently ask ourselves how to sustain these suspensions of order longer than a few days. One possibility is that the cultivation of zones free from the police could provide an answer this dilemma.

If by maintaining a police free zone, the Oakland Commune offered a contribution to the struggles of everyone who works to create territories against the police – to make their homes, neighborhoods and cities entirely hostile to police occupation – it could be argued that the re-cent uprising in Ferguson significantly expanded upon this experiment. It seems as though the revolt in Ferguson is unprecedented

