



Nikola: It seems like some of the other things anarchists can do in these situations include encouraging people to wear masks, attacking surveillance systems, trying to undermine more sinister or subtle types of recuperation or leftist attempts to seize control. These things are almost constants that we should expect and have some strategic perspective around.

Bart: I can say for sure that anarchists did create a culture – almost single handedly – of wearing masks. Where the first few nights people were openly saying “why would I wear a mask!? I’m proud of what I’m doing, I want people to know I’m doing this” while committing crazy felonies, later in the week it was almost a fashion statement to have a shirt tied around your head. I think another way anarchists helped to create a safer space for people to engage in more combative action was by attacking the media crews and pushing them out of the streets, or at least back towards police lines. Before this happened there would be dozens of film crews, taking footage of looters, many of whom had no masks on, or had visible tattoos.

Nikola: It seems like there are potentials when these situations erupt—both in the epicenter and at the margins—for all sorts of people, including anarchists, to find some sort of individual self-realization and also to push their own projects further. In doing so they might also help to spread the social conflict and I think it is at the intersection of these possibilities that some of the most exciting things happen. It feels pretty clear that a lot of what we’ve talked about already has been in one way or another about identity and I think that its in these conflictual situations that we can actually understand how identity works against us. A basic contention that a lot of people coming out of struggles in the Bay Area, whether the Oscar Grant rebellion or the occupations, is the idea that identity is a tool of the state used to keep people apart and to enforce the social roles that people are expected to play. It also becomes clear that, in these moments of rupture, identities start to break apart and collapse. As a consequence, this is where the state tries to regain control first, through the logic of identity and through a reimposition of the identity categories that were previously falling apart. It seems, from your account and others, that this was also at play in Ferguson.

Bart: This is definitely true, and I think the state in the Bay has perfected the modern day use of Identity as a form of control, especially in situations like the Oscar Grant Rebellion. Having watched what happened there, it is really interesting to see the parallels, word for word, in how the state responded here. After the first night of rioting, almost instantly the Sheriff came out and said “this is a small group of white, anarchist, outside agitators that came in and stirred things up”. To me it was obvious that this was an attempt to try and preemptively put a stop to

