

Katie and Elijah
"Seattle Post Intelligence"

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JS So we're going to talk about the wrap, about the *Seattle Post Intelligence*. Are you guys...? You can say your names if you want. You can also not say your names if you want.

But I'm here speaking with two people who worked on the *Seattle Post Intelligence*. Do you guys want to give your names or an alias or something?

E I don't know.

JS You're just two people for now. So how did start?

E How did it start? It's just, you know, in the months leading up to the WTO, everyone was meeting in coffee shops under different working group titles, throwing out all kinds of crazy ideas, and in the various impromptu, people who would show up at, like, the loosely-dubbed independent media meetings, one of the many, many outlandish and unattainable ideas that was thrown out there was to wrap all the morning papers with an activist paper that talked about the WTO, that looked exactly like it, that was color, and it could be folded out and had a poster on it, and could also be used as a poster.

So, I don't know. There's always this point at which people have ideas, and so there's a couple people who particularly wanted to work on that, and so we met once. There was four of us, and there's always that point when you, like, you realize you have no idea how you print it, you have no idea how you get all the articles, you have no idea what it would cost, and you only have a month to do it in. It's like shit hits the ceiling, like, remotely possible.

The only thing that made us think that it was is that we had evidence that other people had done it in the form of the actual papers.

JS Like what evidence?

E Recently there was in the Reclaim the Streets protest from London, they actually printed.... They didn't wrap it or it wasn't necessarily a subverting action, but they had printed a full newspaper that was to go along with the day of the action. And then one of the people in the group had actually been part of groups who had done Gulf War protest papers where they had taken the morning paper and actually glued on a new front page, which was a little more...

So we debated various tactics. That's really cheap, because you don't have to print as much paper, but it doesn't really fool anyone. It's not classy in a lot of ways. So we shot for something that we thought would be really as big a size as possible, full color on one side, and somehow miraculously within the month it came together.

K Well, I got involved in it about a week after he did, and there was a meeting at our house. Again, there was, like, six people there. One woman spent most of the meeting trying to get everybody to publish a sixteen-page piece based solely on the environment. Everyone was, like, no, no, no. So it was one of those meetings where you're like, gosh, what's going to get done?

There was this big list of articles that we were going to get, and a week later, or at the end of the meeting, they were like, okay, next week we're going to meet. In one week, we're going to have all these articles, and we're going to put it together. Everyone was chuckling, like, what? And this one guy there was, like, "I'm going to spend the next one week researching these two articles. I'm not working right now. That's what I'm going to spend all my time on." And we're like, okay.

E None of us knew him. He seemed sort of like a crusty hippie. We had no idea.

K He only came to that one meeting.

E He only came to that one meeting.

K We really had no idea who he was, but he wrote the front page.

E Cover article, right. He wrote these genius articles.

K Totally well-researched journalism.

E Well researched. So there's all these parts that came together, like, one of the main people working on it was this amazing photographer who just put a lot of time into the photographs and had a big archive of her photographs. And then, like, I just, I had ordered my computer months and months ago and it never came, but it came just at the right week so that we could all hunch around on this little laptop laying out.

It was like seven of us in the living room with just papers strewn everywhere like it's a total disaster zone. Little mockups and people editing.

K People sleeping everywhere, and the dog.

E Right. There was a dog. People coming in and out. It just looked like a blizzard going through, and the only thing we're editing on is this little teeny computer.

K But what I was impressed with was the week later we had more than enough articles and some brilliant stuff. Some stuff that was like, oh, cultural critique. Some stuff that exactly sounded like it was out of a newspaper. I did some stuff that was like a kids' section. We really felt like we had enough of these mocked up articles to really talk about all these different facets of the WTO, in a way that if someone got this mock paper, they would be psyched.

E There's a lot of things that conspired to bring it together. It did seem impossible at first in terms of how much money it would take, and somehow that miraculously... I'll just say this, because what was formerly the Direct Action Network secretly channeled over a thousand dollars into funding this. There was many other organizations which were much more legitimate that secretly channeled money into the Direct Action Network to provide that money. So there was this money available, and we put it to good use.

K We got 15,000 copies made, and that was made down in Oregon.

E Because there's no printers in Seattle. Everyone was booked.

K So some guy's friend was driving up, drove up these 15,000 copies. We took them to a warehouse. I wasn't there. You were there, and they were ready to go. But then we had this big problem of, the most people who had worked on the wrap so far were, like, six people. We had some friends, but not all our friends were willing to spend this whole night going around the city, wrapping it up.

But luckily the convergence was just starting right around then. I'm not quite sure how the word went out and how those people were recruited.

E Wink, wink, nod, nod.

K On the night we met at like 10 p.m. at this warehouse, which is also an art studio, and the place was just covered in people. There's probably like 75 people there; 24 cars, I think. There's this whole telephone system where you radio in or call in and say how you're doing, and the press release was going to go out once everybody had called in in the morning.

We were pretty scared that people were going to get arrested, one, because a lot of people just looked like crazy convergent activists, so they were very well marked, and we were going to the Eastside, going to the North End, going to a lot of places that it seemed we could get harassed.

E There was a lot of reasons why everyone was a little on edge. One was because the police were already beginning to crack down.

JS What day was it?

K Good question. It was, like, the Wednesday before.

E Yeah. It was, like, the Wednesday before. It was before Thanksgiving, I think.

JS The day before Thanksgiving?

E The day before Thanksgiving.

K I think it was the day before the day before Thanksgiving. I think the day the paper came out was the day before Thanksgiving, so we would have been doing it...

E ...two nights before.

K Yes.

E Because, it wasn't as bad as the police are now, like, in D.C. and L.A. and Philly where they're just totally preemptive. But they were already hedging their bets and arresting people and being more suspicious. I had actually gotten arrested the week before for stickering, doing anti-WTO stickering, and I had my computer on me, the laptop that had all the files, just like right there. I was arrested with the complete evidence of everything that we'd been doing, so right before we about to distribute it, we were a little sketched.

The last time they distributed it, one of the carloads got arrested.

JS The last time they distributed it?

E Yes, in Seattle. The previous time they'd done it.

K They'd done one a couple of

E One of the cars had gotten caught.

JS Was this, like the Gulf War one you're talking about?

E Yes. Then we had this legal training, where right before we all go out and do it, and so everyone is even more scared because of the legal training.

JS Who did the legal training? You don't have to say someone's name. What I'm getting at is I'm wondering if it was someone involved in DAN legal?

E Yes, it was.

K Yes. But he was actually... The DAN legal lawyer was supposed to come, but he was sent because she was really sick, and he sort of was using scare tactics, so we were even more freaked out and just like, "Oh, my gosh."

E But it was fun. It was great energy. Everyone shows up at three o'clock in the morning at this warehouse in South Seattle, and it's packed with people, and everyone's like, "How are you doing?" It's sort of a party atmosphere.

K It's pre-bangles.

E The warehouse is also packed with the turtle costumes, so we see, like, hundreds and hundreds of turtles ready to go before they're unveiled, and all this food, and people are all, like, tired.

K It was very exciting, because we definitely put out the word to all our friends and put out the word to everyone we could, but had no real idea who was going to show, and knew we had these 15,000 copies. So to have all these people show up, all these different cars, it was just really amazing.

So then we divided up all the cars, and most people were going out in cars with people they didn't really know by neighborhoods. Everyone got a bunch of wraps and a bunch of quarters and they went out and in the middle of the night. There was definitely a lot of stories of people going out in cars with other people who just, like, "Oh, you know, this little stoner, 18-year old, went out with two friends and who for the life of him could not remember the other two people's names in the car." They were really paranoid the cops were going to pull them over and it would be real apparent that he... I don't know, Paranoia was running high.

JS It would be real apparent that what?

E She wouldn't be able to maybe lie very well or something.

K Because, I mean, if you couldn't even remember their names. We would all told by DAN Legal to have some sort of scenario about what we were doing out, and so that guy was just supposed to pretend to be (inaudible) if pulled over.

I went out with these two Anarchists who, you know, we talked about what would happen if we got arrested and they were both, like, "I'm just gonna run as fast as I can," and all that stuff. We were like, okay. But they were very, very nice, and actually when I was going, we kept on seeing other cars that were also doing it. And you'd be like, "What are they doing?" and you'd sort of see people grabbing out all these newspapers and putting them back. Mostly took them out of the machines where you put in quarters, but then there were some people who went into the grocery stores and mini-marts and just grabbed all their papers and (inaudible) because who is suspicious

of someone changing the newspaper in the middle of the night? That's what happens.

E The method is you have, like, three people in the car, and you grab a stack, and you have...

JS A stack of wraps?

E Yes. You grab your initial stack of papers in the very first one you go to, and then you take off in the car right away, and the person in the back, or the two other people, are disassembling the papers and then reassembling them. It takes a while to make them look nice. Then you build another stack, and then when you come to the next place, the person in the passenger seat takes the papers and they run out and they do a switch. So then it doesn't take that long; you just switch, and then you're off again. That's the beautiful theory of it. The problem is that in a lot of places like the Eastside, it just takes forever to find these freaking boxes. They are so few and far between. Sometimes they'll only have a few papers in them and stuff like that, but when it works, it works really well.

JS So you didn't have the boxes scouted out ahead of time, did you? You just sort of went around the neighborhoods and thought about where you would probably see them.?

E No. There's way, way too many of them.

K There was 25 cars, so you didn't necessarily have to take a huge neighborhood, so you could pretty much drive down every street in the neighborhood and find one. Yeah, and it was pretty exhausting, and it lasted all night.

E Some people put them on the ferries, on the ferry roads. People who lived on the Eastside, they had some leftover, so a lot of the ferries had them on them. And later, so then the next day happens, and there's not... I don't know, we probably didn't wrap more than 7,000 papers.

JS Really? Even though you had 15,000 wraps?

E Yeah.

K We had a lot leftover.

E But it was just amazing wide coverage. Like, way out in the suburbs. It was all over Seattle. It was really far down south. There were reports of them way up North and on the ferries and stuff. And so when the newspaper reports on it, the evening paper the next day, this is like unprecedented, far-reaching coordination, and so everyone is all impressed for several reasons. It looked exactly like the PI, and so it was impressive that way, I guess. And also how far-reaching it was. And also, I mean, what was nice is for us working on it is that it was, I mean, if we say so ourselves, it was well done. The copy was good. The art was good. The layout was good.

K And no one got caught by the police at all.

JS Was anyone stopped or anything?

E I was stopped in the act of doing it, but we had just passed the cop that stopped us, and the person I was driving with is sort of extremely paranoid, and so we pulled over and put everything in the trunk, and we were pulled over basically for being young while being in Bellevue in the middle of the night. So he just comes in and shines his flashlight around and, like, checks my ID, and away we go. But, otherwise, I mean,

because we had a lot of papers. It would have been hard telling him to hide them all. So it was very fortuitous that he was extremely paranoid.

JS I didn't quite understand. You said you put the stuff in the trunk after the police...

E We saw the cop.

K They just saw a cop on the street...

E ...and we knew that we were...

K ...just when the incredibly paranoid was (inaudible) put them in trunk.

E But that same cop circled around the followed us.

JS Okay, so the paranoia actually turned out to work?

E Yes.

JS Kind of like, it's just like that Nirvana song, what is it, "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not after you."

E Exactly.

K Totally.

E So, I mean, it was... And then it just, I mean, it was... It somewhat is a media stunt. There was a content and a message. It was also very much speaking about corporate media and how it wasn't covering any of the issues at all, and also just a media activist, and so designed to get media attention more than anything. Okay, so the 7,000 things were not going to reach that many people, but it was picked up by...

K Although I went into work and my boss said, "Did you hear that Boeing is moving overseas?" which was the lead article, which is...

JS Was she serious?

K Yeah. She was totally serious, and I was like, "Oh, man..."

E There were some sad antidotes like that, or like somebody riding on the bus the next day, and somebody saying, "Yeah, man, Mumia is freed," 'cause that was one of the joke headlines as well, and that, obviously, not being true.

K Yeah. We had all these things at the top that was like, "Mumia freed." I mean, just like, "Ten million dollars that was supposed to go to a jet is now going to public schools," like all these dreams if, like, you were to wake up.

JS How about, I think I know where one is. Can I grab one and could we look at it for a second?

K Sure.

JS You were handing them out where?

K Oh, well, we had all these leftover ones, and we were handing them out everywhere, like the Spearhead show and at the IFG, the International Forum on Globalization. But the paranoia continued after the night, because the next day, the *PI* came out and said that they would prosecute these people who did it to the full extent of the law. They were working with law enforcement officers to hunt down these....

E ...the malicious...

K The one thing that was cool is we didn't even take away anything from the paper. We just added a little extra, and who can fault that, you know? I mean, them.

E And we paid for it, too.

JS Because you put in all those quarters.

E Yeah. We put in, like, \$200 worth of quarters throughout the night, so.... I mean, I think my favorite post-response... I mean, it was also cool, because all my relatives, I told them I was working on it, and they read about it in their local paper, or Portland picked it up really big.

K And part of the reason it was, I think, got a lot of media coverage is it was a good time before the WTO was actually happening, so the media was very aware that something big was going to be happening, and they kept on wanting to have articles about what was happening, but nothing was really happening. So they were definitely hungry for anything going on. I know a lot of people have said to me it really marked the fact that some pretty crazy stuff was going to be going on in Seattle, but it was like very much the starting point of different actions going on.

E Actually, at the IFG conference, which was a couple days later, or the start of it, maybe half a week later, maybe, at most, we were still handing out extras there. We weren't actually handing them out. We'd just leave a stack of them, and I, for some reason, was warming the seat at the table for the People for Fair Trade, completely separate from the stack of papers, across the room, and several people came up to the table and were like, "This is great. Whoever made this is genius," or I don't know if they said genius, but they said, "It was so inspirational to me." They'd be like, "I want to thank that person," and I was just biting my tongue.

K Yeah. It was a really fun action like that, because most things you do aren't that successful or something, and this very much felt like... The wrap looked great. People really appreciated it. It got a lot of media coverage. It got so much media coverage, in fact, that the next day David Solnit, who is a big Direct Action Network organizer who had nothing to do with it, got called by this news station and were like, "We know that public service announcement, or whatever those are called, got sent out of the DAN office. We're going to prosecute you unless you give us someone to talk about tonight on the five o'clock news." And he was like...

E They knew that he was involved in DAN. They knew that this was something that DAN would probably do. They called him up and they said that they were going to announce on the news that he did it, that he was involved in it, DAN was involved, unless he could provide someone who was involved.

JS An actual in the news source said this?

E Yes.

K Which is sort of incredible, because usually, I mean, we're just calling media saying-please report on this.

E We did that night, actually, so I, that morning, at six o'clock in the morning, I faxed out like a hundred press releases about it. But somehow I wanted it to reach this guy. And we obviously didn't give... For more information, call this number it was going

to say that. So that's how one of us ended up getting on the news. It was like the garbled voice and the giant sun puppet head, and so she just sounded like a demonic figure talking about the corporatization of media and about the issues, about the WTO. It was a very surreal media image.

JS How is it that a person ended up on TV? Did she approach...?

E She was the.... It was the TV that called, I think, through other channels.

K I think David Solnit contacted her and was like...

E ...and knew. David Solnit knew who did it.

K ...and she wanted the rest of us to come, too, but for whatever reasons, we couldn't.

E We were sleeping.

So the original plan had been to get, like, all 70 people and all of their friends who had helped distribute it and hold a big press conference and say, "We did it," and talk about why we did it, and we'd flaunt the fact that we'd done it, and try to have as many people and be, like, "You can't arrest us all." And if they did, we were like, do jail solidarity with our whatever.

K Well, that was a pipe dream, but it never came to anything.

E Right. That was before anyone had gotten arrested for the WTO yet. Then the next day when they were just like, "We're going to hunt them down," we were all so tired and so burnt, and we were just like, whatever.

JS So you just like...?

E So our plans for a press conference fell through, but when this new source put pressure on David Solnit to provide somebody to talk to is when it got on the news.

JS That's incredible.

K And that's the wrap.

JS One question I thought of when you were talking is, where was the idea originally conceived?

E Well, it's just a long... I mean, I know the person that was pushing for it hardest, initially. She was an older activist in Seattle for a long time and had been involved in wraps, like I said, that were similar, glued on the front page in case of the latest one, so... I mean, it was definitely stuff that they'd done before.

I think that the fact that we had color and the timing was right and there was already media hype around the WTO led to the greater coverage. It's something that seems really, really difficult to do, like beyond that, where none of us knew how to find a printer, how to talk to printers, how we were going to do, get stuff camera-ready or whether we were going to give it to them on disk, and what the formats would be. All that stuff, when we just had to educate ourselves and figure it out.

We were sort of like all impressed that we did afterwards, and it was fun, because months later at another planning meeting for another action, somebody was like, "We should make a big newspaper wrap like they did for the WTO." And then someone else there said, "Oh, I heard it was some rich British millionaire who did that in England and had it sent over and paid for it all." That was, like, that's a really cool

rumor, but... It was long enough away that I think I actually at that point said, "Well, I know who worked on it." But it was funny, because it seemed like it was professionally done and not just this rag-tag bunch of activists.

At the same time, we drew on all these resources in terms of money and friends network of friends and it made it all possible.

JS Did you guys have specific goals in mind when you decided to do the project? Did it just sound like fun or did you want to get a particular message across?

E I think, obviously, highlighting corporate media, but really to give a diversity of the issues on the WTO, to not have it too environmental, to not have it too labor, to also include lots of agriculture, stuff that wasn't necessarily... Like, people would talk about a lot of the environment stuff, but there wasn't as much on agriculture, and I wanted to make sure that that got in there.

Also, I mean, originally the idea was to have it fun. We tried not to make it so just like straight. The front page was supposed to be mostly sarcastic, but it's hard to write... Somewhat of the model was like *The Onion*, but it's hard to just write something just funny, then it's just funny. So some of them were a little bit of both, and some of them were like spoofs, and some of them were half factual and half not, so it was... We really struggled with, like, are we... We want to really educate people, but we want some of it to be a spoof, an *Onion*-type spoof is all made-up stuff. So, what stuff is going to be giving the straight facts, and what stuff is going to be playing it up a little bit so that it seems outrageous.

K And it definitely seemed like a good medium to... You know, newspapers cover a lot of things, so have a good mish-mash of materials.

JS Are there any particular articles that you want to talk about, or that have stories behind them or anything? Do you want to elaborate on them?

K Well, so this whole section, this Fair Zone, was sort of initially my ideas, or both ours ideas. At the time, the *Seattle PI* was doing this thing every Friday called The Free Zone. Just a page for kids. It was all talking about why free trade is fun and why free trade means being able to eat enchiladas in Seattle. I mean, it was crazy. So we tried to put together this kids section, one, that was cool and not dorky, since the *Seattle PI* seemed to be really corny. So we used one of these characters, Huey, who is the coolest comic character from The Boondocks, and he's very sassy, sort of like socialist boy. So you asked questions to Huey, and then he sort of gave you answers.

Then we used Queen Amadallah from the Star Wars movie, just because she was fighting trade relations with her country. So our whole thought behind that was, you know, like it's definitely a section of this that isn't very text heavy. It's fairly easy to read, and then it's also pretty informational.

E There's definitely some things, we wanted more on food safety we didn't really have. We could only have a little bit on reforestation. But overall, I think, we were complete with the breadth, I mean, in a week. The total nightmare of the whole thing was at the very end, after we've stayed up all night and there's two of us left and we haven't... I mean, it's like, when we're laying it out, it's already six o'clock in the morning the next day, and we're still editing the calendar, trying to make it fit so that there can be a comprehensive calendar that's as up-to-date as we could find at that time, and yet figure out... A lot of it was really lengthy, so, and there's hundreds of entries, and

we're trying to shorten each one and figure out what words we can leave off and what events we can leave off because they're duplicated, or they're not as important as other events that we can get to fit exactly. Our eyes were going fuzzy, and we're just, like, snapping at each other, but....

It was also fun that that word got back to us by someone, somebody's friend who had a friend who worked at the *PI* that... They were, like, some people had put it up on their wall and they thought it was really.... They were like, people thought it was an inside job for awhile, because it looked just like the *PI*, because we spent a really long time trying to mimic exactly their look on the inside and the outside.

K I know one thing that was reported, too, that probably a lot of people who just got it didn't notice, but all the bylines are mostly martyred activists or just activists who are really amazing who are dead. That's one thing I appreciated, like a lot of the little details, just like the index... There's this little weather thing that says, "Gathering clouds through Monday. Hard rains and a break in the weather on November 30th." Oh, yeah.

JS Hard rain's going to fall.

K Yeah.

JS Yeah. The details are amazing.

E The front page thing, too, is cool. So there's a man in a plaza; it's actually Westlake Plaza, and it was about Boeing. It may not have been Boeing, but an informational picket kind of thing, and talking about the hourly wage drop around the world and how they can just move a factory somewhere else and pay someone less and hurt labor there, and hurt labor here. But the numbers on the picket sign didn't match what was reported in the article, and there were different places and different numbers, and the article is about that. So we digitally modified the picket sign, so the numbers matched exactly what was in the article and the places did, too.

K Yes. You added this maquiladora wage which wasn't there at all.

JS That's impressive.

E And it looks exactly alike. We just took letters from other parts of the sign, and combined them, and lined them up. Yeah. No one's ever noticed.

JS There's no way you could notice unless you knew. That's amazing. Wow.

So that's a wrap. That sounds like that's most of the stories. Is there anything else that people should know about?

K I don't think so.

JS Any other anecdotes about production or the work you put into it?

E I mean, it's just, there's so many other people who worked on it, so they all have their own anecdotes.

K Yes. The editing process was crazy. We just each tried to read everything into it, so often you'd get back a piece you had written and it would really look like nothing you had initially written.

- E You really had to just let go. It was like so many cooks, and, there was actually one article that was submitted by someone who is pretty much pre-eminent, like a lefty news reporter in Seattle, and another by someone who is a fairly well-known published author, and both of them kind of didn't want their stuff to be edited real heavily, and we just butchered it just to get it to fit, and people were like.... I mean, people just read it as if it was someone else, I mean, any of the other articles, right? It wasn't given any special consideration, and so they were just like, whatever, and totally changing it and stuff. But we never got any complaints back.
- JS Cool. Thanks for telling your story. You were talking about the last page?
- E Yes. So we've laid out the three other pages, and we sort of laid out the last page last minute, like way after three o'clock in the morning or something, but we talked about the text and the content of it the last time we'd met. Everyone was struggling. A lot of people had these amazing photographs and laid them out for us, and we were all really impressed by the composition and stuff, but we just couldn't think of what text to go with it at all. People were throwing out all kinds of stuff, and we'd do a little work, and then we'd stop and we'd, like, "Okay. What are we going to do for that back page? We've really got to do something with the back page."
- K I think someone threw out for us, "If you breathe, eat, work, play, the WTO is already part of you."
- E Or the WTO is going to get you, or you should care about this. And then someone threw out, "You're already involved." Everyone was, like, "Oh, that's perfect." So it was fun. I don't know if other people liked it as much as we did. We were very, very impressed with the wordage on the back page.
- K ...which is, "If you breathe, eat, work, play, you're already involved. Take the next step."
- E And then at the bottom is the calendar of 50 or more events.
- K Yeah. Because I definitely think that was one of the things that the media kept on reporting, like, "Why do these people care about the WTO? What's all this?" You know, and they were like, "These are Americans. They're not affected. What's going on?" blah blah blah. We were quite pleased with that page.
- E I think the "take the next step" was also a breakthrough in coming up with it. Like, how do we tie-in this abstract art and these photographs with the text with justifying putting this big, ugly calendar there? What's the tie-in with the two? There's definitely nicer done WTO articles, but we were happy that it was maybe the most functional.
- K And it still looks like the back page of a newspaper.
- E It also looks like a back underwear ad or something.

End of Interview