

# Arizona EF! Trial

## Conspiracy or Entrapment?

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The government of the United States believes in the concept of freedom so much it infiltrates movements that practice the concept and tries to set them up to commit illegal acts.

Dave Foreman, co-founder of Earth First!, and four others are being prosecuted for conspiracy, and although the government contends the “Arizona Five” conspired to sabotage the nuclear industry, it is apparent the reason behind the arrests and prosecution is to discredit the radical environmental movement and to jail Foreman because he wrote a book.

The book in question is *Eco-Defense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching*, a manual of environmental sabotage. That book is deemed so dangerous that the FBI set up four people to commit acts they would have otherwise only dreamed about.

On the night of May 30, 1989, a brilliant flare lit up the Arizona sky illuminating four environmental activists standing next to a powerline tower, attempting to topple it with a blowtorch. At the site, two of them, Mark Davis and Marc Baker, were swarmed upon by over thirty heavily armed federal agents.

Peg Millet, a third person on the scene, escaped on foot through the desert, eluding agents who pursued her on horseback and in a night-vision equipped helicopter. She hitchhiked home, but was arrested next day at her job. A fourth, Ilse Asplund, was indicted months later for her alleged participation.

The following morning, FBI agents awakened Foreman with guns pointed at his head in his Tucson, Arizona home and charged him with being part of the conspiracy although not present at the scene.

The Arizona Five “monkeywrenching” trial began in July at the federal courthouse in Prescott, Arizona. The five defendants are represented by different counsel, but the defense strategy is being co-ordinated by Foreman’s attorney, Gerry Spence from Wyoming. Spence and the other attorneys are attempting to convince the jury that their clients were entrapped by the federal government.

So, how did the feds set up these activists in what has been dubbed “Operation Desert Tie Dye?” It is known that the Federal Bureau of Inquisition has spent three years and over two million dollars to infiltrate Earth First! It is speculated that the FBI was unsuccessful until Ron Frazier of Prescott, decided to turn ‘informant’ against his friends in the area.

In cross-examination, it came out that Frazier was a heavy LSD user and quite confused. Testimony also showed he had a run-in with Foreman at one time.

After wiring Frazier’s body and tapping his telephone to gather “evidence,” the FBI sent in special undercover agent, Michael Fain. Using the name Mike Tait, Fain posed as a disgruntled Vietnam vet with a learning disability and wormed his way into the EF! inner circles.

The EF! defense will center on the concept that it was Fain who initiated the idea for the sabotage and provided the logistics. In the words of one of the locals who was mocking the trial, “First, you need a blowtorch. Don’t have one? We’ll get it for you. Don’t know how to use it? We’ll show you. Don’t have enough gas to drive into the desert to knock over powerlines? We’ll drive you.”

It would be a funny story if not for the fact that the government is trying to dismantle the radical environmental movement, bust a person for writing a book, and send people to federal prison for a very long time.

Very clever—except for one of Tait's mistakes. He left his body tape recorder on too long after talking to Foreman and discussed with other agents how to whole scam was just a setup.

Shortly after the FE goes to press, Gerry Spence and the defense team will present the story of this entrapment to the jury. It looks like the trial may go on through October, so if you are interested in seeing one of the most important trials in session, go to Arizona. Gerry Spence (who arrives in court everyday in a ten gallon cowboy hat) is almost worth the travel expenses.

For updates and information, call (602) 776-7073.

FE note: *Eco-Defense: A Field Guide to Monkey-wrenching*, edited by Dave Foreman, is available from FE Books, \$14.

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