

# Tales from the Planet

john johnson  
Tequila Mockingbird

2003

## Starbucks Social Response Scale-Back Initiative

In August, Starbucks stores in San Francisco had “for lease” signs and letters saying, the stores were closing pasted on the windows and doors. In all 17 Starbucks were hit with the official-looking signs, mostly in the Tenderloin and South of Market neighborhoods. At many stores, the windows were soaped up and the locks were jammed, leaving employees waiting outside to start their shifts. One flyer posted outside one store said, “We are moving over and making room for local coffee bars, our last best example of our commitment to fine coffee and local culture that got us into the business in the first place.”

## Benton Harbor Intifada

As the economy crashes even further for tens of millions of poor people in the “richest country in the world,” the specter of popular uprising is again appearing on the horizon. The phrase “Benton Harbor Intifada” was coined by a young college journalist at Detroit’s Wayne State University to describe three nights of rioting by poverty-stricken blacks in a small town on Lake Michigan following the police killing of a fleeing motorcyclist.

The term is apt because like devastated, occupied Palestine sitting next to affluent Israel, so Benton Harbor exists in the shadow of predominately white, middle-class St. Joseph, Michigan.

Government and police officials who thought black riots were a thing of the past quickly sent in the armed might of the state, and, like always, made promises to better the lives of the citizens there.

Nothing has changed in South Central LA since the Rodney King riots and nothing will change soon in Benton Harbor if it’s left to the rulers. America is quickly sliding towards the social construction of a Latin American country where only a third of us will be waged enough to participate fully in the economy.

In 1965, Watts was the first black urban uprising of that period; will Benton Harbor be the initial one in ours?

## Earth First! Legal Update

Oakland Police and FBI have agreed to pay \$4 million to settle Daryl Cherney and the late Judi Bari’s civil rights suit against them. A federal jury in Oakland last year awarded the pair a \$4.4 million judgment. For more about the Bari/Cherney case and the pending settlement please visit [www.judibari.org](http://www.judibari.org)

## **Website will predict White House actions**

Inspired by the futures market in terror and war that the Pentagon released and then immediately yanked in late July, a consortium of computer scientists, political scientists and others announced an online futures market in White House behavior.

“The Pentagon felt that a market in terrorism futures could predict terrorism,” said AAM spokesman Tad Hirsch, a researcher at MIT’s Media Lab. “If the market is indeed such a powerful tool, then it should be directed at the most urgent question facing the world: what will the White House do next?”

The site [www.AmericanActionMarket.org](http://www.AmericanActionMarket.org) will offer various categories of “futures” that users can bet on and trade. Some of these have easily verifiable outcomes:

- \* Who will be the next foreign leader to move from the CIA payroll to the White House “most wanted” list?
- \* What will be the next major White House lie to break, and how will the White House attempt to control it? Will the attempt be successful?
- \* Which corporation will be next to see its close relationship to the White House erupt in scandal?

[AmericanActionMarket.org](http://AmericanActionMarket.org) will be fully functional and ready for bets on October 1, the day the Pentagon’s now-defunct futures market was scheduled to open.

## **WTO hounded, Cops clamp down, and arrest seedballs**

Some four thousand people mobilized to protest the World Trade Organization’s Agriculture mini-ministerial in Sacramento, California in late June. A spirited series of protests and events took place, letting the WTO know that they were not being left alone. The huge state security forces operation left nobody in doubt as to who controlled the streets, and as a reminder of the current state of affairs in the USA. Of course, the cops harassed everyone from black bloc anarchists to permaculture activists dressed up as butterflies and ears of corn. Nevertheless, Food First, Public Citizen, IFG and others organized events in the Alternative Forum that attracted over a thousand participants. In other news from the Sacramento WTO protests, the cops confiscated dozens of clay “seed-balls,” claiming they were dangerous weapons. The seedballs, created at a permaculture workshop during the convergence, contained a variety of seeds and clay and were designed to hold water and protect seeds as they were strewn about abandoned areas in a creative protest against corporate death agriculture.

## **Ent Suicide Attack on SUV**

In California, a 200-foot-tall tree on Sequoia National Park’s main road fell and squashed a parked sport utility vehicle from Florida. The giant sequoia, believed to be about 1,000 years old, fell along the Generals Highway several miles east of the Giant Forest Museum. No one was injured but the Jeep Grand Cherokee was left as a pile of crumpled metal. The mid-August incident was claimed by the Ent Liberation Front.

Send news to [FifthEstate@pumpkinhollow.net](mailto:FifthEstate@pumpkinhollow.net)

# fifth Estate

john johnson  
Tequila Mockingbird  
Tales from the Planet  
2003

<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/362-fall-2003/tales-from-the-planet>  
Fifth Estate #362, Fall, 2003

**[fiftheestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fiftheestate.org)**