

PIPELINES TO PLOWSHARES

Two Catholic Workers admitted that they Secretly Sabotaged the Dakota Access Pipeline on Election night last year **Jessica Reznicek** and **Ruby Montoya** said that they set fire to five pieces of heavy machinery being used to construct the pipeline. The two then taught themselves how to destroy empty pipeline valves, and moved up and down the pipeline's length, destroying the valves and delaying construction for weeks. They say their actions were inspired by the anti-nuclear Plowshares Movement, which used nonviolent direct action to target nuclear warheads and military installations.

"We are speaking publicly to empower others to act boldly, with purity of heart, to dismantle the infrastructures which deny us our rights to water, land and liberty. We, as civilians, have seen the repeated failures of the government, and it is our duty to act with responsibility and integrity, risking our own liberty for the sovereignty of us all." said Jessica Reznicek

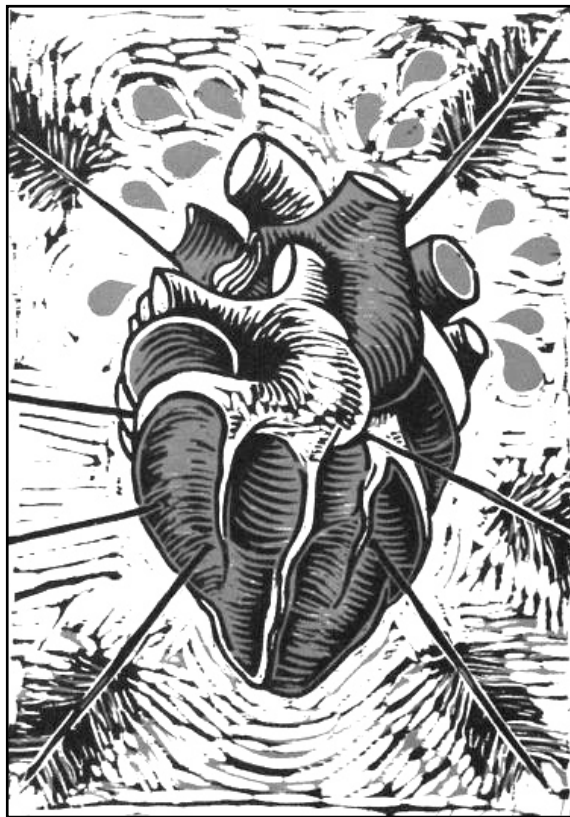
Ruby Montoya adds: *"Some may view these actions as violent, but be not mistaken. We acted from our hearts and never threatened human life nor personal property. What we did do was fight a private corporation that has run rampantly across our country seizing land and polluting our nation's water supply."*

They describe their action: *"On election night, we went to a DAPL easement site in Buena Vista County, and we saw over six or seven pieces of heavy machinery there. And we went with our supplies, and we filled these coffee canisters up with gasoline and oil. We placed those coffee canisters on the inside of the cabs of these heavy machinery, on the seats, and we pierced those coffee canisters so that the flammable liquids would spread. We then lit matches and—in efforts to make those machines obsolete."*

We acted after having exhausted all other avenues of political process and resistance to this petroleum pipeline that, to my knowledge, is the largest in the United States as far as the capacity that it is able to carry the oil."

"The pipeline runs right here through the county I was born in, Polk County, Iowa. I definitely took a lot of inspiration from what I saw up at Standing Rock. But Iowa is impacted greatly by this, and my home city's drinking water is to be destroyed when this pipeline breaks. And so it's not a matter of having to find it. It's right—it found me." said Reznicek.

"As time went on, we saw that construction continued and that pipe was being put into the ground. And so our only viable means was to somehow obstruct this pipe. And that material is made of steel, five-eighth-inch steel. And we had to figure out something that would melt it or somehow make it obsolete. So we began to look for things that would cut through that amount of steel, and that turned out to be oxygen and



acetylene, which burns at like over 2,000 degrees, and that melts steel. So, after acquiring that knowledge, we proceeded and found many empty valves. All of the valves were empty. And we began, first in Mahaska County, Iowa, piercing through a valve there. And later, we continued, until we ran out of supplies, hitting multiple valve sites."

"Ruby and I felt very disheartened by the fact that oil is now flowing through the pipeline. Obviously, we cannot pierce through empty valves anymore. They are not empty. We halted construction up and down the line for several weeks, turning into months. And we're now at the phase where we have to deal with the reality that this pipeline—that we failed, as resistance here in Iowa goes. And now oil is flowing through it, and there's really nothing more to do now than come forward and let the public know that—and continue this public discourse about what that means, where we're heading, and the consequences of it."

Many would say that destroying private property like this is violence, Jessica Reznicek disagrees—*"I think that the oil being taken out of the ground and the machinery that does it and the infrastructure which supports it, that this is violent. This is—these tools and these mechanisms that industry and corporate—corporate power and government power have all colluded together to create, this is destructive, this is violent, and it needs to be stopped."*

And we never at all threatened human life. We never at all—and, actually, we're acting in an effort to save human life, to save our planet, to save our resources. And nothing at any point was ever done by Ruby nor I in anything outside of peaceful, deliberate and steady loving hands."

Jessica and Ruby, living at the Catholic Worker House in Des Moines—*"We have a rich tradition, started by Dorothy Day in the 1930s. And we have a rich tradition both in assisting underprivileged*

people in our communities, via soup kitchens, hospitality, shelters for homeless people who we live with in our communities, and we also have—on the flip-side of that, we also recognize the resistance that is needed to help bring underprivileged people back up to the same level as the people who are taking the money from them." Reznicek explained, adding:

"And so, in essence, Ruby and I focus on the resistance aspect here in the Des Moines Catholic Worker. And we have followed suit, and I believe that we are inspired by Mr. Phil Berrigan—the house that we live in is named after. And we do understand the need to dismantle infrastructure when it poses a threat to human life and liberty."

The Berrigan brothers, Father Dan Berrigan and Philip Berrigan, helped launch the international anti-nuclear Plowshares movement. Father Dan and seven others poured blood and hammered on warheads at a GE nuclear missile plant in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, in 1980.

Dan Berrigan and Philip Berrigan and others— the Catonsville Nine, in 1968, burned the draft files of people in Catonsville, Maryland, using napalm that was used in Vietnam.

They made their statement admitting to the destruction of pipeline equipment standing in front of a Iowa Utilities Board office—then turned around and started ripping off the metal letters from that sign, as the—as the police moved in to arrest them

"The Iowa Utilities Board here in Iowa granted the Dakota Access LLC permits, using eminent domain, as a public utility, for this pipeline. So, the company was allowed by the Iowa Utilities Board to come and seize land from farmers to put this petroleum pipeline underneath their fields. So, the Iowa Utilities Board here in Iowa was key, because Dakota Access pipeline and Energy Transfer Partners were able to sidestep the legal requirement of an environmental impact statement. So, each state had its governing body to either grant or deny these permits to build this pipeline. And here in Iowa, that was the Iowa Utilities Board. And it was granted under the guise, under the lie, of a public utility. They have released another decision, yet again doing the wrong thing and ruling in favor of the Dakota Access pipeline and Energy Transfer Partners. So, that's why we were there." Montoya explained—

"There have been many protests, vigils, hunger strikes in front of that building, with no response; public commentary hearings, with no response from this board. Geri Huser, who's the head of this board—it's a three-person board—she's actually under investigation for corruption. And so, the list goes on and on as to why the Iowa Utilities Board is culpable in the allowance of the Dakota Access pipeline to come through Iowa. So we couldn't have picked a better place to release our statement. And with trying to remove all the letters from the Iowa Utilities Board, we don't feel that they represent Iowans, nor do they have their best interests in mind. Clearly, time and time again, they are siding with these oil companies, because of corruption."

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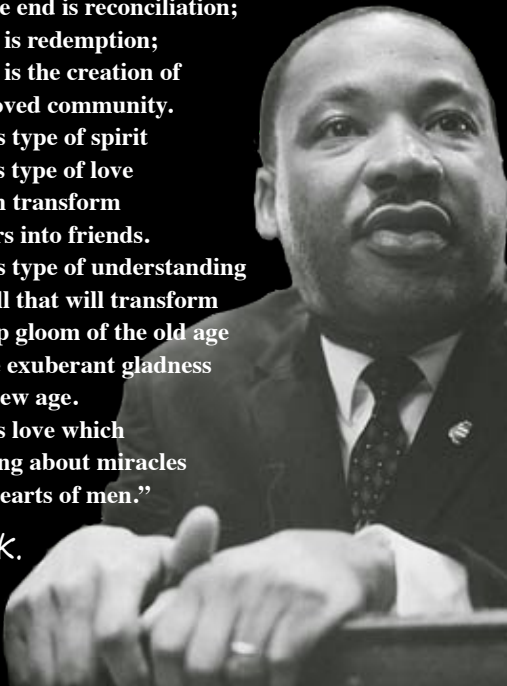
(707) 923-9199

jaym@humboldt.net

P.O.Box 1669
Redway, CA 95560

**"But the end is reconciliation;
the end is redemption;
the end is the creation of
the beloved community.
It is this type of spirit
and this type of love
that can transform
opposers into friends.
It is this type of understanding
goodwill that will transform
the deep gloom of the old age
into the exuberant gladness
of the new age.
It is this love which
will bring about miracles
in the hearts of men."**

~ M.L.K.



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