

The Face of Eco-Terrorism

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There's no doubt that [Discovery Channel gunman James Jay Lee](#) was mentally unstable, but it should be equally clear that Lee is far from the first person – and surely not the last – to take their cues from an environmental movement that grows more delusional with each passing day. Does that mean that we should blame Al Gore for Lee's actions and death?



No. Gore is far too savvy a huckster to endanger the green gold-mine that he helped create by encouraging violence among his followers. He would much prefer that the James Jay Lees of the world save the planet by making a substantial purchase of carbon credits on the CCX. That said, Gore, the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, and all the rest of today's self-proclaimed environmental champions surely share the blame for creating the atmosphere of fear and dread that permeates America's attitude about our relationship with nature. It is the misguided notion that

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human beings are an infection on planet Earth, a feeling shared by millions of Americans, that provided James Jay Lee with an outlet for his paranoid delusions, just as it did for Ted Kaczynski thirty years ago.

Environmental advocates have continually upped the ante when it comes to doomsday rhetoric, to the point that they are now “all in.” They have progressed from the bird extinction delusions that Rachel Carson chronicled in *Silent Spring* to a crisis they claim is so acute, so immediate, that all forms of life on earth are in grave danger. Is it any wonder that some people might take them at their word and act accordingly? A mentally unstable man like James Jay Lee wielding a bomb might grab the spotlight for a few days, but he is hardly the only example of someone taking the Green movement’s message to its logical and extreme conclusions.

Consider the [Voluntary Human Extinction Movement](#) for example. Proudly proclaiming “may we all live long and die out,” VHEMT says that “phasing out the human race by voluntarily ceasing to breed will allow Earth’s biosphere to return to good health. Crowded conditions and resource shortages will improve as we become less dense.” Members aren’t inclined to hasten the process along by blowing fellow human beings up, but their goal is indistinguishable from James Jay Lee’s: once humans stop procreating, the world returns to pristine purity. Less subtly, [the Church of Euthanasia](#) asks visitors to “Save the Planet: Kill Yourself” and instructs followers to abide by its “four pillars” of faith: suicide, abortion, cannibalism and sodomy. Are these two extreme examples? Sure, but theirs are hardly isolated points of view. A James Jay Lee would feel right at home commiserating with like-minded souls who belong to organizations like VHEMT or the Church of Euthanasia. Such organizations may have counseled Lee against violent means, but they surely would have sympathized with his ends.

The Earth First! movement proudly proclaims that it’s growing in size and importance. The radical organization urges people concerned with the fate of the planet to use any tactic, legal or illegal, to save the planet. The Earth First! Journal [describes their mission thus](#): “Earth First! formed in 1979, in response to an increasingly corporate, compromising and ineffective environmental community. It is not an organization, but a movement.

There are no “members” of EFi, only Earth Firsters. We believe in using all of the tools in the toolbox, from grassroots and legal organizing to civil disobedience and monkeywrenching. When the law won’t fix the problem, we put our bodies on the line to stop the destruction.” The term “monkeywrenching” is of course code that covers a variety of offenses, from spiking trees to burning down subdivisions, all in the name of making the earth a better place in which to live.

At first blush it may seem ironic that radical groups and ideas like these could sprout up in a nation that has made such incredible strides in cleaning up the environment over the last forty years. Yet, upon closer inspection, it makes sense. America has dedicated billions and billions of dollars in both the public and private sector toward environmental protection and restoration. Congress has passed law after law that requires cleaner air, water and soil. No matter. The tenor and substance of the message that people like Al Gore and organizations like the Sierra Club has not changed, no matter how much time and money we invest and how much progress we make. In fact, they never admit that we have made any progress at all. In this circumstance, a committed environmentalist can only conclude that government is incapable of fixing the problem, either because politicians are incompetent, or because corporations are too powerful, or both. The people that ardent environmentalists trust – like Gore and the Sierra Club – assure them that the planet is in worse danger than ever today. Government solutions have failed. So what’s left? Clearly, for folks like those represented by VHEMT, the Church of Euthanasia and Earth First! radical solutions are the only thing left. Nothing else has worked.

James Jay Lee is an extreme example of an illness that permeates American culture. While “mainstream” environmentalists and environmental groups may not condone his methods or his words, most are wholly committed [to his goals](#). Environmentalists worry about over-population and civilization encroaching on wildlife habitats. James Jay Lee translated that into: “Saving the Planet means saving what’s left of the non-human Wildlife by decreasing the Human population. That means stopping the human race from breeding any more disgusting human babies!” Environmentalists wag their fingers and lecture that humans are responsible for pollution and so we must do more to clean up this dirty planet. James Jay Lee expressed that idea more succinctly: “Humans are the most destructive, filthy, pollutive creatures around and are wrecking what’s left of the planet...” Environmentalists wring their hands about endangered species and supposedly-endangered species (like polar bears). James Jay Lee took that message to heart: “Nothing is more important than saving them. The Lions, Tigers, Giraffes, Elephants, Froggies, Turtles, Apes, Raccoons, Beetles, Ants, Sharks, Bears, and, of course, the Squirrels.”

Environmental apologists on the left have attempted to condemn any attempt to link Lee to their movement, claiming that doing so exposes the hypocrisy of conservatives who complain about attempts to link violence and racism to the tea party movement. These two examples bear no practical resemblance to each other. The tea party movement’s focus is overwhelmingly on making a difference by working legally within our system of government. To wit: by exercising the movement’s power at the ballot box. The environmental movement has continually sent its followers the message that government has not and, by inference, cannot solve the global ecological “crisis”. Additionally, while there are incidents of politically-motivated violence on the right, it would be very surprising to learn that such incidents outnumber those involving leftist-inspired violence. In the case of political causes, in other words, both sides are equally infected by extremists. But, when it comes to the environment however, extremism and violence is a one way affair. There is no group analogous to Earth First!, VHEMT or the Church of Euthanasia on the skeptical side of the environmental movement. There is no one analogous to James Jay Lee or Ted Kaczynski. The strongest voices aligned against green extremists are lawful, non-violent think tanks like the [Cato Institute](#) and the [Heartland Institute](#). While organizations like Heartland receive death threats from time to time, they don’t issue them and, more important, nothing they say or do would inspire their followers to believe that such violent measures are necessary. Environmental groups can’t come close to making the same claims after decades of overblown hyperbole and scare-mongering. Al

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Gore and his cohorts, in other words, may not have pushed James Jay Lee over the edge, but there is no way that troubled man would have gotten close to his particular precipice but for Gore and his disciples.
