

Why 23 Years?

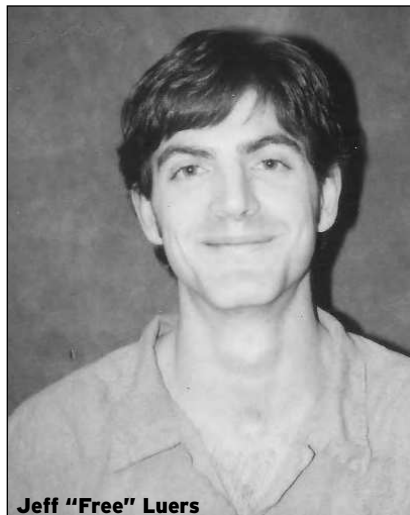
Sentence for SUV arson didn't match the crime.

Why 23 years? It's really the only question worth asking in the case of Jeff "Free" Luers.

Some people might want to ask, "Why did he do it?" but for people who've been paying attention to the climatologists, I think it's pretty obvious.

Global warming is *here*. Peak oil is here. We're at war in Iraq to maintain control over an oil supply that is only getting smaller. And meanwhile, the economic elite in America still love their SUVs. Some people just won't get it until you do something that makes them pay attention, and that's what Jeff Luers was trying to do. *That's* why he did it.

But why did he get 23 years? He damaged three SUVs, causing \$40,000 in damages. No one was injured or even put at risk. How did this crime result in a sentence exceeding that of most murderers? What logic could possibly motivate a judge to inflict such a sentence on a 23-year-old man with no prior felonies, no history of violence or drug abuse and no intent to achieve personal gain from his actions?



Jeff "Free" Luers

To make sense of it, it is necessary to understand that the authorities are *afraid*, not just of Jeff but of people like him. He got 23 years because they decided to "make an example" of him.

Jeff is not alone.

The answer to this question is not to be found in the details of his crime. Compared to sentences received for comparable crimes, Jeff's sentence blows them all completely out of the water. *Nobody* gets 23 years for arson. Even people who burned down houses with people still in them don't pull that kind of time. To make sense of it, it is necessary to understand that the authorities are *afraid*, not just of Jeff but of people like him. He got 23 years because they decided to "make an example" of him.

So what is it about Jeff that presents such a threat? If you ask the FBI, they'll tell you that the U.S. is facing a growing trend toward "political violence." This disturbing trend, with increasing incidences of politically motivated arson, acts of animal liberation, and in-your-face street protest, threatens our peace and security, they say.

The radicals have a point.

If you ask an environmentalist, you may come away with the distinct sensation that the current status quo represents a greater threat than all the eco-radicals put together. According to all reliable reports, the Earth's temperature is increasing rapidly, huge chunks of arctic ice are breaking off and floating away, the planet's supply of fresh water is dwindling and we're in the midst of a human-caused period of mass extinction rivaling that which destroyed the dinosaurs. Nothing in the current administration's policies gives us any hope of change for the better. In fact, every step the Bush administration takes is a step in the wrong direction.

Meanwhile, the traditional tools for political change have been subverted and weakened. Voting is a meaningless charade in a political climate with no candidates willing to take a stand. Our representatives are either already doing their best (like Pete DeFazio) or they're bought and paid for by corporate interests. Either way, calling and writing to them isn't going to do much good. Political rallies and civil disobedience techniques have become so commonplace and boring that they fail to even make the news.

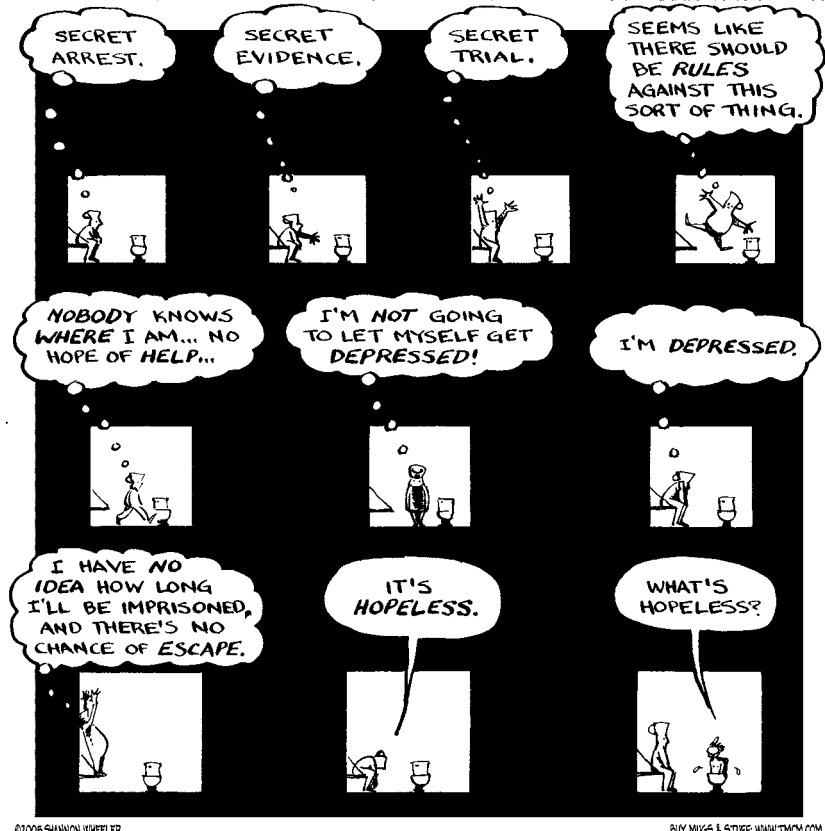
So with the traditional options exhausted and the crisis getting more serious daily, growing numbers of people are taking matters into their own hands. Whether it be climbing trees, stopping traffic, locking down bulldozers, even breaking windows or burning SUVs, more people, especially young people, are coming to the same conclusion: If we want the human race to survive on this planet, direct action is going to be necessary.

So there it is. He did what he did, he never claimed otherwise, but the sentence he got is ridiculous. Come down to Sam Bond's on June 12, let's have some fun and give Jeff some love! If you want to see changes in this country, if you believe the system is out of control and want to help reel it in, or if you just think Jeff Luers is a hero who deserves your support, come on down. We'll see you there!

Chris Calef of Eugene is a member of the Friends of Jeffrey Luers group. Luers was convicted of arson and attempted arson in 2001. For more information, visit www.freefreenow.org

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN

BY SHANNON WHEELER



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Letters TO THE EDITOR

CRAZY AD

What a poor choice to enclose an AOL CD in your 'alternative' weekly. This is a non-recyclable and unnecessary item. Especially ironic since the other insert for LCOG is so ecologically oriented. It's hard to tolerate the sleazy ads for topless bars, but this AOL decision seems crazy!

Cliff Martin
Eugene

Editor's note: EW is aware of the landfill concerns related to the AOL inserts. Our carriers picked up the CDs that fell on the streets, our staff manually removed them from the returned papers and we have arranged with Weyerhaeuser to recycle them.

IN BED WITH AOL

Having lived here for more than a decade, I have enjoyed — nay, taken for granted — all the luxuries Eugene has to offer. Good coffee, fresh produce, you get the picture. I have utilized *EW*'s multiple listings, articles and am grateful for whoever came up with the Happening People section.

This week, I have a bone to pick with you guys. What's up with the AOL thing? Of course they can pay you well, of course you're a free paper, but is there no line for you not to cross?

AOL distributes millions or even billions of these pieces of plastic and offers deals to people that are similar to the Visa card terms. I am enclosing my copy of the AOL bullshit for you to keep. If you need money, have a fundraiser or something. No need to slough off and sleep with a corrupt bloated company that does not give two licks about the environment or you or I. Have you ever tried to take their software off your system? It is next to impossible.

Anyway, *EW*, get a bloody backbone and realize you are successful. You don't need those AOL bastards any more than you need a hole in the head.

Brian Ellis
Eugene

ANOTHER VIETNAM

As a Vietnam veteran, though not a SEHS grad, I was pleased to see a memorial was

placed to honor the students who lost their lives in the Vietnam War. Having lost a number of my high school friends in the war, it is good to remember. Hopefully all SEHS Vietnam veterans will take this memorial as a tribute to their sacrifices as well.

Sadly, these young men didn't die defending America, though understandably it eases the pain of their loss to believe so. We lost that war and none of the events we were told by the government as to why we needed to fight in Vietnam have come true. Are the soldiers dying every day in Iraq defending America, or are they once again a sad casualty of government lies?

As it was during the Vietnam war, this question will be answered individually, with different results. However answered, the loss of life and the pain for their families and friends is real.

Donald C. French
Eugene

ENOUGH ALREADY

Citizen review for the Eugene Police Department would be a Band-Aid. The time for Band-Aids is OVER. Law enforcement is too important to leave to career bureaucrats. It is definitely time for a state-wide initiative to bring ALL law enforcement personnel under the control and supervision of "We the People." No exceptions.

The criminals have had more participation in law enforcement than the citizens for long enough. This initiative would create one outside independent review board for the state of Oregon. All government agencies would be prohibited from having or creating any such review entities.

The greatest resource of this board would be the citizens. The board would furnish the citizens video cameras, other equipment and the training to collect and preserve evidence that would stand up in court. If enough evidence was accumulated, the board would then move to the next step of hiring an investigator, perhaps from the Oregon Bar Association.

Frank Skipton
Springfield