

## TANGO CHARLIE

(an account of non violent direct action as seen from an old peaceful warriors eyes)

An outline of the defence to start with will serve as this short stories set up.

As a grandfather, and having grown up in intimate relationship with the land, water and the First Nations people, I feel a profound responsibility to my grandchildren and all living things. My heart breaks when I see the changes that have come about, not only by human destruction of habitat in my lifetime (of which I am a part), but by human caused global warming in just the last two decades. It's frightening!

This TMX pipeline expansion, firstly, increases the risk to marine and coastal ecosystems (including an already compromised salmon run) due to the demonstrated probability of diluted bitumen spillage from tankers and pipeline ruptures. And, secondly, it's been well established that, over and above the damage from spillage, the increased tanker traffic and noise this expansion entails is enough to deliver a fatal blow to an already at risk orca population, and possibly to other marine life of the Salish Sea. As to the risk to human life, Burnaby is ground zero. Ask any firefighter and they will tell you that fire loves to go uphill. I think most would agree that gravity will insist that all liquid goes downhill. The tank farm, a lot of which I know in some detail, sits approximately half way up Burnaby Mountain pretty much surrounded by Simon Fraser University and its village on top, protected wilderness on the sides, a school and a large residential community below, which back in the day when the first tanks were built was a few kilo meters away. Now it sits up close. Meters away. And apparently the government of the people, for the people wants to squeeze in twice as many tanks. Mayor Mike Hurley, ex firefighter and fire chief, is horrified and truly worried for his constituents.

What honestly inspired these citizens actions is the simple fact that almost half the length of the expansion is on traditional territory without permission, arrogantly presuming rights of encroachment that have not be ceded by the First Nations, whose island and coastal territories THESE ARE BY TRADITION. Even the duty to consult has not been properly understood. And the process laid out by former Supreme Court judge Frank Iacobucci to ensure there is meaningful, "two way" dialogue between the Crown and affected Indigenous communities, has not been seriously implemented or concluded. Although I am a peaceful man, I must admit it stirs murder in my heart when I see these huge corporations, legal individuals with enough money to lobby our government and get their way, using violence against the land and water while some cowards in their man camps use violence against Indigenous women. Simple fact. Women, land and water, give life. Most of us forget the fact that for the most part Indigenous people saved a lot of our early ancestors from the harsh winters in the New World. This is how we repay them?

GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS: The expansion of this pipeline CANNOT BE SEPARATED from the expansion of fossil carbon release on a global scale. For instance, I am working with the Georgian Bay Biosphere to restore the Walleye spawn from the damage to rapids on these small rivers by the logging industry years ago. They tell me that the science predicts a one degree celsius rise in water temperature per decade. I take this personal. When my 12 year old grandson is 42 this very unique and beautiful part of The Great Lakes will have 3 degrees warmer water. The fisheries and thus tourism, the cottage industry, will no doubt collapse. Algae blooms and species loss will be our future. This Non Violent Direct Action I continue to take will test the 'necessity' argument here by showing that a proper, and now necessary, understanding of Global Warming must acknowledge that every act, and certainly every "expansion", of fossil carbon release into the atmosphere ANYWHERE has immediate implications EVERYWHERE. One can argue that this was never as seamlessly true of any threat in the past. Yes, the potential for frivolous interference would still be a counterargument, but legal qualification, or judge's discretion, might be an acceptable solution in a "climate emergency", where legal measures may all too soon become as Draconian as in any past war or Bubonic Plague.

Currently - Amazon rainforest is burning

- Iceland just lost it's first glacier
- Wildfires in the arctic circle
- 12.5 billion tons of ice melted off the Greenland ice sheet
- July this year was the hottest month on record
- Canada is on track for 4-degree celsius increase in temperature over preindustrial levels

Before I go any farther I would like to acknowledge my brother Ken Christenson ([extremophilechoice.com](http://extremophilechoice.com)) and thank him for many years of inspiring conversations as well as guiding me in writing this story.

It's now September 26th, 2019 and the Crown is asking that I spend 123 days in jail for four counts of criminal contempt (breaking the injunction three times plus one count of not paying the \$2000 fine). As of now I have spent three nights in Deer Lake RCMP Detachment and twelve days in segregation at North Fraser Pretrial on a hunger strike. At time and a half this counts as 23 days. I owe 100 days. The Crown also wants an immediate decision from Justice Affleck so I fully expect to walk out of court that day in handcuffs.

Here's the deal. On the evening of October 25th look for the next page of this story to appear on [befreeyourself.com](http://befreeyourself.com). Note: There is currently a play being written based entirely on the continuing transcripts of these trials. A friend of mine who is acting in this play (she also has spent 8 days in jail for breaking the injunction, let's call her Em) planted the seed that my story might make a good two person play. My character of course, thinking I was totally in control of my activist alter ego. Em is awesome and has apparently become labelled a 'sinister senior' for her work as an activist. Wow! Define sinister. Climate collapse????

Look for new songs in the next few weeks from Chris Hess, Shawn Maguire and Rick Capreol, but for now I'm excited to introduce you to newest member, my old friend Charlie Hase. We hooked up in 1984 and toured together through my Juno nomination in 1987. Charlie plays slide on everything from dobro to petal steel. He writes songs like 'Do To The Others' featuring Ed Goodine on drums and percussion and Rocko Vaugeois on vocals. Also, again with Ed on drums and percussion, my first collaboration with Charlie entitled 'Dark Calm' which amounts to a plea to Justice Affleck to save his grandchildren.

It's one thing to be powerful person within an institution, it's quite another to be a powerful person within a nation by acquitting us all and thereby setting an example of how a 21st century justice system could lead us into the future. 'Dark Calm' goes out to everyone who has done time in jail. To everyone who continues to go to jail in this peaceful war effort. I continue to urge you to support organizations like Stand.earth, Greenpeace Canada and the Suzuki Foundation. These people are working hard for our grandchildren's future.

This story actually starts in March, 2018 when Tango at this point in time, hasn't taken action since the Arctic 30 in August 2013. He's now frustrated, and worse, he's a bored asset. That day in late March he was bouldering at one of his favourite crags when the phone beeps. The question was simple. 'Do you want to climb a tree?' And, it was from one of his closest activist friends. The immediate answer was 'Absolutely'.

Because of security concerns some of the following names have been altered. A few days after that message there was a meeting in Toronto. Jrod (J), who asked the question, flew in from Vancouver and Vbomb (V), another close, in fact adopted daughter activist, flew in from the States. Over the past several years these three had engaged in several conversations about doing a citizens action without the red tape of most NGOs or the legal representation of their lawyers. The best defence is no defence. In other words, tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. So here goes.

Later that month V and I flew into Vancouver to meet up with J. The next day was the first time Tango saw the eagle tree at West Ridge Marine Terminal. Viewed from the walking path 90 feet to the east and possible 40 feet uphill, one couldn't see the bottom 20 feet of the huge cottonwood which stood a short distance inside the security fence. It was a proud tree. That's why eagles for years nested there, high above the rest of the forest. Despite the fact that Kinder Morgan (KM) had legally acquired a permit to tear down the nest and replace it with an elevated platform down on the harbour below, the bulbous eagle deterrent, tied and screwed into the nesting area, saddened our hearts. It also stirred the rainbow warrior spirit. It absolutely is spiritual. If you would consider that the eagle is the messenger to Coast Salish people, that the land the tree grows from has not been ceded, then you begin to understand why Tango, even though it was hard for him, mustered up all the arrogant white privilege he could, and as a Canadian senior citizen, attacked KM. The whole truth is that he made what we refer to in the R&D (research and development) business as a Victor Echo (variable error). As he tried to imagine the diameter of that tree trunk at the base, his intuition was screaming at him that the store bought rope lanyard that he had bought with the timberjack style spur climb gear, was way too soft to flip effectively on the eagle tree. So, the first attempt was made aid/modern gear style and resulted in a flat on my back in the mud 18 foot fall. The bark on that trunk was too thick and cottonwood is soft, wet wood. Oak and maple would have been solid. Live and learn. Tango owned it. That following week was a long one at the Patricia on W Hastings in a room where there was literally no room to do yoga, let alone hang out feeling sore and miserable. I soon realized while walking several blocks passed homeless camps each morning for a decent coffee, to sort out my perspective. Times like these really test the size of a warriors heart.

Later that week I saw the Watch House on Burnaby Mountain for the first time. There it was sitting pretty and proud right on top the KM pipeline, less than a 100 yards from the tank farm. The Indigenous people had started carving a totem pole. There was drumming and singing and everyone was warm and welcoming. That afternoon J and Tango got away for a walk and managed to find the one cottonwood that was smaller than the eagle tree, yet bigger than any tree at the north end of the tank farm. It stood in a creek bed right below the entrance to Simon Fraser University (SFU). Perfect.

Exactly a week after the fall three citizens took action. V took care of the press release and communications. J drove the rented car and got out of Dodge after Tango disappeared that morning down the mountain into the darkness emerging as.....Protesting Grandpa??? Tango was offended. He had soloed 80 feet to the canopy, rigged an anchor, rapped down to the fifty foot level and performed a batman swing to a smaller tree to rig the hammock. All this in the dark. That's all I get? He bit his tongue. When asked in an interview sometime later how I felt about that name I recall saying at least it was accurate. I'm protesting, and I'm a grandpa. After the swim action recently, apparently now I'm self proclaimed. Again Tango was furious. Man, you've got to have thick skin.

Long story short the tank farm cottonwood climb was a successful citizens action. We were truly honoured to have people like Elizabeth May, Rex Weyler and David Suzuki join hundreds of us in this peaceful resistance against the TMX. It certainly reconnected me to Emergency Response Team members. I have past experience helping to train TRU (Tactics & Rescue Unit) officers in Ontario. I'm actually a rope designer/technical climber/rope access professional but don't tell Tango. He'll want a free rope.

After all these years I continue to say, as someone who has experienced both sides of law enforcement, that per capita, there are better people in the special forces here in Canada than in the civilian population. Also, I think it would be safe to say that we all have a tendency to develop an 'us against them' attitude when it comes to authority. Most of these people truly want to serve and protect in what is not only a hard job, it's a dangerous one.

That Monday night of April 2018 in Deer Lake RCMP Detachment I drifted off to sounds of frustrated people not used to being in jail. Some were indigenous. Some were not. Some were

university professors and students. Although Tango was sore and hungry, he managed to get some sleep and standing before Justice Affleck next morning he said 'My Lord, I want you to know that it was hard for me, but I managed to summon up all the arrogant white privilege I could, and I broke your injunction in hopes we could acknowledge that this traditional land has not been ceded. We need to start sharing the wealth and the political power with First Nations.' Then, to my horror, he lies about intending to pay a \$2000 fine, fully intent on healing up, designing a new lanyard and trying the eagle tree again.

The highlight that day was getting a hug from Cat, an indigenous woman facing multiple charges, and her introducing me to the healer, and Watch House elder Jim Leyden. Jim was also arrested earlier that spring. Born to Six Nations people in Ontario, he has lived in Coast Salish territory since he was a young man. Over the last year and a half he has taught me much about their culture and spirituality. Jim also does extensive surveillance on KMC in the Burnaby area and actually stayed in the Watch House all one year. Because the air moves through the board siding with no insulation, and the skylighted roof lets in the sun, winter is cold with humidity and summer is stifling. Eventually I would meet Jim's elder, the Squamish chief Robert Nahini.

That evening Tango and J celebrated but both agreed that it felt hollow without V, who had to fly back to the USA the night before for work that day. On the flight back to Toronto I remember feeling anxious. Never rest in the past. I then spent a few weeks training and I found an old 11mm high line rope that had stiffened up good as it had been left out in the weather for years. It became my lanyard and was really effective on the largest trees I could find.

Then came the breaking news that we Canadians had bought the existing pipeline for 4.5 billion. It was built in the fifties. This changed everything. Now we were no longer fighting a Texas oil company. We were fighting our own government.

After a frustrating year of trying to be patient, two more trips west from Ontario all the while sleeping in my truck, J introduced me to a woman who, after reading her book, immediately became a new found hero of mine. We refer to her as M.

April 15, 2019 was the deadline I had to pay the \$2000 fine. Tango had hoped to take the eagle tree that day but because the Alberta election was on the 16th, the media was preoccupied. I'm better at 'hurry up and wait' than Tango is. He hates it. Eventually we made a deal to knuckle down and start the training cycle all over again. Here's a plug. If you're only in town for a few weeks, Sparticus Gym, located just off the Drive has an awesome yoga room. For \$20 a week you can hang out there and get it done.

During that timespan I had been invited to a pipe ceremony as well as a sweat lodge. There I heard victims testify about the residential school system and how it had the ripple down effect of leading to generations of substance abuse. The Watch House itself was a place of healing. One morning Jim set up a breakfast meeting with Robert Nahini, who was ex military and in his retirement was touring the prison system working as a councillor/mentor to indigenous inmates. It didn't take long for Robert to convinced me to make it a spiritual climb, which meant leaving a gift to the eagle of salmon, sage and tobacco. 'Visualize the eagle as you climb.' he told me. Eventually we got permission from Will George and the Tsleil-Waututh people and I remain eternally grateful.

There wasn't much sleep that night. Tango was itching to get at it and I quite frankly, was nervous. Had I trained hard enough? As always, I fast the day before an action so I don't have to deal with a bowel movement while I work. It's now 2:30 a.m. on the 28th of April, 2019. The alarm's set for 3:30 a.m. I'm laying in a motel room bed listening to my stomach growl, mixed in with the sound of a soft snoring old musician friend I had recently reunited with. Known as Purple Hase, he had offered to drive me to the scene of the crime. At 4 a.m. he wished me luck as I grabbed my 45 pound pack out of the trunk and disappear over the guard rails and down the mountainside toward the target.

Once my eyes had adjusted to the darkness I turned on my headlamp. A dull red light does not reflect light, yet allows enough light to help you work your way out of the brambles with at least some grace. When I got to the walking trail I turned it off and carefully found my way downhill to the fence that I had climbed the year before. It was quiet on site as I cut my way through it and found myself standing, looking up once again in awe of this cottonwood. I opened my pack, placed the gift of salmon, sage and tobacco for the eagle, and using a wooden stick, I managed to lift the loop in my lanyard high enough to hook a small sucker limb on the west side so I could climb mostly hidden by the massive trunk.

With enough water for a few days my pack now weighed 35 pounds and the first 30 feet of climbing that stump was brutal. Every time I rested and looked up, the canopy, almost a 100 feet away did not look any closer for at least an hour. M and her people launched the press release after I was out of reach of security and gave Purple the go ahead. I called Jim Leyden (Black Bear Warrior) first though, so he could organize the Indigenous response. I have to say in hindsight that Tango never wavered in his focus on the eagle deterrent. After climbing onto the lower limbs of the canopy, rigging the hammock and having a good long rest, sore of body and happy of heart, we climbed the last 15 feet and released the device into the void. I've never had a more satisfying summit. As the drumming and singing from the foot path overwhelmed me, I lost it and screamed at the beast that industry can be.

I wasn't really surprised that I got to spend the night in the big cottonwood. On the tank farm tree I had made a deal with ERT that if they could climb safely to the hammock at the 50 foot level, and since the canopy was showing signs of rot, I would jug up to the high anchor, clean gear and meet them back at the hammock so we could bail together. When I expose these fine professionals to possibly dangerous situations, I feel as responsible for their safety as they do for mine. We had fun together that night and everyone got home safe. The eagle tree however, was much larger and again, I wasn't surprised that they struggled to even get off the ladder that they had brought. I started to worry for the young man leading the climb. I immediately called M and she agreed that having an ERT member get hurt was unacceptable. Even Tango didn't hesitate to break down camp and lower the pack. Unknown to us of course, ERT's captain was on his way and he was a pro (the year before when I occupied the tank farm tree he had been away on a body recovery mission). As soon as he swung one of two lanyards attached to his harness rig, I knew he was eventually going to arrest me.

As an older pro I was very impressed with his technique and thoroughly enjoyed watching him climb in good style. Eventually, when he reached the canopy, he looked up and with a big smile said "Hi". I gave him the thumbs up and while preparing a repel for us, he and Tango launched into a conversation about various climbing crags they had in common. But being the consummate pro he was, he soon reminded me that we were under arrest. Once again I must acknowledge how good it made me feel when the Indigenous people sang and drummed as I came down.

Finally upon arriving at the EMS (emergency medical service) truck, they immediately assured me that they were on my side, and I could tell that they were worried about my health. They knew I hadn't eaten or slept in 3 days and at 71 years old I must have looked rough. Later that night, my second in Deer Lake RCMP Detachment, I smiled when they realized my home town was Parry Sound, Ontario and wanted to know if I knew Bobby Orr.

Next morning I stood before Justice Affleck for the second time. I truly felt for sure I was going to jail for awhile. After all, I was facing 3 counts (tank farm tree, eagle tree and not paying the \$2000 fine). My lawyer at the time managed to talk the crown into releasing me on \$1000 bail and then informed me that she couldn't continue to defend me if I kept taking action. She was busy and couldn't put the necessary time in to study 'defence of necessity'. I understood.

I remember feeling relieved in fact. My job was to rack up counts of contempt and it must be hard for a lawyer to get their heads around that tactic. I've never been comfortable listening to someone speaking for me. Over the three days of eagle tree media, dozens of interviews, still

non of it managed to escape the province except the North Star in my home town. I thank them for that. Also, there was a feeling of survivor guilt after developing the mindset to face time in jail and then, a few hours later there I was in Ms hot tub drinking beer. Tango was cool with it but I was thinking of the spiritual swim ahead. (In 2014, when the second Arctic 30 team ended up not even getting on rope, and then spent about three months in jail, I first experienced survivor guilt). I flew home.

In June I was training on the Georgian Bay in a 3mm wet suit, mask, goggles and flippers. Seven Km off shore on the outside of the Mink Islands, turned out to be about the same temperature as July 10 in Burnaby harbour. At about 11p.m. on the 9th it started to rain steady after a long period of beautiful weather. Tango didn't sleep a wink and before the alarm went off we were geared up on a mountain bike headed to the target. It was a perfect night to do research. Even moderately hard rainfall is loud and not even security guards want to stand out in it for very long. I can't say much about my approach to West Ridge Marine Terminal. Once inside I left Chinook Salmond, sage and tobacco for the black fish (Orca).

I will say that I'm a reasonably good free diver and ended up being in the water for about two hours. It was time enough to do a thorough research of a large area inside the floating barrier. I determined that the primary target was not doable. Being alone and missing an important piece of gear, I retreated to the secondary target which I had swam up to twice that night to see if there was security in the patrol boat docked there. I had to dive under the floating scrubbers and be careful when I surfaced not to blow air out the snorkel, just in case.

Throughout the entire time the rain came in sheets of hard to really hard. The one patrol boat that had previously done its drive around had retired to hot coffee inside a guard post to the south end of the site. As I slid out onto my belly on what turned out to be a solid platform, I noticed three large crabs upside down, freshly deceased. I carefully slid up on my butt, took off a flipper, placed it on the floating dock along side my small waterproof pack, and thinking I was alone, sat up on the dock to take off the second flipper. That movement nudged the patrol boat and instantly a large security officer sat up to attention, absolutely horrified at seeing me that close to him. "Holy fuck! What are you doing?" as he grabs for his radio. I was heartbroken because it was now approximately 3:15a.m. and it wasn't going to be light for a couple more hours. I knew that there was nowhere on this target a couple floors above me that I could hang the banner that read 'NO TANKERS'. But I went for a walk anyway. Tango answers 'Having fun.' and almost laughed out loud when, we'll call him Big Guy, blurts out that he used to be a cop as his body language betrayed him by backing him up a little. I heard Tango say as he picked up the gear and walked by him 'You can join me if you like'. The radio then instructed him to film me with his phone, which he did.

I made my way to the top. Standing there maybe forty feet above the water, I looked over to the right where the steel infrastructure was slick from the constant rain. There was nowhere to hang a banner that security couldn't walk to. Nowhere to climb. Once again, I was thinking how even the couple short possibilities on that structure would only put law enforcement and myself at risk in these conditions. Not even Tango could see himself hanging on with one arm while trying to deploy the banner so it could be read. At this point I turned and noticed two security guards with dogs on leashes on the main deck below as three RCMP patrol cars entered the site at the main guard house, their lights flashing. I heard myself say 'Well bud, it looks like you get to be the hero tonight', motioning for him to lead me toward the police.

We had won. I spent a third period of time in Deer Lake RCMP Detachment and eventually managed to get my core temperature back to normal. On our way there the young officer asked if I was cold and turned the heat up in the back of the cruiser. He then asked 'Aren't you afraid of sharks?' I smiled through a shiver and told him that I was afraid of climate disaster.

There was just the Crown, the stenographer, the officer guarding me in a tiny courtroom somewhere in Superior Court when I faced Justice Affleck for the third time. They were going to let me go again for the same \$1000 bail, and in two hours I'd be back out on the street. I refused

to sign my release. July 22 was 12 days away. This was my court date for the eagle tree. Affleck eventually asked 'Why?' and I replied 'My Lord I've been very unreliable and I feel I owe you that.' Well, as Crown turned to face me, jaw on the floor, Affleck said 'Very well, you realize if you change your mind you can be out the next day'. We all stood as his Lordship left the room.

By the time we arrived at North Fraser PreTrial, we had picked up several prisoners along the way and it was late afternoon. I'm now into my third day with no solid food. Sitting before the head mental health professional I tried to explain my decision to hunger strike. You should know that both The Mental Health Unit and The Health Care Unit have to monitor anyone on a hunger strike and that means segregation, or what they refer to as the hole (solitary confinement). I made a deal with the doctor that if my urine turned dark, I would give it up. Every morning I offered it fresh off the press. I bit the end out of the oranges and sucked the juice. I strained the broth of soup through my teeth and of course drank their tasty juices along with lots of water. My normal weight is 160 pounds. In the first five days of what turned out to be 14 days, I was down to 148 pounds. I had to stabilize so I started licking out a small tub of a butter substitute every day. It worked and nine days later at 140 pounds, I stepped into the paddy wagon bound for Superior Court. One of the things I enjoyed while in the hole was listening to these professionals as they went about their duties. They treated everyone with the same care, and there are some bad people in there. In my opinion these pros are world class people in a very difficult job. Of course, I knew better than to mention my buddy Tango.

I had hoped to walk into court a little weak, but totally in control that day. It was not to be. The Sheriffs really can not control the temperature in the stainless steel cages of the paddy wagon. When they turn the ignition key on the air conditioning is set, and this lock up was designed to hose down after a full moon weekend. For almost an hour I deep breathed, first through my nose, then through my mouth, all in an effort to load up with oxygen and not eventually get sick. The trick is to not hyperventilate and pass out. I was almost hypothermic and could barely walk when they helped me get out in the underground garage beside the holding cells. With ankle bracelets on and hands cuffed in front, it's meant to be hard. When a young officer put his hands on my ribs to frisk me he freaked. "He's nothing but skin and bone!" Another officer, there's always one, asked "What's your secret?" Now on his knees on a bench, feet up to accommodate the jewelry being taken off, Tango looked up with a sarcastic smile and replied 'Just don't eat'.

A few minutes later I'm pacing in a three foot circle in a familiar holding cell in the basement of Superior Court, trying desperately to get my core temperature up so I could stop with the muscle spasms. I'm weak from the fasting. Emotionally, I felt very unstable. An officer whom I've come to know since the tank farm tree arrest, brought me a veggie sub and an apple juice. He implores me to eat and then locked the cell door behind him. I drank some apple juice and sat for awhile, still chilled and experiencing waves of shaking uncontrollably.

I was still pretty much out of control as I was escorted for the fourth time to stand before Justice Affleck. Crown was now calling for a \$3000 bail, for me to return to North Fraser Pretrial, appear there on video in early August to confirm a trial date of August 29th. We had finally pissed them off. As I turned to leave the courtroom, I noticed that the gallery of people behind the bulletproof glass were standing. Although I couldn't hear what they were saying, I could tell that some were voicing their support, others looked worried. Tango flashed a peace sign as we departed.

Once again I find myself pacing in a three foot circle in a holding cell, only now I'm really scared. There was only one faint little light at the end of this tunnel and that was simply Affleck's reaction when he found out about the hunger strike. He abruptly leaned forward and I heard him say "No one told me about a hunger strike."

As my core temperature started to rise I suddenly shuttered at the thought of riding back to North Fraser in that ice box. Exhausted, I stopped pacing and sat down on the hard cool bench beside the veggie sub. I stared at it for what seemed like an hour as I tried to imagine how far I

could safely continue on my hunger strike. When I stood to go to the toilet I noticed the seat of my bright red prison pants was wet. I immediately dropped them expecting to see blood, but it was only water. My kidneys couldn't keep up and now I was shitting water. Great! Suddenly my friend was at the door again. "Mr. Christenson, there's a lawyer wanting to meet with you."

Sarah J. Rauch saved my butt that day. She was there defending other protesters and was horrified at how my rights were being abused. Long story short the Crown backed way down and agreed that the \$1000 bail previously paid was still good enough. And if I promised to be a good boy I could return to Ontario and then fly back for my trial on August 29th and 30th. Sarah also allowed this story to continue by helping to free me at that time. My family and I have no words to thank her enough.

Upon getting out, the first thing I learned was that my friend Rita Wong, a poet and professor at SFU, was serving a 28 day sentence for peacefully sitting in front of a gate within the 5 meter injunction line. Although I knew how strong she was it still saddened me. We all have to manage our emotional investment at these times.

It did feel good to be home with family and friends again. I've definitely smelt the roses ever since. Not having my freedom was the final challenge for me as a rainbow warrior. I'm confident now that I can deliver this story, with a little help from my friends.

My plan was to let the Crown present it's evidence on the 29th and somehow, after their final witness testified on the 30th, convince them that I needed more time to prepare to defend myself. To the horror of my supporters in the gallery that day, I insisted on being put under oath. Once sworn in, I answered questions from Justice Affleck like, would I pay the outstanding \$2000 fine and I assured him I wouldn't, because I considered the injunction an unjust law. I explained that I had permission to be on that traditional territory. Also, I took a chance by introducing Tango to the mix. In the end I stated 'I know it sounds crazy My Lord.' 'No Mr. Christenson,' he assured me, 'I understand what you're trying to tell me.' Apparently crazy people would never admit to sounding crazy. I did manage to get a slight smile from an otherwise very serious individual.

October 25th I get to defend myself. Here's where it gets tricky. It's now October 10th. I'm training hard and studying law. I will be flying out to Vancouver on the 19th to prepare over several meetings with various people. This time there will be a complete connection to the outside.

Late on the 25th look for the story to continue here on [befreeyourself.com](http://befreeyourself.com). And to all those who have downloaded the tunes for free over the years and then, in turn supported this effort on GoFundMe, I thank you with all my heart. I would also ask everyone to understand that freedom, from my perspective, someone who has sailed the North Atlantic in a 30 foot sailboat and lived for weeks on a big wall, slept in caves, snow caves and portaledge, define comfortable. Like Tango said to the professionals in Seg, 'comparatively speaking, this is the Holiday Inn'. cheers t

postscript: special thanks to Ainslie Cruickshank at StarMetroVancouver for her genuine interest and for introducing Tango.



