

hand grenade. @WERWULF and a few others were Ukrainian expats, or belligerent Poles with bad memories of the suppression of Solidarity in Gdańsk, long comfortable in a world eager to inflict on them violence, and similarly comfortable to respond in kind.

The Project had dozens, maybe hundreds of members, each with their own unique (and weird) specialty: @ChuvaKurka for HF radios, imagery, and advanced mathematics (weirdly — @ChuvaKurka claimed to be an auto mechanic); @emceedub, a poli-sci major in Bristol, for what they called “cultural factors,” like explaining that the layouts of rural Ukrainian farming villages were due to the location of the Machine Tractor Stations, never more than thirty kilometers apart, and from there the realization that these large logistical complexes made natural bases for the advancing Russian Army; @WERWULF, a kindergarten teacher in Australia, for cryptic allusions to unnamed military assets. The war was thrilling, though she certainly would not admit that to her mother, or perhaps even to herself.

From her world of peace and safety, in which she had no agency or effect on the world around her, she could, at the merest stroke of keys, the swipe-to-zoom of the satellite image, acquire agency, project an effect, exert a force — small, certainly, but a force exerted nonetheless six thousand miles away, where people she wanted to help were dying. Take your ennui and your learned helplessness and fuck off, she thought, uncharitably, taking another gummy, waiting for the kick-in to knock her out. “You feel powerless?” @WERWULF had said in the #generalchat one night, to no one in particular. “It’s because you’re more comfortable that way. It’s never been easier to change the world.”

Early in the war, west of Kyiv, a battalion had advanced far ahead of their supply lines, which seemed mostly to be stuck in the mud in Belarus. They were surrounded by the Ukrainian military and panicking. The main radio operator had the call sign Buran-30, and over the course of one week in early March she heard the man change, audible even though she did not speak his language. The excitement and glee of fucking up some khokhols