

Below is my story of the magic of Brunswick. It is a long piece.

I am grateful to every being who support this work and me.

Love,
Juniper

Bridge of Resistance and Hope

What I've written below is a description of Pagan Cluster work in the Brunswick G8 protests. I invoke magical protection for these words. Anyone reading them is accountable to the intention to raze the fortresses of domination and oppression and open space in the world for abundance, love, peace, beauty, justice and freedom for all.

Our first ritual occurred the night we arrived, June 1, in our hotel room. Settling into our beds, Charles, Naomi, Lisa and I, something that Naomi said sparked a strong desire to do a ritual to protect us from surveillance. We climb out of bed, make offerings of waters of the world and corn meal, invoke Elegba to guard the doors, and then take the large mirror off the wall to cast a reflective circle around us; a circle through which we cannot be watched.

The next morning Lisa, Charles and I are driving through the Community College. We spot three clusters of 50 to 75 people standing outside, as if in class. Our first impression is of a peculiar uniformity; although looking carefully, each group embodies a wide diversity of age, gender, ethnic heritage, and clothing. We take photos and are eager for concrete evidence to support our gut feeling that these are undercover cops.

We agree that while Lisa and Charles investigate the student center, several buildings away, I will cloak myself in "is there a bathroom in here?" innocence and approach the group nearest the parking lot. From 30 feet away, I hear the roll call: "FBI Thompson", "FBI Clark", "FBI Ivy". My heart beating fast, I have the information that I came for and turn to escape with my findings, this time cloaked in invisibility.

We come back together to engage people as they leave, each with three boxes, one a new cell phone. It is embarrassingly evident when they lie; and when, sheepishly, they admit the truth of what we are seeing. These undercover cops will be omnipresent during the next week: in our press conferences; in our marches; and on one occasion, attempting to join in our magic. Mostly they do not blend in. They wear a similar aura and new sandals. They can't dance and are uncomfortable in the midst of moving energy. More likely they are "investigating" from a safe distance, 20 to 30 feet away.

Thursday is the full moon. Elizabeth and Deborah have joined our group. We have planned a ritual to begin at Sara Britestar's and then traipse across Brunswick to plant crystals at strategic locations. We will pull threads of magic from the web above and anchor them into the soil with crystals to form a web beneath the soil surface to cradle the upcoming actions. It is late, however, and we have worked hard since sun up. We choose to go simply to Neptune Park, on St. Simon's island, charge all of the crystals there but plant only one. We will extend the work of crystal planting over the next several days.

We create sacred space at the foot of a towering white lighthouse, rhythmically gracing our circle with its crystalline light. We spread the living river cloth and place our offerings and crystals, invoke Elegba and Yemaya/Yemonja, and cast a circle to include all of Brunswick, Sara's land, and Sea Island, where the G8 meetings will be held. We claim this entire circle as the sphere for our power and magic. We charge our crystals and each carry one to the beach to plant in the sand.

On the beach we drum and sing "Our hands remember how to spin; We spin justice on the rising wind. . ." under the light of the beautiful full moon and what would become the ubiquitous roar of a helicopter overhead. No doubt a gray-haired woman in flowing dress dancing at midnight with friends on a beach under the full moon fits some profile of the unrestrained terrorist; a person willing to take it all apart with her bare hands. Coming up from the beach, we are met by two 2 undercover cops, identifiable by the silver crescent of metal handcuffs that show beneath their tourist shirts when they lean over.

Filled with the ecstasy of the full moon and our magic, we plant 2 more crystals that night: one in Overlook Park, where the press conference and Palestinian story circle will be held; the other at the gates of Hercules Chemical Plant, a source of toxic contamination in the Brunswick community since 1948.

Thursday evening's magic was channeling the muses: the writers and artists for the next morning's opening press conference and for the 8-page information newspaper that we would use to leaflet.

Friday evening's ritual occurred in the courtyard of our hotel room. Our Tejas allies, Lori, Trevi, and Birch have joined the Cluster. We cast the gray circle, a circle of protection and invisibility that prevents tracing back through our magic. Two people walk simultaneously around the boundaries; one doecil, the other widdershins, three times around.

Again we make offerings, particularly to Elegba and Yemaya. Elegba makes out well this week; one or more of us puffing on a fine cigar to offer him the smoke and almost everyone taking in 10-year-old rum, filtered through coral reef, and spewing it into the air as an offering. Not every drop always spews out and all of my buttons about drug-and-alcohol-free are punched every time, but there you have it.

That night we engage a dropped-and-open process to explore what the Bush administration knows of our work. Through this journey, we learn that they believe we are not the threat in these actions in Brunswick; they are more concerned about civil uprising. Our work together across racial and cultural divides makes them nervous. We sing and raise energy. We also have a creepy feeling of being watched. When the ritual ends, we find that the crazy hotel owner, Amy, has come into our room, shut the curtains, and locked us out.

Saturday evening we went to Sara Britestar's, 18 miles into beautiful, rural Georgia, to work with the blood and bone meal that we will use for bioremediation. We pour into the cauldron with this material everything toxic. We create a circle of visions of the world that will grow from the remediated, living soil; a world where all schools will have windows. We close by forming a small circle and stepping by turns into the center to have the rune of protection, Ψ , drawn onto our bodies.

By Monday the Pagan Cluster is completed by the arrival of the Alberta witches, Rae, Roberta, Kevin, and Casey. During the Interfaith service that evening, Pagan Cluster offers a choral rendition of our action theme song, The River of Life (words below). Lynn has been offering meticulous legal support; checking with us faithfully each day, and singing into the phone any words or melodies about which we are unsure.

Afterward the Interfaith service, we return to our hotel to engage in another dropped and open ritual, this time inside and with our keys. Our intention is to go through the Clan house and find the bridge we have been talking about as part of our intention.

I expect that building the bridge would be part of our trance work, so I am surprised to see, very quickly, a large and lovely span. We climb a tower within the Clan House and then fly

from a high window. Trancers scatter, but eventually gather at our end of the bridge. Our allies, the Gnomes, meet us there. We begin to walk together across a large and lovely structure, all silver and crystal. I look down to see the water beneath teeming with living beings. From this side of the bridge I feel overwhelmingly and lovingly connected with all of life.

We walk to the very peak of the bridge. Here I see an initiatory gate of the black stone heart. I walk through the gate and down the bridge to a dark, gray forest. I feel alone, lonely, and as if I am being watched. Naomi and Lisa cross as well and explore this side including the Cloisters where the G8 will meet.

Others in this trance remain on the bridge near its apex. They plant trees down the backside of the span; extending the work of our magic. All too soon they are calling me back, but I have an urgent sense of needing to do something before I leave. Unsure what to do, or the consequences of any choice, I take a large, clear quartz crystal and use it to polish the surface of the large black, obsidian heart. This is the work of Monday night.

Tuesday morning is the opening of the G8 and protests are launched with a powerful anti-war rally at the old court house and a long, hot march under the Georgia sun. March participants embody a diversity of ages, issues, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, many with very new shoes. One shirt that particularly catches my eye is "Kerry – Don't make me Vote for Nadar; Oppose the War" on a strikingly tall white man.

Four hours later, I had just stepped out of a mid-day shower and was eagerly anticipating a 30-minute nap (jammies and all), when I heard a knock on the door. "Who is it?" "This is the police." "Is this a joke?" " No, open up." No way, thanks to more than one Know-Your-Rights training. I throw the lock that lets me open the door only a crack and get a look at this guy, still wearing his "Kerry – Don't make me Vote For Nadar" t-shirt, but now flashing a Homeland Security/Coast Guard badge and threatening to tow and break into Lori's Subaru. A call to her high-ranking Coast Guard husband clears everything up, but nap time has vanished.

Tuesday evening is a vigil to the victims of globalization in Neptune Park. The Living River bus heads out with everyone but Lisa, Charles, and I. We have been negotiating with the man in whose yard we will do the bioremediation ritual tomorrow. As the three of us head across the causeway, however, we spot the bus heading in the wrong direction. Elizabeth, at the wheel, looks distinctly unhappy. We take a U-turn and head after them, pulling up in time to see them arrive and spill out at the military check point for commercial vehicles. Elizabeth is forced to drive alone, with only military accompaniment, through the search and bomb sniffers. They find and confiscate a crate of molding strawberries as potential biohazards. Her military guard takes an embarrassing stumble when Elizabeth suddenly applies the brakes. We join them when the search is ended and head for the vigil.

At Neptune Park there is a tight cluster of people in the center of the vigil, and a wide mix of people scattered around them through the park, hanging out on the picnic tables. Every other table is a cluster of two to 6 people with suspiciously new, shiny brown leather Birkenstock sandals, including the two Homeland Security guys from our hotel.

As the vigil comes to an end, we discuss whether to do a Spiral Dance. Whether any of us have energy left to gather the focus the disparate attention of scattered groups through the park is a question and no one feels keen to Spiral with undercover cops. Nevertheless, Pagan Cluster moves to a wide open space in the grass, a bit away from the tables. We grasp hands to form a circle, stashing bags in the center to create our familiar street altar, and begin to sing and drum. People join us, including a woman slightly older than me, wearing shorts, bleached blonde hair, and plenty of gold jewelry. She takes my hand. A few

minutes later, Lisa steps between us, asking me, sotto voce, if wouldn't I rather *not* hold hands with a cop.

The Spiral Dance begins to form and energy builds powerfully. Although we complain, the calling to work magic in the presence of cops may be a common thread among Pagan Cluster activists! Just before the cone peaks, the undercover flies from our circle; as Charles aptly describes: a grouse flushed from the bush! Back-tracking, we lay our spiral altar cloth and make offerings. Holding hands, we turn outward, stepping until our arms are fully extended to claim the largest possible circle and sing "No army can hold back a thought, no fence can chain the sea; The earth shall not be sold or bought, all life shall be free" to the surrounding ring of cops, this time in undercover tourist clothing rather than riot gear.

Our circle grows as people in the park are drawn in and participate in the magic. We turn toward the center and together create a story of the G8 from a sentence or two contributed spontaneously from the circle. The first part of the story asks "What do they fear?" "Our joy, our pleasure, our bodies, our song, our freedom." The story evolves organically to create a vision of the world that we want. A world of peace, says one young man, shyly. We raise another cone.

Young people whom we don't know and will likely never see again have joined us for this taste of magic. Afterwards they speak to us, in small, private conversations. They have dreamed of this, practiced something similar in their rooms alone, but never expected to find it that night in Neptune Park. This long day ends again on the beach, at waters edge. Naomi's dog, Cousteau, throws his body with total delight and commitment, into waves larger than him, heedless of any consequence.

This is almost all of the group magic for the week, except the bioremediation ritual, which has been brewing for weeks. We have talked to an African-American man who lives in a home adjacent to Hercules; at the very corner that Daniel Parshley says is most likely to be highly contaminated with Toxaphene, a persistent biocide that was banned from use in 1984, but is discharged every day from the Hercules Chemical plant; a toxic community legacy of 40 years of corporate profit-making. We have negotiated his agreement to allow us to do the work we want, but without media or crowds, and no using his name. Just us and one IndyMedia person to film.

This ritual begins, however, with a public rally on the street beside the Goodyear school, built without windows to protect the children from the toxic fumes of the chemical plant four blocks away; a chemical plant that is shut down this week so that the G8 summit, 10 miles away, catches no whiff of the methyl isobutyl ketone used to extract chemicals from the resins of trees stacked 50 feet high across the property. Media loves the contrast between Pagan Cluster in white tyvek suits and respirators, and youth bloc in black and bandanas when their march arrives from Fair World Fair. In a bazaar mix of science and magic, we stir together the bone meal and blood meal that is part of the EPA-recommended recipe for toxaphene remediation with stories of the toxic legacy of corporate dominance and dreams of a world that nourishes everyone. We call upon Bush and the G8 to smell, taste, and feel the toxic legacies of their decisions, as they are felt every day by the children of Brunswick.

By the time the rally/ritual and the march and the confrontation with police have ended and we have gathered our tools and materials for bioremediation, we are beginning our project much later than we expected. Our host, John, is now home. He is still down with what we are doing, but stays sequestered inside.

16 witches go to the back yard and begin to dig, moving soil onto a sheet of plastic. The soil is fine gray delta sand that carries the look and feel of ash, of death. We collect samples for

analysis. We line our trench, 2 feet deep by 3 feet wide by 4 feet long, with plastic and begin to refill it, mixing blood and bone meal, rain water fortuitously collected during a brief thunderstorm that morning, and our magical intentions for transformation of all toxins and the possibilities of life, health, sustenance, and abundance.

We dig right at the fence line that separates this backyard from Hercules Chemical Plant. Hercules security guards have been watching us on their fence line for days. Tonight is no exception. First one, and then several cars, and then a group of men inspect the fence line. "Everything seems to be OK." A bright light now shines from the adjacent hill as they film us. Clearly it is time to wrap up. We finish and the Cluster leaves, except a small group who stays to check in with John. We are there when the first police car pulls up and begins to question him for their "report". This is exactly what we have tried to avoid.

Fortunately, Lisa and Charles had a long meeting with the Chief of Brunswick Police yesterday, describing exactly what we wanted to do. Lisa gets Chief Bruce on her cell phone and then hands it to the officer intent on making his report. His is told to stand down, and everything seems cool. Except that when we emerge to the front yard, there are 10 police cars and a police van parked along the street, another helicopter in the air, and every neighbor on their front porch to see what is going on. So much for anonymity and protecting this poor and vulnerable neighborhood from military invasion!

The final day of our protests begins with a beautiful and powerful story-telling to honor the experience of the Palestinian people, and to protest Israel's apartheid wall. Roberta moderates the rally and Kevyn, Charles, Lisa and others share stories. We carry a replica of the wall to the causeway intersection. At this point youth bloc allies splits off to begin their own march along the road across the wide expanse of Georgian marsh to confront Bush and his allies. Pagan Cluster and others remain to ritually tear down and burn the apartheid wall, surrounded by photographic images of the death and destruction of US/Israeli policies.

From there Pagan Cluster went together to rally and march in silence through African-American Brunswick streets with local organizers opposing racism. As that march draws to an end, the next 30 minutes is a beautiful manifestation of the Pagan Cluster spell; an echo of the exchange between reporters during the opening press conference in Brunswick. As one reporter prepares to leave, he turns to the other and says "May you be at the right place at the right time."

Lisa gets the cell phone call. Youth bloc has marched 7 miles beneath the relentless Georgia sun and under the constant pressure of riot police. Their need for water is a medical emergency. We count 6 gallons on the bus, a box of Emergence-C, and four power bars. We decide not to buy more water, not to pick up another car, and head directly for the fast passenger car check point between us and our allies.

Military stops the bus at the check point. "We are bringing water to people who desperately need it. Now!" An officer steps on and walks the narrow aisle between 16 beautiful witches, tenderly and sweetly singing to him: "May the beauty you love be what you do; there are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground." He searches nothing and quickly leaves. The second person who attempts to search the bus takes one step onto the floor board, takes one look down the bus at the singing witches, turns and leaves. They wave us toward the tent with the dog tasked with sniffing for bombs. This dog is intensely interested in Charles' boots. "Do you have a dog?" they ask him. "I am living with three puppies." They wave us through.

We are on the Island!

We approach the road to Sea Island. Military block our passage and turn us back. But Naomi, who lived on this island for several years, navigates a back way. Moments before Youth bloc arrives at the final check point, we pull into a shopping center parking lot, find a space, and spill out into the street. As Youth Bloc takes a quick break on the edge of the police line in front of a Cancun-design fence, we fill their water bottles, hand them packages of Emergence-C and douse their clothing with water.

We have arrived with only moments to witness as Youth Bloc explains their intention to bring a message from people to the G8 summit. They take three steps toward the police line and then sit down in the street. Riot cops quickly sweep in to surround them and separate and force us back, in the face of our singing, and against our sweet and tender flesh. Most of the Youth Bloc is arrested. We bring food and banners for jail support to the grassy lawn across from the jail. We share tarot readings, shielding the cards with the spiral cloth and disarming surveillance police by demanding that they respect our secret, strategic consultations.

Several hours later, Charles, Lisa, and Naomi return to the courthouse for a last evening reconnoiter. The call comes back to the Pagan Cluster hotel that jail support is being forced to leave the lawn. We fill the Living River bus to provide our bodies and our magic for whatever support might be needed. Police keep us from joining those being ordered to disburse, but they are coming our way. We meet in the closed street and share a rowdy spiral dance.

Filled with the energy of the spiral magic, a giddy group of thirty sing and drum through the streets of downtown Brunswick. Quietly past residential homes. Loudly and powerfully as we circle the jail. "Sisters, brothers, go in peace; charges dropped and all released". An hour later we have done our work, and we do indeed leave for well-deserved beds. The next day as drive madly to Savannah, hoping to catch our scheduled flights home, word comes that 3 of the Youth Bloc were arrested for singing outside of the jail.

The arrests of Youth Bloc, like the bioremediation ritual, is another powerful lesson that we can either choose to use our power, our magic, and our privilege to protest injustice and privilege, or not. We can take the Brunswick streets to challenge the privilege and policies of the 8 most politically powerful men on earth. While they meet behind walls on the wealthy enclave of Sea Island, we can work in a community that experiences the poverty, oppression and the toxic legacy of accumulated wealth. While G8 breathes momentarily fresh breezes of unpolluted air, we can place our hands into toxaphene, mercury and PCB-contaminated soil that children play in every day. We can walk door-to-door in neighborhoods where a woman who answers shows only the right side of her face, hiding the dark purple bruise, the size of a fist, below her left eye. We can walk through projects where young, dark-skinned, 20-something men stroll up pushing a baby carriage. We can listen while one of them, wearing shiny silver dragon jewelry of a TV-character drug dealer and the power of Elegba, stands halfway in and halfway out to tell us that the police have told them they will be arrested if seen talking to protestors.

We can claim our power to challenge an oppressive and abusive regime in the heart of a community that every day bears the brunt of its brutal policies. We can let go of the illusion that any other choice but this one will save us from directly experiencing this brutal oppression in our own lives. Or not.

From the River of Life, By Starhawk

*Our hands remember how to spin,
We spin freedom on the rising wind.
We spin threads of truth and cord of fate,*

We spin love into a river that will overrun hate.

We spin justice burning like a flaming star.

We spin peace into a river that will overcome war.

*In the face of truth no lie can stand.
Weave the vision strand by strand.
Break the chains that have kept us bound;
Weave a web to bring the monster down.
If you want to know where true power lies,
Turn and look into your sisters' eyes.*

*We are sweet water and we are the seed;
We are the storm wind that blows away greed.
We are the new world we bring to birth;
A river rising to reclaim the earth.*