



They called it trash  
because they wanted us ashamed.

They called it backward  
because they wanted us isolated.

They called it white  
because they wanted us obedient.

This is not a defense of whiteness.  
This is a refusal to let the bosses,  
cops, landlords, and politicians  
decide what our people are for.

From Blair Mountain to Uptown,  
from holler to highway,  
from trailer park to tenement:  
**we organize where we are.**



**NOT CHARITY. NOT SAVIORISM. SOLIDARITY.**

Different terrain. Same bosses. Same fight.



### SABOT MEDIA



Essay by Sunday Flint



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FOR THE MANY  
NOT THE FEW

# A WHITE TRASH MANIFESTO

organizing from the edge of the rainbow

by Sunday Flint

YOUNG  
PATRIOTS  
DEFEND THEIR  
COMMUNITIES ★  
★★★



Photo: Harlan Co., KY / 1931

SOLIDARITY  
ACROSS  
COMMUNITIES

**REDNECK**

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# A White Trash Manifesto

organizing from the edge of the rainbow  
by Sunday Flint

A reflection on The Young Patriots,  
The Battle of Blair Mountain,  
and white boys with motion.

“We are the living reminder that  
when they threw out their white  
trash, they didn’t burn it.”

- Preacherman, The Young Patriots’  
People’s News Service



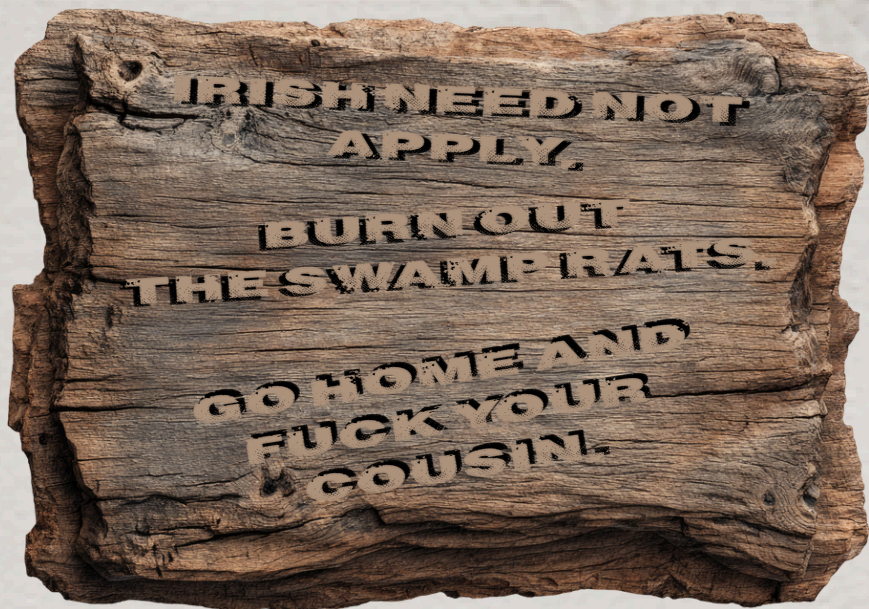
# WHITENESS IS MADE UP.

My skin is not white. If  
you were to hold a color  
pallet against my skin,  
you’d see yellow, red, tan,  
and brown in my  
freckles, but not white.

“White” is a legal classifier the United  
States came up with for the census as a  
way to make me, and people who look like  
me, feel better than others - white is  
“pure,” white is “clean,” white is “holy.”  
And when they did that - when they came  
up with this legal qualifier, they made  
sure that we knew that those qualifiers -  
pure, clean, holy, were what white people  
\*ought to be\*, with a strict  
understanding of how it makes “the rest  
of us” look when someone doesn’t live up  
to those.

| Description |      |                                  | Profession,                           |
|-------------|------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Age.        | Sex. | White, Black, or Mulatto. Color. | Occupation of each Male years of age. |
| 4           | 5    | 6                                |                                       |
| Ch          | b    | HB                               | farmer                                |
| 18          |      |                                  |                                       |





These words were on the sign that sat outside the dumpster where you left your white trash. People whose nationalities, regional cultures, class positions, or stories inconvenient to the white narrative should be left. Propagate the “white” “race”, except those Russian commies, Irish drunkards, and Appalachian cousin fuckers.

**I'm here to talk about the stories of those who fell in between the cracks of whiteness**



In 1921, the largest armed conflict to ever take place on American soil broke out. Not in Dixie over unification or D.C. over independence, but in the mine country, at Blair Mountain.

“AT THE TIME, MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA LIVED IN AN ‘INDUSTRIAL POLICE STATE.’”

– Charles B. Keeney, historian and author of *The Road to Blair Mountain*

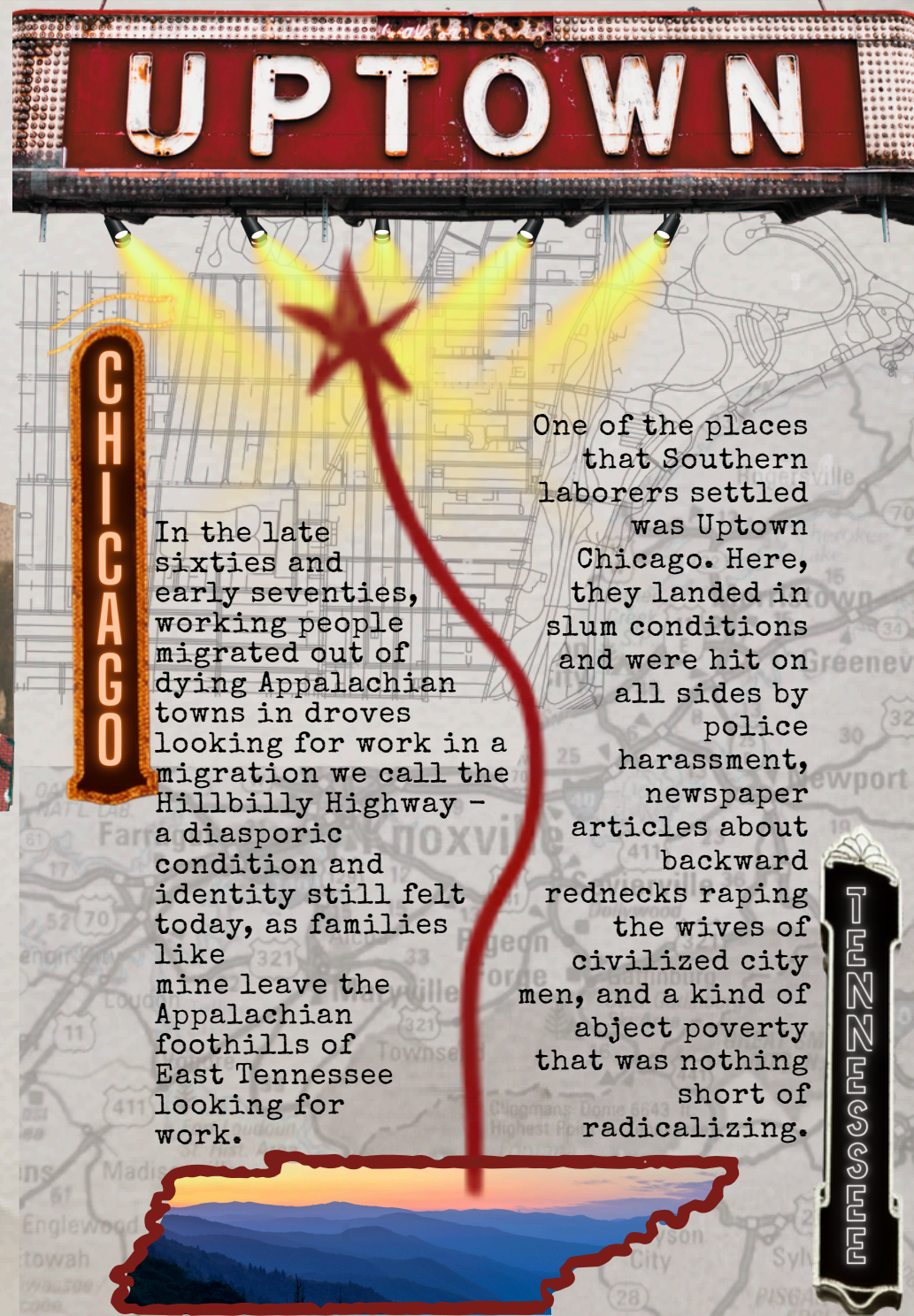


After a year long strike followed by a union-friendly sheriff and a town of women and children being gunned down by union-busting gun thugs, the striking miners picked up as many arms as they could find and marched on Blair Mountain. The uprising was mostly white, but multiracial - in fact, it's where we get the term "redneck," as the striking miners of all races wore red bandanas around their necks to signify solidarity. The battle ended when the federal government ordered bombers to unleash their payloads on the striking miners.



Though it was just one moment, the mythology grown out of the Battle of Blair Mountain epitomizes the sorts of structural conditions that often give us the people we call white trash. Regional struggles that give birth to specific regional and ethnically informed cultures, being violently repressed and starved out by a state that doesn't give a damn about the region. The black miners got the worst of it, but anybody living in the region had a target on their backs and fences up around their means of survival.

They were trash



CHICAGO

In the late sixties and early seventies, working people migrated out of dying Appalachian towns in droves looking for work in a migration we call the Hillbilly Highway - a diasporic condition and identity still felt today, as families like mine leave the Appalachian foothills of East Tennessee looking for work.

One of the places that Southern laborers settled was Uptown Chicago. Here, they landed in slum conditions and were hit on all sides by police harassment, newspaper articles about backward rednecks raping the wives of civilized city men, and a kind of abject poverty that was nothing short of radicalizing.

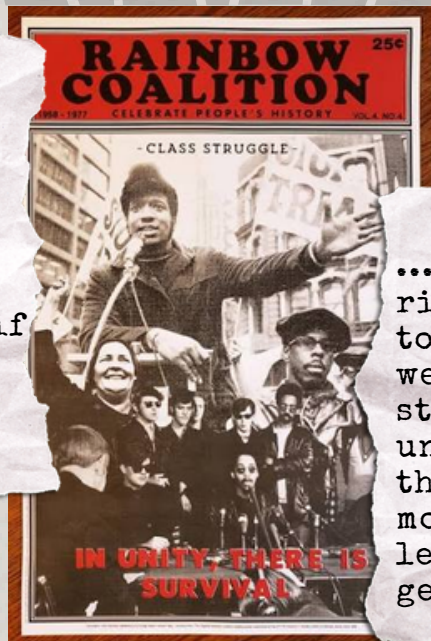
TENNESSEE



# THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

was in full swing, and the  
**BLACK PANTHER PARTY**  
 encouraged some of these  
**APPALACHIAN TRANSPLANTS**  
 to form their own organization  
 and join the

They were technically capable of receiving much better treatment or being seen as "just white" if they code switched enough and rolled...



...in the right parts of town, but they were structurally unable to do that, for the most part, at least in their generation.

to organize for better living conditions and more respect in these Chicago streets. They were white, yet culturally and structurally marginalized.

THEY LIVED AT  
 THE EDGE OF  
 THE **RAINBOW**

## ANECDOTES

WHAT GETS  
 PUNISHED:

1. accent
2. poverty
3. dress
4. survival



I mentioned before that I spent my childhood in Appalachia. I developed my sense of community, duty, religiosity, and family there. After we moved away, in school I got jokes from the other kids about incest, illiteracy, poverty, being dirty, and drinking moonshine in filthy trailers. I developed a neurosis around proving to myself and others I could read and wasn't attracted to my relatives. Because of this, my accent didn't dissipate as organically as it normally does when you move somewhere new - I consciously repressed it out of shame.

I was embarrassed of where I was from.

Even though I came of age in an urban center far from the South, my highschool years were shaped by being a family of Southern transplants, with Bible Belt convictions and working class restrictions.



Fast forward to now, and I'm an adult transsexual woman who lives in an urban center and is deeply, deeply working class. I've lived in diverse, poor neighborhoods most of my adult life, and in the last year lived in a predominantly black building that had conditions which met the legal definition of a slum, just before being homeless in my city's ghetto. I've also now spent a good portion of my adult life consciously relaxing my accent. I talk about where I'm from and the folkways I picked up with a good deal of pride, and consider myself an Appalachian American and a Hillbilly Highway rider.

Because of where I live and my class position, I've incurred my share of trauma from the streets. I've seen things and done things to survive I can't mention in middle class spaces if I want to be seen as a human worthy of being there. I've had cops pull guns on me for the crime of walking to my apartment, a violence reserved for those who commit the crime of poverty. I've been socially isolated for my accent coming to the surface or the way I dress. I think carefully about how honestly I present myself in certain spaces and stay acutely aware my accent can never be visible in job interviews if I want even a shot at being hired. I'm mostly stealth as a transsexual, though sometimes am clocked, so the cultural and class factor of who I am adds another layer of potential violence to my life.

I've heard many stories like mine from people in similar social positions - most of the homeless white people I knew in the ghetto were also Southerners, oddly enough. I heard stories of police brutality and day to day discrimination you don't expect to hear coming from the lips of pale people. And yet, those stories were shared. And those stories happen. And though all of us still have what you'd call white privilege, it became clear to me that what that privilege meant in the day to day referred to something much messier and blurrier and inconsistent than I could properly put my finger on. We weren't quite the right kind of white, but we were still white, and would never be able to fully understand how this country treats people who simply aren't white, being left in a liminal, contradictory place without a good answer about what we were, except both "white" and "trash."







## Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin

a black anarchist and former Black Panther, wrote on the white working class that we are "contradictory actors." This means we sometimes favor white supremacy over class solidarity and do horrible, racist violence out of resentment, having been told by "our" "leaders" our problems are to blame on Jews, latinos, black people, natives, or Asian Americans. However, sometimes in history we put on our big girl pants and realize that all those groups are in the same trenches as us - ie Blair Mountain and the Rainbow Coalition.



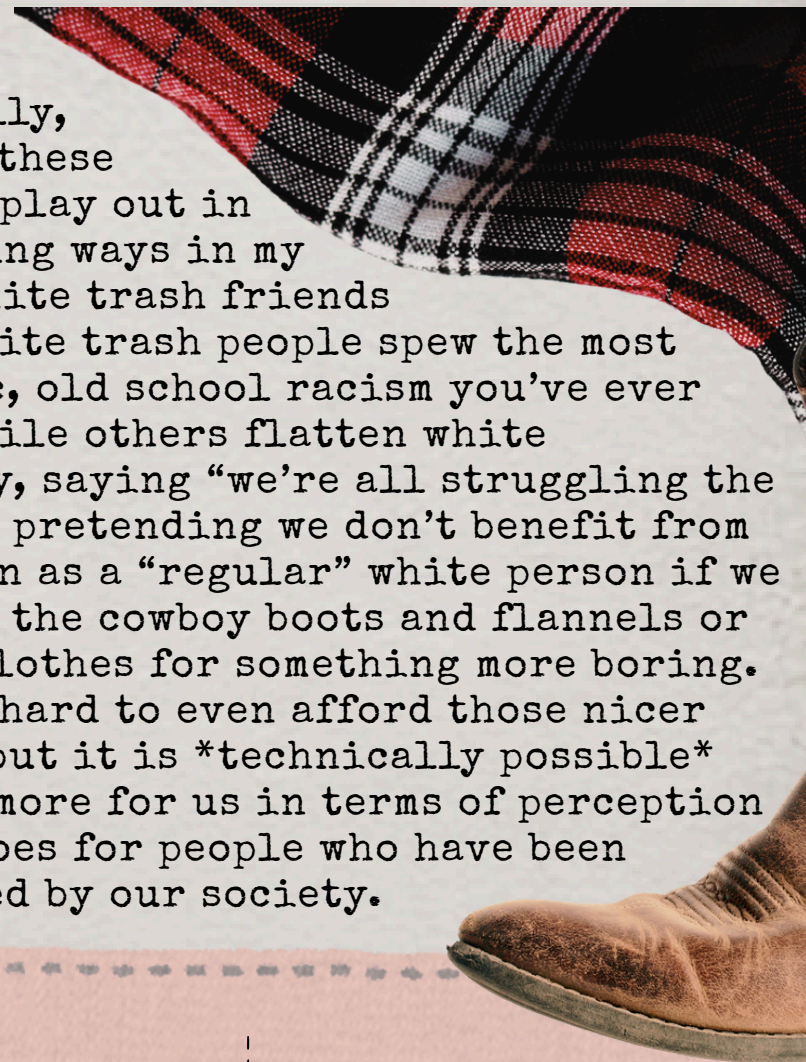
Anecdotaly, I've seen these mindsets play out in interesting ways in my fellow white trash friends - some white trash people spew the most vitriolic, old school racism you've ever heard, while others flatten white supremacy, saying "we're all struggling the same" and pretending we don't benefit from being seen as a "regular" white person if we trade out the cowboy boots and flannels or torn up clothes for something more boring. It may be hard to even afford those nicer clothes, but it is \*technically possible\* and does more for us in terms of perception than it does for people who have been racialized by our society.

### THE TRAP

scapegoating  
resentment  
white supremacy  
divide and rule

### THE OPENING

solidarity  
memory  
rebellion  
shared struggle





It makes a lot of sense that Lorenzo called us contradictory - everything about our position is liminal and fits into the class, race, cultural and regional hierarchies of this country in a strange way, almost like it doesn't quite fit at all. With such a contradictory position, people branded white trash -

Appalachian hillbillies,  
Rust Belt trailer trash,  
Cajun swamp rats,  
ghetto white boys, and  
white women with cookie  
monster pajamas

have to consciously choose what we do with our position - being thrown in the garbage gives you a good deal of freedom with what you do next. They threw us away, and there's a lot of spare parts to build something new with in the dumpster - something I learned from the white boys in the hood who made their side hustle selling scrap electronics and car parts.



MAKE "WHITE TRASH" A REVOLUTIONARY LABEL AGAIN

FOR THIS REASON, I'M CALLING  
US TO REMEMBER OUR ROOTS -

not the ones mangled with hate, but the ones where, for a brief moment, we lived in timelines where our eyes were open and stared down the barrels of our pump-action shotguns at the right enemies. Where we saw our vulnerabilities, saw the scars that looked different but shared similar patterns to ours on black hands, and stood shoulder to shoulder - trailer park, barrio, rez, ghetto and Chinatown all united against white supremacy, regional chauvinism, borders, cops, landlords, bosses, and politicians. A recognition that though the cops watch us for different reasons and with different undertones, that the cops are still watching all of us, and that though we are seen as more human than our black, native, latino, arabic, asian comrades, we're seen as less human than the middle class white Yankees and Yuppies, who we want nothing to do with anyway.

THIS IS A CALL  
FOR **SOLIDARITY,**



across differences, to build a new period of white trash resistance born out of a collective consciousness our ancestors would be proud to see us carry.

Make them regret not burning their  
trash when they threw it away.