

## SPECIAL FEATURE

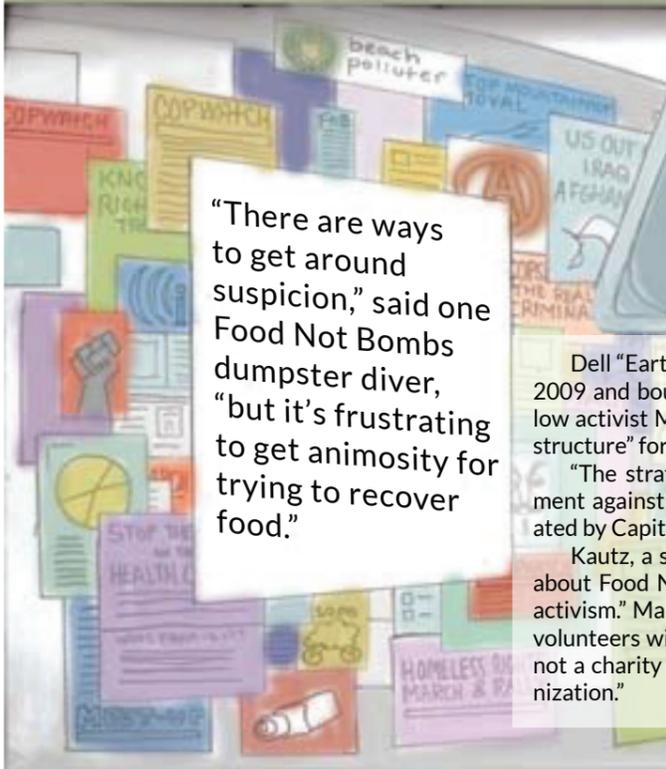
# The Teardown House

Revolutionary activist group Food Not Bombs fight hunger in Woodruff Park each week.

Reported and illustrated by  
Miles Keenlyside

One of the organizations that calls the Teardown House its home is the Atlanta branch of Food Not Bombs, a group dedicated to feeding the homeless. The group meets every Sunday to prepare and cook a variety of foods to take out and feed to the hungry in Woodruff Park.

Located on a tiny side street near DeKalb Avenue, the "Teardown House" serves as a base of operations for several local activist organizations. The slogan "Build up resistance, tear down oppression" is written in bold letters across a rainbow awning over the entrance. At first the messy and spray painted exterior of the house might mislead you, but it's different than other spray painted houses in Edgewood. On closer inspection you will find the graffiti to be empowering phrases such as "Our passion for freedom is stronger than their prisons." A solitary black flag flies on a pole out front by the message board, and the house's strict "No Illegal Substances Allowed" policy is posted by the front door.



"There are ways to get around suspicion," said one Food Not Bombs dumpster diver, "but it's frustrating to get animosity for trying to recover food."

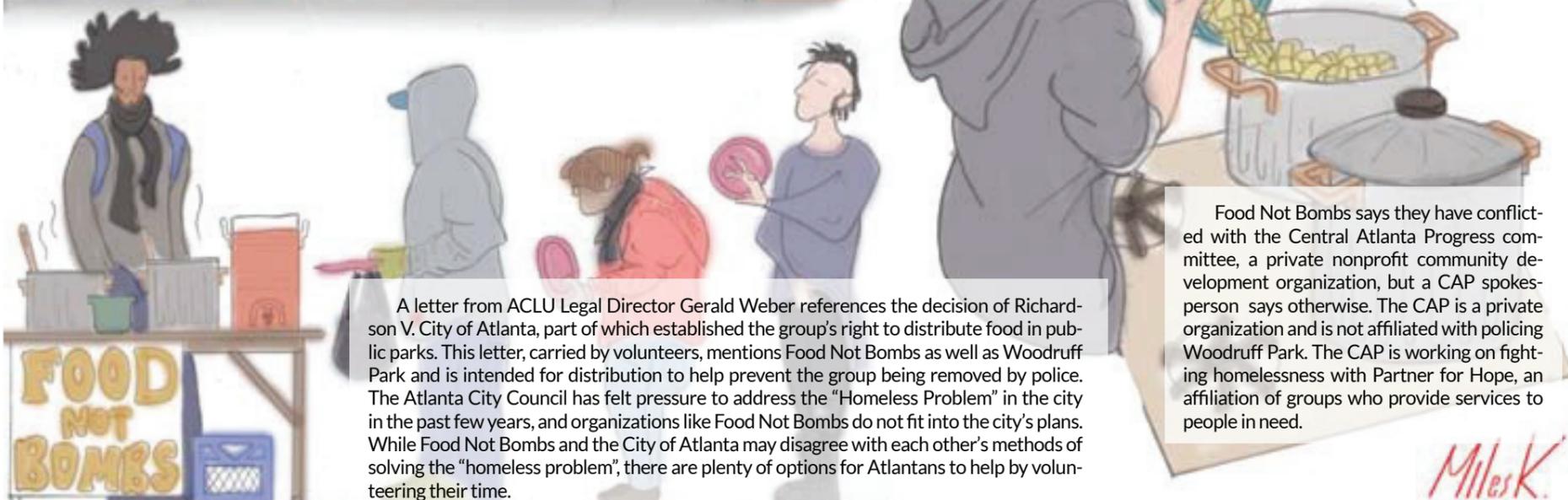
Dell "Earthworm" MacLean moved to Atlanta in 2009 and bought the house in Edgewood with fellow activist Marlon Kautz in order to "create infrastructure" for activism in Atlanta.

"The strategy is to connect to create a movement against poverty," said MacLean "poverty created by Capitalism and the prison system."

Kautz, a self described Anarchist, is passionate about Food Not Bombs because it is "real work in activism." Make no mistake in your language either, volunteers will remind you that Food Not Bombs is not a charity but a "Revolutionary Solidarity Organization."

The food is usually vegetarian and is obtained in various ways, including everything from donations to dumpster diving. The menu changes week to week depending on the food available, but a few staples in the kitchen are roast potatoes, veggie stir fries and fruit. The food is obtained, prepared and cooked entirely by volunteers. A few charities donate food, and some volunteers "dumpster dive" to obtain the rest. At Food Not Bombs, dumpster diving is justified as preventing waste. According to Food Not Bombs volunteer Marlon Kautz, over 50% of food in grocery stores never makes it to a plate. Dumpster diving is not appreciated by grocery store security, who often fend off potential dumpster divers.

At the park a line soon forms in front of the folding serving table and food is dished out onto reusable plastic plates and bowls. Volunteers played drums to attract attention as more people gathered to wait in line for the free meal. Not all of the attention that Food Not Bombs attracts is positive however.



A letter from ACLU Legal Director Gerald Weber references the decision of Richardson V. City of Atlanta, part of which established the group's right to distribute food in public parks. This letter, carried by volunteers, mentions Food Not Bombs as well as Woodruff Park and is intended for distribution to help prevent the group being removed by police. The Atlanta City Council has felt pressure to address the "Homeless Problem" in the city in the past few years, and organizations like Food Not Bombs do not fit into the city's plans. While Food Not Bombs and the City of Atlanta may disagree with each other's methods of solving the "homeless problem", there are plenty of options for Atlantans to help by volunteering their time.

Food Not Bombs says they have conflicted with the Central Atlanta Progress committee, a private nonprofit community development organization, but a CAP spokesperson says otherwise. The CAP is a private organization and is not affiliated with policing Woodruff Park. The CAP is working on fighting homelessness with Partner for Hope, an affiliation of groups who provide services to people in need.

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