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# WELCOME. WELCOME.



*Across the US tens of thousands of commercial and residential buildings sit empty while people sleep in the streets or descend into poverty paying ever-rising rent. Chapel Hill is no different. This building has been empty for a full decade, gathering dust and equity for a faraway landlord while rent skyrockets beyond our ability to pay. A brand new "green" development remains empty right up the street, gentrifying the neighborhood so longtime locals have to move to Durham. This is what happens when our town is shaped by profit rather than human need.*

## WELCOME TO AN EXPERIMENT.

For the past month and a half, people across the US have been occupying public space to protest economic inequality and hopelessness. This started as an experiment in a small New York City park, but it didn't emerge out of a vacuum: Occupy Wall St. "made sense" because of the rebels in Cairo, because of the indignados of Madrid and Barcelona and Athens. These rebellions were all experiments in self-organization. Each was unique to a particular context, but all were united by the shared reality of the catastrophe of global capitalism and the futility of electoral politics.

Recently, the "Occupy" phenomenon has expanded from providing a space for dialogue to become a diverse movement seeking to shift the social terrain. From strikes and marches to building occupations and port blockades, this looks different in different places, but one thing is clear: many are no longer content with "speaking truth to power," for they understand that *power does not listen*.

In that context, we offer this building occupation as an experiment, a possible way forward. For decades, occupied buildings have been a foundation for social movements around the world. In places as diverse as Brazil, South Africa, Spain, Mexico, and Germany, they offer space for everything from health clinics and daycare to urban gardening, theaters, and libraries. They are reclaimed spaces, taken back from wealthy landowners or slumlords, offered to the community as liberated space.

As the economic situation worsens, this occupation is a logical response. This action is not orchestrated by Occupy Chapel Hill, but we invite occupiers, workers, and unemployed and homeless people to join us in deciding what this space should be. This "tour guide" is just one possible blueprint among many, a hint at the countless uses such a building could be put to once freed from the stranglehold of rent.

Make no mistake: this occupation is illegal, as are most of the other occupations taking place around the US, as were many of the other acts of defiance that won the little freedom and equality we appreciate today.

*in Love & Rage,  
for Liberty & Equality,*

-some autonomous anti-capitalist occupiers

