Wayne Curry’s few friends knew the East Van resident as just another embittered old hippie. They had no idea that Curry, a.k.a. John Jacobs, Weatherman, had so much to be bitter about.

Tears streamed down the cheeks of a distraught 22-year-old as she read the poem “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night.” It was not the first time Dylan Thomas’ invocation to “rage, rage against the dying of the light” had been read at a funeral, but there had perhaps never been a service at which the words were more apt.

Seven days earlier, on October 19, 1997, police had been called to an East Vancouver basement suite where paramedics were having difficulty with an ill and angry man. Marion MacPherson, the common-law wife of 30-year-old Wayne Curry, had found him asleep when she came home that day. Beside his bed but untouched, she said, were a bottle of whiskey and a half gram of coke, his painkillers of choice.

MacPherson called for an ambulance, but by the time paramedics arrived Curry was awake and in the midst of an agitated fit. He was enduring the final stages of a cancer that had begun as melanoma and progressed to invade his brain, lungs, skin and lymph nodes. In the late stages his skin had become ultra-sensitive to touch. Using gentle diplomacy, the police were able to coax Curry out of the house and toward the ambulance. As they walked along, a female police officer patted him softly on the back and said: “You’re doing fine.”

The comforting touch had an unexpected effect. Pain became rage, and Curry slugged the officer in the face before stumbling back to the house. It took another hour and another batch of police officers to strap him onto a stretcher and send him off to Vancouver General Hospital where medical staff took over. “He fought all the way,” MacPherson recalls. “The police said he was one of the strongest sons of bitches they’ve ever seen.”

Curry died 14 hours later. His death came as no surprise to MacPherson, the four grown children in the couple’s blended family, or the few close friends he’d made during his quarter-century in Vancouver. He had been diagnosed with melanoma in 1976, and the disease had followed a slow but predictable course. Even the furious nature of his exit was not a complete shock. During the last two decades of his life, Curry had supplemented stints of blue-collar work with the money he made selling marijuana and was known to harbour no love for the police.

But if friends weren’t astonished by the events of October 19, they would be two days later. Sandy McGuire, a landscaping contractor who had first met the American expat 18 years earlier, stopped by the Curry house to see how Marion and the kids were doing. MacPherson was speaking on the phone, and McGuire overheard her saying she would have to

ILLUSTRATION BY ALAIN PILON
get in touch with the police about Wayne's real identity. They, in turn, would contact the FBI. "It was one of those spine-tingling things," McGuire, 50, recalls.

As McGuire would learn that night, his friend had gone out with the same fiery anger that, at Columbia University 30 years earlier, had earned Currie an impressive name—albeit a different one. Currie was then known as John Jacobs. In the pantheon of '60s radicals, he was among the most illustrious: a co-founder of the Weatherman organization, one of the masterminds behind Chicago's Days of Rage and for years a staple on FBI most-wanted posters. In the early 1970s, following a particularly bloody and disastrous period of revolutionary activism, he had disappeared, virtually without a trace, perplexing the U.S. authorities and many of his former comrades in arms.

In fact, Jacobs had quietly crossed the border into Canada, soon settling in Vancouver: As fellow activists were picked up and sentenced to short jail terms or probation, he successfully created a new identity for himself as a humble and perhaps slightly "burnt-out" ex-hippie and blue-collar worker. Eluding American justice—or "kicking the imperialists' ass" as he later wrote—would be one of his proudest accomplishments. How he died would have been another. "He got to hire a cop," Marion MacPherson says. "I told them not to touch him."

John Gregory Jacobs was born September 10, 1947, in New York State, the youngest of Douglas and Lucille Jacobs' two sons. Before leaving the profession to operate a Connecticut book store, Douglas Jacobs had been a prominent journalist, one of the first Americans to cover the Spanish Civil War. "Our parents were leftists," says JJ's older brother Robert, now an Oregon school bus driver. "They were political—socially aware, politically conscious progressives of the times.

JJ's childhood seems to have been happy and normal, but by the early 1960s the teenager was beginning to rebel—not against his parents, to whom he was close, but against American society. In high school he became fascinated with the Russian Revolution and the writings of Marx and Lenin. A contemporary hero was also the process of shifting from its former role to a new left protest group to one that advocated outright revolution. Rudd remembers watching Harlem burn, then embracing the streets with J.J. the night King was assassinated. "At one point we got separated and I went home," he recalls. "Later I learned J.J. had wandered the streets alone all night, reveling in the celebratory violence and anarchy."

At the time, Columbia officials were planning to build a new gymnasium in the predominantly black neighborhood near the university. To many students, it smacked of racism and small-scale imperialism. In his book The Wind Blows Free: A History of the Weather Underground, author Ron Jacobs (no relation) says Columbia became a metaphor for the U.S. government. "At the same time they were talking principles of freedom and democracy, they were using the power that then existed—street and financial power—and using the wealth of the university to basically colonize the surrounding neighborhood...."

By then J.J. was taking a leading role in the SDS, Jeff Jones, co-organizer of the New York chapter at the time, remembers him as a true Marxist ideologue, "very committed to not just a basic Marxist-Leninist-Marxist-Maoist ideology, but also militant tactics—confrontation tactics—and a world view of the United States as the centre of an imperialist system."

When Columbia president Grayson Kirk tried to push his gym plans ahead, students stormed his office. In an article that appeared in Rolling Stone in 1982, Peter Coller and David Horowitz describe the riot:

"When Rudd influenced the daily flow of events at Columbia and revelled in the limelight...J.J. worked behind the scene, explaining how the events fit into a larger pattern of apocalyptic that included the Tet offensive, LBJ's decision not to run for re-election and the "revolutionary protests" in France, which, by May, nearly toppled the de Gaulle government. The corrupt structure of the capitalist world was crumbling, he argued, and all that it needed was a strategically applied push to send it crashing down."

During these events, J.J. became known for his commitment to the dictum "auda-
city, audacity and more audacity." Rudd chuckles, recalling how Mathematica Hall, taken over by J.J. and his cohorts, became known as the Hall of Crazies. They also invaded the president's office.

"There was a famous story of a disturbance among the occupiers of what to do when the bust was imminent," says Rudd. "J.J. suggested putting Columbia's rare Ming Dynasty vases on the window sills to deter attacks from that direction. That was vetoed. Then he suggested pushing the cops off the window sills "non-violently.

"Unlike many peace activists, the occupiers weren't protesting war itself but rather the role of the U.S. as a capitalist aggressor. "We were all Guerillas," says Rudd. "We were all in the cult of Che. Cuba represented a departure from Soviet Marxism, and Che was the most romantic and heroic of the bunch." With J.J. busy working behind the scene, and Rudd handling the media, the events at Columbia interested. According to Collider and Horowitz, "As the conflict at the university deepened, J.J. became a legendary nom de guerre." Their article quotes Rudd as saying, "He had brains, vision and the ability to talk. When he was on, he was brilliant. Nobody else ever came close." More than 700 were arrested in the Columbia rebellion, and a student strike shut down the remainder of the school year. J.J.'s revolution had begun.

BY EARLY 1969, JACOBS WAS CEMENTED WITH
THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ULTRA-LEFT-WING
ACTION Fraction, WHICH WAS PREPARING FOR
THE SDS'S NATIONAL CONVENTION. THAT June, Jacobs's manifesto, "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows," was published in the SDS newspaper, New Left Notes. The manifesto took its title from a line in the Bob Dylan song "Subterranean Homesick Blues," and predicted a political armageddon, tying the struggles of black Americans into a world revolution that would attack U.S. imperialism and racism. "For better or worse he was the author of the Weatherman paper and the underground armed-struggle strategy," says Rudd. "He had the anti-imperialist vision."

A small leadership group that included J.J., Rudd and Jones as well as Bill Ayers, Bernardine Dohrn and a handful of others quickly became known as Weatherman, and began to plan a demonstration to take place in Chicago—the Days of Rage. As J.J. wrote, Weatherman would show the war right back down "their" doors, fascist threats and show them, while we were at it, how much better we were than them, both tactically and strategically, as a people. In an all-out civil war over Vietnam and other fascist U.S. imperialism, we were going to bring the war home. "Turn the imperialists war into a civil war," in Lenin's words. And we were going to kick ass.

Thousands of angry young Americans were expected to descend on Chicago, but far fewer made the trip. "We had set the tone and the level of militancy so high that only a couple of hundred people were willing to come and participate in a demonstration on those terms," says Jones. The demonstration quickly became a riot, with students taking on police in hand-to-hand combat. Rudd regards the protest as a test. "I think the Days of Rage was a rite of passage for us," he says. "J.J., if I remember correctly, led one of the actions and got arrested right away. He passed his test."

Later, in analyzing the low turnout, the Weather Bureau looked to their model, the Cuban Revolution. "I was very, very depressed, realizing that so few of our expected troops actually came to Chicago, and that the arrests were so many and costly —also that so many people had been injured, mostly by the cops," says Rudd. "But we rationalized the defeat by analogizing to Fidel's Moncada," in which the armed effort was initially defeated but eventually triumphed. J.J. urged the other Weatherman members not to be discouraged but rather to take the movement underground. His argument was the day, explains Rudd. "And that was what we then set out to do.

There was no turning back. On the eve of the Days of Rage, Weatherman had blown up a police station in Chicago. A few weeks later the group firebombed some Chicago police cars. During the next year, bombs would be set off in the National Guard headquarters in Washington, the headquarters of the NYPD, the Presidio Army Base in San Francisco, and in several other American cities.

But along the way, the renamed Weather Underground made a terrible "military error," one that would both affect J.J.'s status within the movement and saddle him with a weight of guilt he would carry to his grave. On March 6, 1970, a homemade bomb, made of nails wrapped around an explosive core, detonated at a New York residence occupied by several members, killing three of them. Eleven days later federal indictments came down against surviving members for their role in the Days of Rage. Leaders of the Underground analyzed the events and made several decisions. One was that J.J. would have to leave the group.

"IF YOU FEEL YOU ARE UNDERRATED, MAKE YOURSELF SCARCE," THE PROPHECIES WOULD DOUGLAS JACOBS HAD ONCE SPOKEN TO his youngest son came back to J.J. The Weather Underground was now truly underground, the subject of a massive FBI search. For a couple of years J.J. wandered around the continent—mostly in California and Mexico—under a variety of identities and usually alone.

"Life is admittedly lonely and sad," he wrote in a never-mailed letter to Rudd. "But you can't blame that on being a political fugitive. Life was already lonely and sad before we got involved in politics. We were so naive at the time. I know that for myself, part of... (continued on page 100)
The message is as old as automobility itself. Go fast, look good... the stunning, entirely problem free XJR proved in nearly 3,000 miles of fast, hard driving... Jaguars do it all three.18

Steve Thompson - AutoWeek

The XJR is an elegant stoker of a sedan. Powerful, balanced and poised...19

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If you're not moved by metal, leather and wood, may we suggest ink?

14This is a car that's the epitome of luxury, but it's got the proper stuff with a 4.0-litre V8 engine.11

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[CONTINUED FROM 86] what I wanted from the political movement was friends, family and community. Somehow I thought that among people who were working together for social change, the values of the better society they were fighting for would be manifest in better social relations among themselves. So after I had lost, killed, alienated or driven away all my friends and comrades, I found it hard to be relevant or effective politically.

One constant in J.J.'s past—whether life was the battle between conflicting feelings of guilt for pushing friends to militancy and being scapegoated for the townhouse explosion. "He felt guilty about a lot of stuff: being the leader he felt guilty about the deaths," says MacPherson. Meanwhile, the FBI continued to track him, almost catching him a couple of times. Once, in California, agents burst into a house where he was staying, but he went through a window, clambered over a roof and disappeared into an alley, leaving behind everything he owned, including a passport that revealed the false identity he had been using. J.J.'s brother, Robert, was attending Simon Fraser University at the time, and J.J. decided to venture north for a visit. The FBI was aware of this possibility and had notified the RCMP to keep an eye out. "There were a couple of incidents where they opened my friends' mail and tapped my friends' phones, and they were actively looking for a certain period, but obviously not successfully," Robert Jacobs recalls. J.J. lived mostly on Vancouver Island for a couple of years, working as a tree planter but donating a considerable portion of his income to the construction of a Buddhist retreat on Salt Spring Island—perhaps as a sort of atonement, though he never said as much. The brothers avoided being seen together because of their similar appearances. The alias Wayne Curry was a name J.J. "just pulled out of the air" as the two were walking down Fraser Street one day after he'd returned to the city. Almost immediately Curry met a woman and together they had two children. By the end of 1977 the family had settled into a nice little rental house on the 500-block of East 28th. From his various writings, it is clear that Curry's life in Vancouver was constrained by his fugitive status. Although his political views had scarcely become more moderate, he avoided contact with local left-wing groups for fear of being identified. And, despite having a young family that
VOLKSWAGEN'S
November 1998
One-Day Adventure:
GABRIOLA ISLAND

Because there is no direct ferry service to it from Vancouver, Gabriola Island is one of the more easily visited of the southern Gulf Islands, as local by Vancouverites. Getting there is easy, fraught—on some parts, you're reminded with country roads, scenic views, eagle nests and inscrutablelyphy.

After NC ferry from Nanaimo is 10 minutes away. Then, as a ferry, it is to Gabriola is 30 minutes, from me to John every hour. When you disembark at Denman, head south onto Sutle Road. As you near Port Mouton, you see the old

1. Got a rendezvous with an on ramp? A date with a winding country road? May we suggest the Volkswagen Passat. The automotive equivalent of the black turtleneck. Starting at just $29,100, the Passat has a clean, handsome design that allows you to weave in and out of any situation (traffic or otherwise) with grace and style.

2. Drivers wanted.
The Last Radical

her of society, as a person able to make his own choices and influence the choices made by others, essentially ended the day he went underground in 1971. "How many of those surrounding him in the last days knew who he was—the last Weatherman?" Rudd asked in a pains-letter to a friend the day he learned of J.J.'s death.

At home in his private jungle Jacobs did indeed remain the last Weatherman. In one of his letters to Rudd he describes his vision of a revolutionary communist's homecoming: "I can see myself like a photo I saw once of the Cuban revolution—some fat, middle-aged guy walking down the street into Havana with his machine gun, returning some day victoriously."

Jacob's victorious return never happened in quite the way he thought it would, but in the end he did make it onto the streets of his beloved Cuba. After Wayne Curry died, his body was cremated and his ashes scattered, some here, some there, all around the world. The remains of John Jacobs now mingle with the waters of English Bay, with the soil in his East 27th Avenue backyard, at a spot in Oregon he remembered fondly from his days as a fugitive—and finally with Che.

Beside the historic grave site of Che Guevara in Santa Clara, Cuba, a photo of a younger Jacobs, wearing khakis, a beard and collar-length hair, is attached to a plaque that reads, in part:

"John Gregory Jacobs, known in the United States revolutionary movement of the 1960s, was born September 30, 1947, and died October 20, 1997... He organized protests against the Vietnam War in many parts of the United States; and was a principle author of what became known as the Weatherman Statement. After SDS broke up and the Weatherman leadership were indicted for 'conspiracy to incite riots,' he split from that organization but remained an underground fugitive for the rest of his life. Though he never got to Cuba in that lifetime, the leadership of the Cuban Revolution were his models. His family and friends are extremely grateful to the Cuban government, the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, and others for the honor and respect shown him by allowing some of his ashes to be spread at the monument to Che Guevara.

"He wanted to live like Che," it concludes. "Let him rest with Che."