

LESLEY WOOD

So, I don't know if you'd remember the days of action against Mike Harris in 1996. This was the head of the new Ontario government, and he was enemy #1 and the face of massive cuts to education, healthcare, and social services, there was a wave of protests; rotating general strikes called the *Days of Action*.

When Toronto's turn came, activists like us wanted to shut the city down, and we did. I was part of a group of bike activists called *Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists* and we wanted to figure out how we could do our bit. The subways were shut down, the highway was shut down, and so we decided to disrupt traffic in the middle of the city.

We headed for a crosswalk on Queen street, right in the downtown, and our goal was to disrupt as much as possible, using something we called the *Endless Crosswalk*.

We arrived at the crosswalk and the first person to step into the street was a woman wearing a *long* white wedding dress, promenading slowly with her train being guarded by two other activists. The first driver looked both amused and confused. Next, were two people with a *long* piece of wood that they carried across. The drivers looked a little bit more confused, and this was followed by a friend and she was dressed like an old man, shuffling ever so slowly across the intersection. When she/he got to the middle, he dropped a pile of paperwork and we all rushed in to pick up the pieces, making apologetic gestures to the waiting cars and trying not to laugh as we caught each other's eyes.

For about half an hour, we held the street and the cars had to give up, turn, and retreat. We'd been part of something big. Like people across the city, we had shut. It. Down.