The Anishinaabe of the Great Lakes region have many stories about Thunderbirds, deemed among the most powerful of beings. Able to bring about renewal and destruction, Thunderbirds have a unique and protective relationship with humans. The Anishinaabe also have many stories about the Great Lakes, which are understood to be the center of Turtle Island, the source of all life. One story tells of a future when a great black snake will threaten to swallow the land and all the waters.¹ This cautionary prophecy is similar to other Indigenous teachings. The Lakota, for example, tell of a black snake that, moving underground, will destroy the earth.² These are not fated predictions, however. The prophesied future can be changed. The future is about the choices we make now.

So many Indigenous peoples throughout the United States and Canada have pitted themselves against imperialist ideologies and extractive capitalism, most powerfully embodied by the oil and gas industry and the neoliberal valuations of water, land, and life that that industry represents.³ This struggle has involved
both local and international actions against the expansion of pipelines within and across the United States and Canada—the Dakota Access pipeline (North Dakota to Illinois), TransCanada’s Keystone XL (Alberta to Texas), TransCanada’s Energy East (Alberta to New Brunswick), Enbridge’s Northern Gateway (Alberta to British Columbia), Enbridge’s Line 3 (Alberta to Wisconsin), Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain (Alberta to British Columbia), Energy Transfer Partner’s Bayou Bridge in Louisiana, and others. It has involved bringing attention to the industry’s collusive role in governments, the courts, and global relations, its facilitation of climate disaster, and its complicity in gender-based and sexual violence. In speaking out, Indigenous peoples have insisted on the viability of their land-based governance and culture as an otherwise. Imperialism and capitalism are not inevitable, nor are they progressive. Indigenous territorial-based practices of shared governance, cooperative economies, reciprocity among humans and other-than-human beings, and genuine equity between genders and sexualities (in)form a viable social alterity.

The U.S. and Canada, in full collusion with oil and gas executives and private or paramilitary security firms, have responded to Indigenous opposition by deploying harsh counterterrorist measures to suppress and criminalize Indigenous protest and disrupt, undo, and disparage Indigenous lifeways. These measures have included smear campaigns and harassment, surveillance and entrapment, and arrest, charge, and incarceration. Particularly disturbing in all this is the broad public support and even demand that these tactics have occasioned. As Jack D. Forbes says of the 1850s genocide campaign against Native Americans in California and Nevada, “The sequence of events [is] all the more distressing since it serves to indict not a group
of cruel leaders, or a few squads of rough soldiers, but, in effect, an entire people; for the conquest of the Indigenous Californian was above all else a popular, mass enterprise.”

In October 2017, Elizabeth LaPensée released a 2-D side-scrolling game on Windows entitled *Thunderbird Strike*, which was followed shortly thereafter by an iOS version. The game’s development was supported by small grants from Michigan and Minnesota, including money from Minnesota’s Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, which provides support to projects that preserve state history and cultural heritage. The game included a link to a website with educational materials on Great Lakes Indigenous cultures and teachings. It also included information on the damages oil pipelines have wrought on Indigenous lands in the United States and Canada and on Indigenous efforts to protect these lands and waters from further destruction.

The three levels of *Thunderbird Strike* depict, respectively, the Alberta tar sands, the prairies of Saskatchewan, and the Straits of Mackinac, which connect Lake Huron and Lake Michigan—all three areas that are implicated in pipeline projects. Players assume thunderbird avatars who gather lightning power from clouds to restore fallen caribou and buffalo and strike against pipeline equipment. Game reviewer Dia Lacina writes, “It’s the first time a game has ever asked me to take on an oil pipeline, specifically the Enbridge 5 pipeline [which flows under the Straits of Mackinac]—all without killing a single person. And video games have asked me to kill a lot of people.”

Upon release of *Thunderbird Strike*, several government officials and oil industry lobbyists accused LaPensée of advancing terrorism. Senator David Osmek (R-MN) described the game as “an eco-terrorist version of Angry Birds.” Toby Mack, president
of the lobby group Energy Builder/Energy Equipment and Infrastructure Alliance, called it a “taxpayer-funded political campaign ... designed to encourage eco-terrorism or other bad behavior.” He further noted: “We don’t think there’s any place for this kind of material being out there.... The consequences of somebody committing an act such as you can on the video game is [sic] just horrific.”10 Bob Gunther (R-MN) called LaPensée’s use of the legacy grant “an abuse” of the program: “Common sense would tell you our arts dollars should be spent on programs that serve some purpose to the State of Minnesota, not on an out-of-state video game that blows up oil pipelines.”11 Mack agreed, saying, “We call on Michigan State University to pull the plug immediately on this taxpayer-funded political campaign and reject any so-called educational program designed to encourage eco-terrorism or other bad behavior.”12

LaPensée was subjected not only to government scrutiny and corporate criticism, threats of funding recall, and questions about her scholarship, but also to online harassment, including death threats, which were justified by the charge that she and the game were advancing or condoning terrorism.13 They were consistent with nationwide and international efforts to demoralize, silence, criminalize, and punish all kinds of Indigenous opposition to state imperialism. They were meant as a warning to others.

State and corporate use of terrorism to justify suppression of and violence against opposition is nothing new. But specific to this historical moment is its use within a particularly configured imperial formation protected by a massive global surveillance and military industrial apparatus. Neither are counterterrorism measures new, but how they are so readily administered and financed is about the unique resources and technologies of war
and surveillance currently available to the state. The racist ideologies and practices that inform terrorism’s articulation rely on actively assembled anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, Islamophobic, anti-Asian, and anti-queer and transphobic notions of identity, culture, and difference that legitimate state imperialism through violence and censorship.

In this book, I argue that the state identifies Indigenous peoples as terrorists in the service of its own imperialist goals. My concern with these identificatory practices is not to analyze the psychology of the oppressor, center military and police violence, replicate the problematics of the oppression-resistance analytic, or romanticize Indigenous opposition. My concern is with how state-defined representations of Indigenous people in the United States and Canada—which I organize by the figures of the Murderable Indian and the Kinless Indian—presumes what Billy-Ray Belcourt and Neferti Tadiar address as lives not worthy of life, as lives forever defined by the fate of death, injury, and grief. I try to show how the representations reenact the social relations and material conditions of invasion, occupation, exploitation, and appropriation. They do so because imperialism’s capitalism can only expand itself in perpetuity by reproducing social relations of gross inequality between the state and Indigenous peoples. By comparing the United States and Canada, I try to show how terrorism as a representational technology has proven to be an especially effective means for states to deflect any real accountability for genocide, physical and sexual violence, unconstitutional invasion and occupation of Indigenous territory, wanton extraction and contamination of water and minerals, and exploitation of Indigenous labor and culture.

Drawing on Indigenous critical race, feminist, and anti-imperialist studies scholars like Manu Karuka, Jennifer Nez
Denetdale, Vine Deloria Jr., and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, this book pays attention to the articulation of relationships between the United States, Canada, and Indigenous people within state discourses of terrorism.\textsuperscript{16} In so doing I hope to show how Indigeneity has been made indistinguishable from terrorism, to lay out the different modes by which Indigenous peoples are identified and identifiable as terrorists, and to explore how that subjectivity works to further imperialist goals. I conclude with a reflection on the abolition of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination as an otherwise. Not as a future imagined, but as an exercised and lived land-based governance and culture that is a viable alternative to state imperialism and neoliberalism. But first: the \textit{Red Scare}.

\textbf{THE RED SCARE}

A Red Scare is a state’s racist and xenophobic campaign of fear. It is focused on an alleged threat—of communism, socialism, anarchism, atheism, often all lumped together—to the state’s security and social stability.\textsuperscript{17} The term is used most often to refer to two historical periods defined by the two world wars. In that context, the Red Scare was used to justify the expansion of surveillance, policing, and punishment of those who challenged state policy and to advance global economic interests through military intervention.

The first Red Scare occurred immediately following World War I (1914–1918). The Russian Revolution (1917), led by Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks, resulted in the overthrow of the Romanov dynasty, the creation of a provisional government, and the formal establishment of the Communist Party. A civil war ensued, often referred to as the Red Terror, in which tens of
thousands were killed. Ultimately claiming victory over Russian monarchists, the Bolsheviks established the Soviet Union (USSR) in 1922, the world’s first communist state.18

This elicited deep concern in Western Europe and northern North America over the potential of workers to unite and overthrow an established government. Publicly, the idea that democracy, capitalism, and Christianity could be improved upon or superseded was seen as at once ludicrous and heretical. But states acted quickly to rationalize and expand executive and federal authority, bolster surveillance and interrogation resources, and criminalize and deport immigrants. In the United States such efforts included the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918, which forbade sharing national defense information with foreign enemies, interference with the draft, and speech involving the use of “disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language” about the U.S. government, its flag, or its armed forces or that portrayed the government or its institutions with contempt.19 In Canada these efforts included the War Measures Act of 1914, which conferred broad authority on Parliament to amend previous acts by legislation and gave the executive unlimited powers in the name of state security. The act provided for the declaration of war. It also allowed for the suspension of civil liberties, giving police broad authority “to arrest and interrogate suspects and to seize documents without going through the regular channels.”20

The second Red Scare is associated with World War II (1939–1945) and its aftermath but really began earlier, during the Great Depression, which stretched roughly from the U.S. stock market crash of 1929 to the advent of the war. This worldwide economic recession was characterized by staggering poverty, unemployment, and housing and food insecurity. It called into question
the viability of capitalism and the promise that hard work alone would bring wealth and happiness. Many in the U.S. and Canada believed that leftist adherents of labor and civil rights movements were turning to or could be turned to communism as an answer to their economic troubles.

In the United States, this concern seemed validated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal, a series of social programs, public works projects, and financial reforms implemented between 1933 and 1939. Conservatives characterized the New Deal as a gateway to communism that would bring about the undoing of U.S. government and society. “There are today many Communists in America,” Attorney General J. Howard McGrath said, “and each carries in himself the germ of death for society.” If successful, it was believed, they would fundamentally “change Church, home, marriage, civility, and the American way of Life.” In response, extreme surveillance and policing measures were gradually put into place and normalized by public sanction.

President Harry S. Truman (served 1945–1953) mandated that all federal employees be reviewed to determine whether they were sufficiently loyal to the government. J. Edgar Hoover, first director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (served 1935–1972), and U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy (served 1947–1957) equated any kind of protest or organizing with communist subversion and led efforts to surveil and blacklist all supposed communists. Dwight D. Eisenhower, elected president in 1953, mandated the immediate suspension without pay, and later automatic dismissal, for federal employees who displayed “any behavior, activities, or associations which tend to show that the individual is not reliable or trustworthy.” Since no provisions were made for hearings, agencies assumed full discretion, often summarily firing individuals who pled the fifth. International travel was
denied to individuals who criticized U.S. foreign policy and entry visas were denied to individuals with potential communist affiliation. Thirty-nine states followed the federal lead, prohibiting “subversive activities,” criminalizing advocacy of “violent governmental change,” and penalizing membership in the Communist Party.25

In Canada between 1945 and 1957, several royal commissions were established to reform Canadian security and intelligence.26 Charged with investigating foreign intelligence networks operating in Canada, these commissions were given “broad powers to summon, hold, and question individuals without charging them and to punish them if they were uncooperative.”27 In 1946, Prime Minister Mackenzie King created the Security Panel, “an interdepartmental body to oversee and coordinate internal security issues and to determine the loyalty of government workers. It included representatives from the Privy Council Office, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], and the departments of External Affairs and National Defense, with the occasional participation of representatives from other departments.”28 The panel oversaw the screening of thousands of civil servants each year: “They caught up hundreds of unsuspecting Canadians who for some past action, membership, or ‘moral lapse’ were judged to be unreliable and, as potential risks, were either denied jobs or quietly given less sensitive jobs within the government.”29

The Red Scare made legible the deep collusions between state governments and the industries of defense, energy, and technology. Suppressing dissent was not about protecting democracy against communism; it was about being able to advance capitalist-driven invasions and occupations of territories, “domestic” and foreign, to acquire lands, natural resources, and the labor necessary to feed imperialist ambitions.30 These ambitions were
unintentionally marked in Eisenhower’s January 1961 Farewell Address to the Nation, a cautionary tale of the “military-industrial complex” that deflected his own role in advancing not only the complex itself but the formations of wealth and debt that it concretized. Within the Red Scare, war, poverty, unemployment, and social precarity were not understood as resulting from capitalism’s gross failures or imperialism’s deep wrongs; instead, they were the consequence of grave, covert threats on the part of communist spies, sympathizers, foreigners, and immigrants who had to be punished and purged.

The notion of a communist menace lasted long after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. By then, the evils of communism had become associated with the American Indian Movement, the Black Panther Party, Third World Liberation, labor unions, the women’s movement, queer movements, and many other left-wing organizations. They were ascribed to anti-colonial efforts in Korea, Vietnam, Algeria, Cuba, Kenya, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and elsewhere, and were blamed for the strife in the Middle East over oil. The alleged influence of communism and its danger to democracy around the world was used to cover a myriad of situations into which the U.S. and Canada insinuated themselves—often together—as advocates of democratic freedom while covertly establishing and protecting the infrastructure of military invasion, occupation, intelligence, policing, and resource extraction.

Meanwhile, all this time, the Red Man and communism and socialism were made indistinct from one another in state discourses of terrorism. As Indigenous groups like the American Indian Movement and National Indian Brotherhood, or those engaged in treaty rights struggles, from Neah Bay, Washington, to the Restigouche River in New Brunswick, addressed the prin-
ciples of “communal land-holding” or community-based governance, associations between the Indigenous and the communist became normalized. Indigenous people were either the original communists, outright collaborators, or the unwitting dupes of infiltrators welcoming communists into their communities. In any case, the threat to U.S. and Canadian society was considered real and required preemptive intervention. The representation of Indigenous peoples as a threat of this kind, to the state’s very national security, rendered them wholly murderable, relegating them to a life filtered by death’s affect.

**THE INDIGENEITY OF STATE TERRORIST DISCOURSES**

It is important to pause here and consider the legal etymologies of Indigeneity and terrorism. On their own, these terms are complicated enough. What does it mean when they are fused together?

According to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues of the United Nations, a clear, internationally agreed upon definition of Indigeneity is grossly lacking. The Forum maintains that this lack is due to the global diversity of Indigenous peoples. But is it not more likely that leaving the Indigenous relatively undefined in fact serves state interests, allowing for greater control over those who are, or are not, recognized as Indigenous within a state’s claimed territories.

Rather than providing a concrete definition, the Forum argues that international understanding of Indigeneity coheres around seven key points:

- Self-identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member
• Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
• Strong links to territories and surrounding natural resources
• Distinct social, economic or political systems
• Distinct language, culture and beliefs
• Form non-dominant groups of a society
• Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities

When an individual or community is recognized as Indigenous according to these terms, a whole host of rights to governance, territorial control, natural resource access and use, and cultural autonomy are likewise recognized. But since a cohesive definition of Indigeneity has not been adopted within the international community, the question of recognition—determining who is and is not Indigenous within a claimed territory—is deferred to state authority. As was evident during the forty years it took the Forum to oversee the approval process within the General Assembly on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, state governments have disputed such definitions in order to dispute Indigenous claims to lands, waters, and other resources. Worldwide, these disputes have been felt in real ways by Indigenous groups engaged in historic struggle for the recognition of their basic human rights, beginning with the right to life and extending to rights to self-governance, territorial integrity, and control of natural resources, as provided through treaties and constitutions.

In the United States, Indigeneity is defined almost solely in relation to the term tribe, extending even to Alaska Natives and