



I KNOW WHO SMASHED THE MILA INSTITUTE

AND I THINK YOU DO TOO.

Just before quarter to midnight, Tuesday September 15, the Mila Institute in Montreal is smashed. An office that boasts “Ethical” AI, that tells us its mission is to develop *safe* artificial intelligence for public interest, to work on health and the environment and climate change, to promote open science and collaboration.

Ethical.

It is remarkable what a word can do. Put “ethical” in front of the machine and suddenly pretend that the products will solely belong to the benevolent world of research. What is destined for the death industry is made to look like something admirable, necessary, inevitable, and the toll becomes almost impossible to see.

But the toll is always settled somewhere.

Perhaps it was you, the tech worker who has been compelled to code with AI, at the promise of increased efficiency and productivity, that it will reduce your workload, yet you find yourself working more than ever.

Or maybe it was you, the schoolteacher, who can no longer stand to read another generated report on 1984. Or you, the one student who refused to use the bot.

Don't you live by the proposed data center? Or the one already built? Can't sleep over the hum, and the damn light's always on.

Was it possibly you, parent who was sold the promise that the screen would educate your child, entertain them, keep them safe, keep them quiet? Now you can't tear your child's gaze from it long enough to hold a conversation over supper.

I hear ChatGPT is your therapist, or do you not care [can you not bear] to admit it? [I don't blame you] I know some who speak to it more than all the people in their life combined... Was it you? Finally lashing out at that isolating feedback loop? Or tired of watching another friend spiral.

Might it be you, who lives in Saint-Michel-des-Saints, whose groundwater has already been poisoned by the mine's dig tests. But the graphite is green! It's for the transition. The batteries, data centers, and open pits are sustainable, you know. Someone has decided that y[our] poisoned water is an acceptable price for the future.

It must be you, the Palestinian, whose home was destroyed and family marked for slaughter by Lavender, an AI that can only produce targets, indefinitely. Indefinite targets then located using 3-D models dutifully and unknowingly trained through the millions catching Pokemon with their phone cameras pointed out.

Could it also be you then, neighbor. You've seen the reporting on AI cameras, ALPRs, Ring, and all the little eyes we call *security*. Have you nothing to hide? And yet I've seen your posts on Facebook and Reddit fantasizing about breaking cameras.

And what if it was you, dear loiterer, harassed and abused by the STM. But this AI software is local, have pride in the startup, the small mom-and-pop! We all loiter, only some have the luxury of calling it leisure, while others are watched, detected and moved along.

Wasn't it you? Shocked and appalled by the brutality of the SPVM towards the “peaceful”

protesters and our precious journalists? That doesn't happen here, surely. Once we get the body cams, just one more angle, that will clear it right up. Or maybe it was one of you for whom this doesn't come as a shock, and lives this violence daily.

Ha, preposterous! Can it ever be ethical? A little regulation should do? No profit needed for this venture. Stop by, grab a croissant from the café while you're here. There is nothing to see, nothing to decide, nothing to do but consume the little pleasures arranged for us while everything of substance happens somewhere just out of view.

Unless you have already seen it. Unless you have already felt it. Unless, for once, you decide that seeing and feeling is enough to make you responsible for what you do next. A person who has been told to accept one more little indignity suddenly recognizes the machinery around them as something made by people, and therefore something people can attack.

And then the pane breaks.

Preliminary findings from the investigation. About ten individuals, they said. Over 20 windows smashed. Walls covered in graffiti, a laconic “NO”. There it is. The story is already written. The victim, the perpetrators, and everyone else can go home.

Except for that I know who smashed the Mila, and I know you do too.

Not because I know their names. Because I know the feeling. Because you've felt it too.

Hell, maybe it was you.

