



Written by [Ann Shibler](#) on April 22, 2009

Earth Day Co-founder's Dark Past

Ira Einhorn, an icon of the counterculture anti-establishment and anti-war movement in the '60s and '70s, and friend of Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, was on stage as master of ceremonies for the first ever Earth Day event, televised globally.

Holly Maddux, a beautiful Bryn Mawr College graduate, dated and then lived with Einhorn for a time, their five-year affair ending in 1977. At Einhorn's demand, Maddux, who had fled Einhorn's company, returned to his apartment to retrieve her things. She was never seen alive again.



Eighteen months later the reek of decomposing human flesh alerted neighbors that something was indeed wrong, and they in turn alerted the authorities who discovered Maddux' body stuffed in a trunk in the closet of Einhorn's apartment. He was charged with murder on March 28, 1979.

A Philadelphia newspaper, *The Bulletin*, [reports for us some interesting details](#):

At the bail hearing, Mr. Einhorn was praised by a contingent of luminaries — all testifying to his character. There were Ivy League professors, an Episcopalian minister and corporate executives who worked with Mr. Einhorn raising funds. They all stated under oath that he was a man of the greatest integrity.

Arlen Specter, currently Pennsylvania's senior United States Senator, was Mr. Einhorn's attorney. He managed to get the bail set at the unheard of amount of \$40,000 for the suspected murderer. Only 10 percent was needed to free him. Barbara Bronfman, heiress to the Seagram liquor fortune, paid it.

Predictably, Einhorn skipped town and fled to France. He flew under the radar for 10 years, and was discovered only after being convicted in absentia, in 1997. He was only extradited after a Pennsylvania state legislator, Daniel O'Brien, introduced and managed to get enough support to pass a special bill that would allow the convicted murderer a new trial in order to appease the French government and the European Court of Human Rights. Those two foreign entities require that anyone tried and convicted in absentia get a new trial, or no extradition will take place.

He got his new trial in the United States, was convicted, and sentenced to life in prison on October 17, 2002, after just two hours of deliberation. Before his extradition, he tried to slit his own throat, perhaps sensing the climate of justice that was prevailing in the United States at the time.

March 28, 1979, just happens to be the biggest of all environmental disasters — to environmentalists, that is — in U.S. history; Three Mile Island. But it was Ira Einhorn, the ecologist/environmentalist co-founder of Earth Day, who did the real killing.



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