

An FT spoof for our financial crimes

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A well-crafted satirical issue of the Financial Times newspaper has been created to coincide with the G20 protests

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I doubt this will stay online for very long, so read it while you can - here. It's the best spoof newspaper you're ever likely to see: a fantasy Financial Times launched by a group called Reclaim the Sheets to coincide with the G20 protests. They've also produced a print edition, and have been handing out thousands of free copies to commuters arriving in the City of London since dawn.

When I pasted in the link I thought I must have made a mistake: at first glance the website is identical to the FT's. Then I started to read. On the front page is the familiar FT billboard: a St Bernard with a copy of the FT attached to its collar. But the text has been subtly altered: "We live on financial crimes. In a world of cold harsh truths, we rescue stories from the facts." Set in 2020, the spoof paper is a vicious critique of financial journalism and a complacent business class reducing the biosphere to a wasteland.

There's plenty of wish fulfilment here too. One story relates how "Tony Blair, the former prime minister, received a ritual scourging outside Notre Dame Cathedral yesterday as he continued on his expiatory pilgrimage to Rome. Dressed in bright orange sackcloth, and wearing the ashes of British parliamentary democracy on his head, the penitent was beaten about the face and body by personal envoys of Pope Jeanne I, costumed as apes and eating Camembert." Beside it is a fake advert from E.On: "Always responsible ... to our interests ... to our directors ... to shareholders ... and to the planet. In that Order. E.On: you can rely on us to get away with it if we can."

The text is sometimes a bit ropey, but the layout is perfect. It must have taken them months.

Somehow I doubt the FT and its corporate advertisers will rejoice in this publication. Last time something like this was published - a spoof of the Evening Standard called Evading Standards - the police swooped and confiscated the paper before it could be distributed. The satire and creativity of protest tend to be treated by the authorities as a mortal threat.

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