



ALEX FELIPE

on the street

Action Terroriste Socialement Acceptable's (ATSA) campaign to end oil dependency along Queen West Friday, February 3.

The 40 patrollers handing out tickets as part of ATSA's Attack #12 campaign against gaz-guzzling SUVs, vans and cars split into several small groups and scour Queen West for offending vehicles.

I tag along with environmental activists Amelia Goodlet and Raha Javanfar. Running into a GMC Yukon on Massey, we consult ATSA's guide to see if the make qualifies for a

ticket. Oddly, it doesn't. Some Toyota, Suzuki and Hyundai models aren't on the list either, which leaves Javanfar somewhat perplexed.

"I don't know why we don't ticket smaller cars, too," she says. "They're just as bad."

On Stafford, a parking enforcement officer stops and asks what we're up to. "Keep up the good work," he smiles.

The streets are quieter than I expect, but we soon encounter a clean-air violator parking his Jeep Grand Cherokee. Though he "totally understands" where we're coming from, he says he needs a big honking vehicle to carry his tools. Besides, he adds, "it came cheap."

Later, on Richmond, an idler parked under a no-idling sign has us tingling

with anticipation. Is he going to give us shit? Maybe spit on our ticket and throw it out the window? No such luck.

"Do I have to pay anything?" he asks nonchalantly.

"No, we're just spreading the word," Goodlet replies. He tosses the ticket onto the passenger seat and drives off.

Two hours and nearly 50 tickets later, we make our way to YYZ for a debriefing. While our journey's been relatively friendly, other groups received stronger reactions.

"Some people criticized us for wasting paper," says Teresa Spizzirri. "But isn't it worth it if we're sending a message in a creative way?"

Eli Kimmerling says events like these don't get through to people when they're choosing a car, because they take "the old American approach — the bigger, the better."

But organizer Annie Roy counters that this follow-up to ATSA's Dundas Square SUV attack last June will broadcast the message to fight air pollution.

"We generated some passionate discussion, which was the whole point," she says.

I can't help but chuckle at how many ticketed SUV owners will call up the city in a panic in the morning wondering how much an offence for an "oversize, gas-guzzling vehicle" will cost them.

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