

By ROBERT TURNER

## Lewis Mumford & the Food Fighters

[Below is an excerpt from a new nonfiction book based in Asheville, coming April 15]

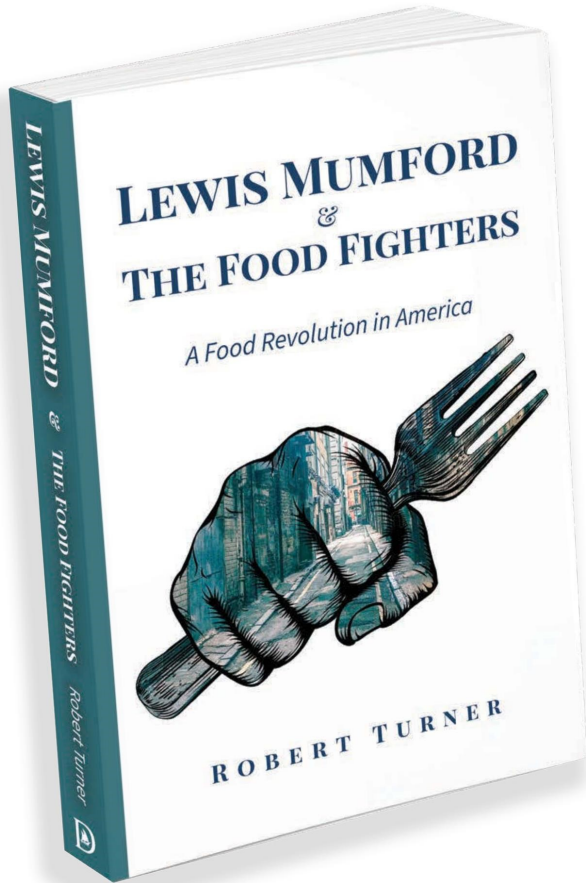
**O**ne time I had to kill a guy. In a clandestine hideout on a dark and snaky road deep in the woods of Appalachia, a grungy group of men made a terrible, fateful decision.

“We have to kill El Tigre,” said Butch in a cold, angry voice. “El Tigre,” as he was known in parts of Central and South America, deserved to die for all the trouble and heartache that he created. I figured we’d be doing the world a favor.

El Tigre had a first name—it was Tony. That’s right, Tony the Tiger, and he came out of New York, the creation of an advertising man from the corporate underbelly of Manhattan. Sure, he was a cartoon character and a brand mascot, but that didn’t make killing him any easier.

When I last saw El Tigre on television, I couldn’t help but notice that he was looking bigger and stronger than I remembered him, like he had been working out, and I wondered if I could still take him. But I knew even then it was all just a false rendering of the truth and part of a sinister deflection and propaganda campaign, one that was designed to convince children that it’s alright to eat lots of sugar. Just get a little exercise and you’ll be fine, they said. Tony even wore a shiny coach’s whistle around his neck. He’s a dead man.

I was heading down a precarious path when I found myself in this meeting with a disorganized gang of revolutionary insurgents bent on disrupting the industrialized food system as we know it. I would eventually come to lead them for a brief time, haphazardly, with both feet slipping precariously on the greasy, slimy



floor of a darkly lit Brazilian meat factory.

International Corporate Kingpins had taken over the food supply, with all the stench of rotting waste and filth and corruption, and someone had to stop them.

For my cover, I was a manager of a small, experimental farm and I read research papers. I also wore reading glasses. After a decade undercover I decided that the modern, industrialized food system was not sustainable. It was heavily dependent on fossil fuels, seriously damaging to the environment, and a major contributor to climate change. But I could see something else much more ominous on the horizon: the complete and total collapse of the corn belt economy, resulting in millions of acres going fallow and economic devastation in the Heartland. Midwestern rural America was headed for a train wreck, and no one saw it coming.

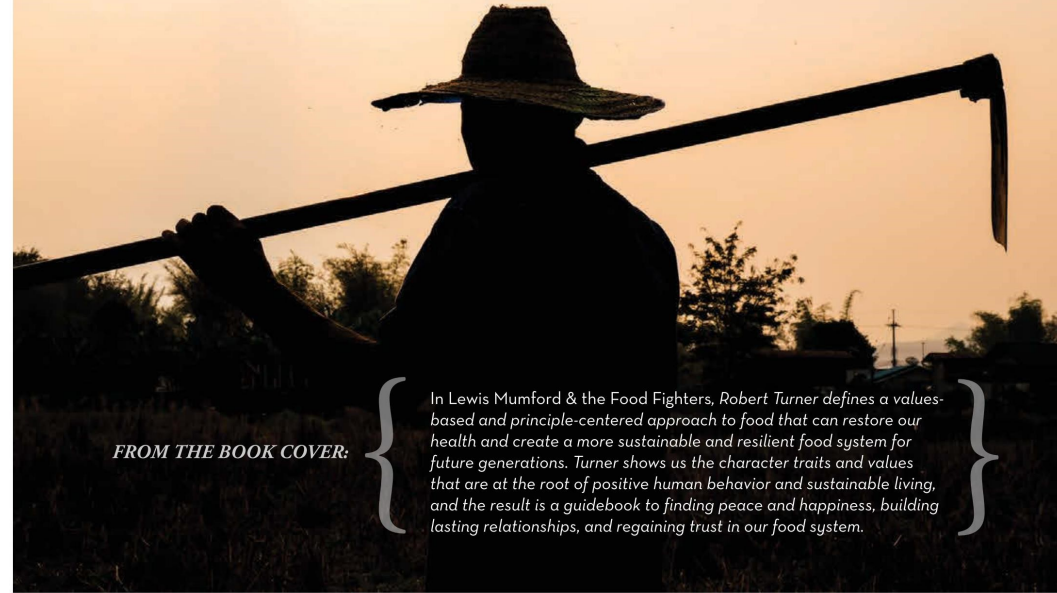
So me and a bunch of oddball screw-ups were going to try to do something about it. My neighbor Lewis Mumford was there to pull us back from the brink.

I wrote this nonfiction book because multinational food corporations have taken over the food supply. In

the work, real people like Lewis Mumford and a misfit band of rebel food fighters battle to take back control of their food and their lives in this compelling true story about food sovereignty and regional resilience in America. The setting for the book is Asheville and Western North Carolina.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic, and then Russian hackers on our oil and meat supply, created food shortages and higher prices that revealed the weak links in our global, industrialized food system—a food supply chain that promotes itself as a source of plenty for all but really creates monopolies for wealthy corporations and food insecurity for the rest of us. The consolidation of large multinationals in the food system has eliminated competition, so they control prices and keep farmers on the edge of solvency while decimating our soils and ecosystems. Is radical revolution the only answer?

Preorder Lewis Mumford & the Food Fighters online at Firestorm Books & Coffee (which is a setting in the book) and they’ll store stamp your copy, or at other regional bookstores. The paperback edition retails at \$16.95. A book launch, which may be virtual, is planned for Thursday, April 14. Check Firestorm’s events page. Robert Turner is director of the Creekside Farm Education Center. To learn more, visit EatYourView.com.



FROM THE BOOK COVER:

In Lewis Mumford & the Food Fighters, Robert Turner defines a values-based and principle-centered approach to food that can restore our health and create a more sustainable and resilient food system for future generations. Turner shows us the character traits and values that are at the root of positive human behavior and sustainable living, and the result is a guidebook to finding peace and happiness, building lasting relationships, and regaining trust in our food system.