

A dramatic scene of a forest fire at night. The background is filled with trees and a large fire that illuminates the scene with a bright orange and yellow glow. In the foreground, a shirtless man with long dark hair and a serious expression stands looking towards the camera. He is wearing blue jeans. The overall mood is intense and somber.

Tenichi's Streaming Scream

By Raymond Howell

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Author's Note

This unashamedly outraged 5200 word short story is a cross between fiction and non-fiction. It concerns the struggles tribes in the rainforest have against illegal logging, mining, hydro-electric and corporations.

It is told in story form but much is based on fact. While this story has an ending the real story will not have one until collectively we decide it should.

Included, are a few internet links you can follow should you wish to explore the story's background further.

Tenichi's Streaming Scream

Section One

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**T**wilight, towing a large black velvet shroud, headed casually, but steadily towards the sun as Tenichi, with the grace of a skilled hunter and bearing gifts for the village pot, stepped lightly out from the shadows of the quietening forest.

Two eager steps on and he was standing in the clearing at the edge of the village, swathed in the warming rays of the still-bright sun. He was home again. The place where his spirit rested and a loving heart quested. Immediately, his eyes fell upon his beautiful Mai and he smiled. For she was as bright and warming as any sun. As gloriously fey as a butterfly. And charming with her crown of shimmering light, which the sun had placed reverently upon her long black silky hair that was pulled back in the casual way he loved. Her slim neck exposed, along with the gentle curve of a bare shoulder and a delicious hint of breast as she gently rocked and nurtured their newborn son outside their hut. It was a proud and uplifting moment and instead of hurrying steps, he stilled them to tarry a little to enjoy the vision that will be over soon enough. In seconds his two older children will spot him and hurry over in streams of welcoming shrieks to drag him off to play.

He was at least 150 paces from Mai, but in her clever and beautiful witchy way, she had sensed his presence. Looking up, she slowly turned in his direction and with eyes lit with joy she sent him a contented and sweet promising smile of her own, which wonderfully conveyed all he cared to know. I'm loved and I'm home. Then their smiles dropped as hell's denizens crawled out of the bowels of the earth to engulf them.

In silence and without warning, armed city invaders swarmed into the village. There was just a sinister smile as one put a bullet in the baby's head. While others laughed loudly as Mai screamed, "Run Children! Run Tenichi!" Before she too was shot. And then just as rapidly, their children. Too innocent and too young and too startled they failed to run, as Mai in that second before her death had so dearly hoped they would.

The only blessing was that she was not made to witness the moment. Either in living or as one of the tribe's invisible people. For her soul had yet to realise she was gone.

Too devastated to scream as his soul and heart demanded Tenichi crashed helplessly to his knees. Overcome, his flesh turned to cold stone. Where unable to react, to think or even blink away tears he simply stared like a totem at the village as the men wiped out the old and young alike - all those tribespeople who had never known a single violent day.

Besides, even if he was able to move, how would he stop them? All he processed was a sling, hunter's stealth and cunning. They were no match for guns. Not that he cared to live, but what is one with so little against so many?

## Section Two

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Contemptuously, the men left the bodies to bake in the huts as they were torched. Or to lay still and twisted on the ground, as if attempting to crawl off to the undergrowth and hide from the slaughter.

Not that it would have offered much shelter.

Tormenting flames were already rising from the village's unruly fringe of bushes and plants and crops, eerily lighting up Twilight's lowering shroud. Where the flames as they searched for prey and in snicker pulled down the living cells of the world's lungs, filling them with the acrid tang of burning flesh and the poisoned breath of the crying, dying, forest. Along with those outraged shrieking spirits so abruptly denied their innocent lives.

Those sounds and odours that the horrified breeze will carry around the world. Leaving the taint and sense of burning bodies and the screamed outrages in every crevice. And in lungs too, before infecting the blood before it goes on to corrupt everything the world's population owns. Or uses. From tins of food and coffee, to a King's, gold-leafed throne. Things, which the forest and the tribes are made to die for - such things they know nothing, or care very little about.

All except for Mai's short but terrifying scream. The heat-fanned breeze was unable to whisk that away.

Instead, the afeared, shocked, outraged desperate echoes pummelled Tenichi's brain, until they brought him vaguely back to his senses, right into

the spiralling core of an emotional tornado. It tore at his heart and triggered his feet, turning him leadenly towards the forest. Then his fear, along with the desperation in Mai's voice took over, urging him to flee from that corner of a new hell, where there were no Amazonian butterflies left to stir and delicately perfume the world's winds. Those beautiful, harmless creatures, just like the undergrowth, lay blackened and shrivelled, annihilated by flames ignited by the stupidity and blind greed of legion after legion of city folks.

As he slipped into the trees a devil's megaphoned voice crackled and cut through the chaos. "It's ours. Now get to work."

Dozens of floodlights flared, lighting up the trees like millions of tribal torches. While chainsaws spluttered into noisy life before catching, their pitches rising higher until they were revving like speedway bikes straining to go at the start line.

The tribe's long-feared nightmare had materialised into human form and was now freely stalking and staking out the forest. Desperate to escape it, Tenichi fled deeper into the trees. Except there was no escape, as the occasional echoing gunshots and the replying screams chillingly reported.

As he ran, the scrunching and tearing of undergrowth and the whining droning engines of lines of logging vehicles moving up to the village, and the loud cracking of branches, along with the men's cheers and warning yells as trees, one after the other fell, gladly banded with the smoke to follow his trail. Just as those sounds and the ethereal bitter herald of those all-consuming flames will keep doing, until...

Or unless...

Section Three

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**T**he last vaporous strands of Tenichi's dying spirit, fallen from contentment into hopelessness, reluctantly lost touch with a mind that was shattering glass-like, while its frantically compelled but disconnected host crashed blindly through the smoke-wreathed forest. The fragile traces offered no resistance as the prying, bad-tempered huffs of hot, dragon-like-breath, consumed them, before shrivelling the helpless undergrowth and searing a tormented stand of frightened trees.

Only the compelling need for Tenichi to scream and scream, “My Mai, My Mai, My Children, My Children” stopped him from turning away from the living. As his wailing soul so longed to do - to dissolve and become one of the tribe’s legendary invisible people.

Driven by shock and panic, he crashed through the trees while continuously tripping on hidden snares. Terrified, confused and stupefied he fled along his secret forest paths where joy had once guided his feet so sure and fleet. But bitter tears clouded those keen hunter eyes as the staggered tread of bare feet drummed no happy beat when they fell upon those very paths, which as a child of generations of hunters, his baby toes had naturally followed so easily.

Disturbed by his screaming born from that deepest of horrors - one afearred by any loving husband and father - flocks of rainbow birds greying in the falling light complained loudly as they scattered from prized roosts. Where their sudden factious flights stirred a juvenile troop of big-eyed-gentle-night-monkeys into confused choruses of screeches and howls. Where

only twenty-two seasons ago the soft chattering of their forebears had joined every thrust of Tenichi's difficult but joyous birth.

The wiser monkeys, having sensed and tasted the bad air had already fled deep into the forest. But the remaining youngsters who had yet to learn the ways of humans and fire began suddenly, as if pulled along by Tenichi's wretchedness, to swing noisily through the canopies.

Other creatures driven by the terror of death's red-orange-yellow, long, hot, indiscriminate licking, lashing, spiteful hell's born tongue, followed as parts of the smouldering undergrowth suddenly erupted. The reinvigorated flames flew hungrily at the trees causing him to choke on bitter smoke as well as acrid tears. Tenichi, as fit as any hunter was struggling. Despair was crippling and destroying his natural skills. While that sense of utter desolation gripped his chest tightly to inhibit breathing.

Forced to suck on the smoke-filled oxygen-thinned air the effortless strides of a powerful hunter, weakened, but lost in a gushing stream of agonised screams he mindlessly staggered on. Stumbling out of the choking trees hopelessly caught in the source of his despair, which were signalling madly to the soil-enriching mycelia that they longed to join him and flee, he headed towards a towering outcrop.

## Section Four

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Steeper and rockier than a hill but no longer mountain-like, as acid rain and increasingly bad weather had stolen its peak, the edifice rose sharply and as lordly as Poseidon's silvery trident. Where it pierced the crackling, waving disturbed sea of green and the thick shrouding of funereal grey-white-black rolling smoke. Except Tenichi had no mind for such detail or thoughts. Or any thoughts.

His was simply a body propelled by muscle memory as he scaled the steep, lichen-pocked, sharp rocky face, sculptured in the ice age and smoothed off by the artistic but untrained hands of time.

After reaching the mottled glass-like top Tenichi simply collapsed, as if supreme effort and grief had suddenly burst his young heart. Yet still, somehow, after falling to his knees and pitching hard forward his lungs found one last gasp as his face smashed against the tor's sharp rock.

Lost to the all-consuming distress, emotional and physical exhaustion turned Tenichi's mind black. While outraged ears shut out the chaotic combustions exploding from the acknowledged mother of all worldly forests below - the place where the source of his living heartbeats lay in silent slain. Then, like those in the village which his mortified eyes had been forced to witness dying, his breathing fell shallow, only to seemingly stop. Just the rapid swelling of nose and lips and the soft trickling of blood from cuts in the thin flesh of bare knees - which flies were already eagerly investigating - signalled to any vultures riding the newly heated thermals that he was still alive.

Just.

Even as he sprawled unconscious, despair refused to let go. Without encountering resistance it swelled and rose just like the fires in the forest below. In a fully aroused psychopathic state, it engulfed his swirling darkness and consumed the remnants of his broken mind, while callously ripping his soul to shreds. Wreathed in dreams filled with dread and hopelessness, he called to death, welcoming it as he wandered through dark nightmare realms. Their source, the sardonic and caustic wells of city dweller's financially controlled and power-led subjugated lives — those ways un-experienced by the non-materialistic, earth and forest-loving, tribespeople.

Section Five

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**F**or the first time, he was sensing the wails of desperate city people and the silent cries of those driven insane. And those of the enslaved. The impoverished. The deeply wronged. And the moans and pleas of the untended sick.

Worse still to his naturally compassionate self, was the sense of forlornness and the cries of armies of ragged children forced to fight feral dogs for scraps and places to sleep. Or for holes to crawl into and die. Or a place to hide from the monsters that search the forever cold, hard, hostile, punishing dangerous city streets, seeking young prey to rape, kill, snatch and enslave or brutalise. The very cities where the rulers call his kind uncivilised and savage.

As newly stirred blood carried that frightful message to his heart a hot sense of injustice sparked into being, where it fought to be recognised. But he was far too weak to use it to pull himself up.

While the sense of injustice was still small, it was nether-the-less, resolute and steady and its core hotter than any known fire. And it was intolerant of despair's presence. Also, unlike the juvenile antics of the frantic, wild untrained fire, injustice possessed patience and persistence. Awakened, it lay in glow ready to ignite when, or if, winds of need happen along to fan it into full life.

But Tenichi was soundly caught by inconsolable wretchedness. Where its fingers gripped him tightly while force-feeding more dreams. In

snickering tones, they spoke of emotions wildly different from those experienced and inured by his society's caring and thoughtful ways. Disturbed, Tenichi whimpered and fidgeted like a beaten dog whose only relief was sleep, while madness sucked his life's marrow dry and incubated anger. Which evolved. Except with nowhere to go it simply added more energy to his depressive, strongly beating, "Death is not taking me to the spirit land where my beloved Mai waits."

"Why Not!"

"Death is not allowing me to take her face in my hands and kiss her once more."

"Why Not!"

"Death is denying me the pleasure of enjoying again my children's freely given laughter when I chase them around the huts."

"Why must it?"

"Or their joyous giggles when I catch and hug my treasures dear. Death has taken them away and now it's cruelly denying me their touch and love."

"Why! Why! Why!"

And so, in that darkness wreathed by bitter smoke, the seed of a raging city-like anger was warmed and incubated by the after throes of despair's hot passage and nudged into wakefulness by injustice and liberally watered by denial.

But Tenichi was too smitten by loss to realise that for vengeful anger to propagate and flourish, it needs the blessing of light shining from a new strong purpose. And for that sucking darkness to release him from its grip.

Except it was too strong and there was more of him to destroy yet.

Seemingly, just as slain as his family and caught like those forest creatures in the raging fires below, the bone-house lay alone upon that high, icy-cold plateau, where very little grows and creatures seldom go. That world window. The finger of ancient rock. An asset, that city folk, once the trees have been cleared and cattle grazed and crops raised, will fight over and take for patios. Or sell in lots. This portal into the shrinking world of green, that in a corporate blink and snaps of thoughtless greedy fingers, will disappear to never again be seen.

## Section Six

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Strong, yet gentle female hands effortlessly rolled Tenichi over, before her powerful arms slipped comfortingly around his cold shoulders.

He felt himself being easily and quickly lifted and cradled and rocked like his Mama once did. It could even have been her mewling softly with the concerned but quiet amusement she always showed whenever he fell from a tree or grazed his knee.

“It’s alright... I have you..., we have you, it’s OK..., it’s OK.”

Except his Mama was with the ever-watchful invisible-people and they have no strength in the physical world, other than to be acknowledged, honoured and thanked, or to send a sense of disapproval now and then. And it wasn’t OK either. How could it be? Not after everything that ever mattered had been cruelly snatched from the living world in a moment of city dweller’s madness.

Instead of providing comfort as intended, the motion reconnected Tenichi with that all-consuming pain as he returned to the living world from which he yearned to fly. All he wanted was to be left alone to become one of the invisible people and rejoin his family. Except the voice although gentle was intrusive, while those arms were holding him over tightly, firmly anchoring him to a life he no longer wanted.

Through a raw inflamed throat, he struggled to moan, “Leave me.” But

the sound was little more than a weak but angry grunt. And as for the person holding him? His eyes were too swollen to see who it was. He only knew that it was not his darling Mai.

And as for her name?

He would never know it, unless she gave it freely, as a new wife or his given to her as the husband does. Otherwise, names when known can be used to harm, to control, for witches to manipulate to hurt the bearer. Names are only shared between those who are dearly trusted and are never asked for. Where he had no intention of ever knowing hers.

From the tattered remnants of his once strong spirit, eager to grow and flourish and bring joy to his family and tribe, Tenichi groaned, Just let me be, let me die.

But inwardly so. Silently like the old trees do while suffering the unrelenting crush of one of the forest's most deadliest and silent of predators. Those strangling, creeping vines, that pick on the old and the weak, where in slow throttle they kill them before their time. Pulling them down to clear the ground to make ready for the new that will sprout from the traces of their remains.

Or so was the life cycle of the forest before the invaders arrived armed with guns and chainsaws to clear the land of people and to fell their beloved trees. And so quickly, that the stumps of the shocked severed trees unaware of their death continue to pump their noble blood. While sticky tears weep freely from the open wounds of the denuded trunks as they lay in long stacked rows, corpses in a war Tenichi could not understand.

As he cried bitter tears inside for the forest's death, his body tensed and shuddered as he began reliving the longest few seconds of his life - the ones

that will remorselessly tick over and over until death finally takes him. The ones which saw the sun darken and the moon snuffed out.

Section Seven

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**I**t's OK," the woman said, as she again brought Tenichi back to the living...

"I'm so sorry it took us a while to find you. But your screams mingled with the monkey's and parrot's screeches and the echoes when they bounced off the rocks confused us. Then you fell silent and we feared the invaders had found you. But we have you now, and I promise, we won't let you disappear from us again."

Then firmly she pleaded, "We have to flee" when he shrugged off the hands to turn and scream tortuously into the smoky wind.

"Mai... my Mai..."

Only to weep openly as he whispered his children's names before nearly collapsing again as he groaned agonisingly.

"And they killed my new son before he could even receive the blessing of a name."

"I'm sorry, I am. But I have lost family too. And we have to face it, they are now invisible. But we are not, and the invaders can find us. We have to leave and do so together if we are to survive this."

The young woman said it gently, but firmly as she grabbed his arm once more to lead him down into the forest. She knew exactly how he felt. Her

heart was just as broken and bitter. After the massacre, she too had laid down and tried to send her spirit to the gods. But this small group of survivors brought her back to the living when they stumbled upon her. Even then she was calling for death as they dragged her along. Until she heard this man's heart-wrenching cries. Then upon finding it was this doting father, the village's skilful hunter and teller of tribal stories, one known for his generous and gentle spirit, her own spirit's determination to live was reset. Along with a need to help him as he had helped others. And I will not fail him, she silently vowed.

“You!” She said urgently to Tenichi. “Must come. We can't stay to honour their lives and prepare for their passing as we should. It's too dangerous. You know those city humans will not care to leave witnesses. They will hunt us down and we'll be slaughtered like wild boars. And what use will we be then to the living? So, come on,” she urged while trying to drag him along.

“We need to go... We need your skills and knowledge... and there may be others waiting to be found too.”

## Section Eight

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The same blind instinct that encourages ants to cling to twigs in times of flood pulled at the sinews of his legs and pumped blood into tired muscles. Where hands, many of them invisible, reached out to coax him into stepping shakily, reluctantly and robotically forward.

Through a shared but unspoken fear that their speech would give them away and with hearts too shocked and sad to want to talk anyway, they used the hunter's silent language to guide each other as they quickly descended the plateau and quietly re-entered the outraged forest. In solemn silent line but with loudly chattering inner fears they trekked through the night heading for the once mighty river and their canoes, where each wondered.

Have our canoes been found and holed by the invaders? Or set adrift? Or will they have simply rotted where they lay in neglect? Or will the city men be waiting there for us?

While in their way, they also worried about the river.

Five full turns of the seasons had passed since any in the tribe had tried to fish it. After the river was taken and caught in the snare of a hydro monster its proud silver sparkling water turned a deadly brown, while its musical roar fell to a turgid moan. It became thin in passage and mean with gifts when once it was wide and bountiful and happy always to share. What use were their canoes on those tiny slivers of water that managed to slip untainted between the forest trees and were easily crossed with a single leap? The waters they were forced to fish in for small fry.

Their fears and more were realised as they left the trees to find the once mighty river had shrunk even more since they last saw it. Instead of dipping hot toes in cooling water, their feet sank into the soft but cracking drying mud of its dying bed. What greeted them was a slow-flowing thick brown sludge, spoilt and poisoned by the illegal gold mining upstream.

As dry-mouthed as they were they knew from its look and tang that it was unfit to drink - dead even to crocodiles and snakes. Much like the forest will be to us all soon enough once the invaders have moved through it with their saws and flames, the groups silently shared angst agreed.

But as the dying river funereally passed by, it had just enough life left within it to water one more seed.

Rising suddenly from his stupor Tenichi, while lovingly fingering the simple bracelet Mai had made for him and where the twin to it lay in ashes back at the destroyed village, he spat angrily as his disbelieving eyes took in the river. "The only way we can live as we would want and is our right, is to stop these monsters stealing what is ours!"

His ardent, cutting, words sliced through the air and the strings of the group's sombre moods as sharply as the invader's chainsaws had felled their beloved trees. Where their tormented sting was as hot as the bullets that had slain their families and the flames that lit the night and brought acid tears to their eyes. And had also invoked in the group a sense of the same hopelessness that a trapped animal experiences just before a hunter's spear strikes. But not so Tenichi. Not now that his spirit was fully awakened. His simmering sense of injustice sparked up and came to the fore where it urged his anger to rise with purpose.

"We must stop them!" He urged again, "We must!"

Section Nine

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**S**taring up at the crimson-orange smoke-tainted sky Tenichi's eyes flashed angrily as his mood turned dangerous. "This is our land, not theirs" he declared strongly. "We must take it back! Without our jungle we are nothing. When we lose the forest, we not only lose the fish, the birds and the animals but who we are and we lose our culture. So we must fight back to keep it all!"

Astonished by his new strength the group stared at Tenichi as his renewed spirit appeared to add inches to his height, along with a commanding sharp edge to his usual gentle sing-song voice.

"We have no choice but to fight this curse the invaders lay upon us - their want of violence, death, wickedness and a need to steal. If we are not to live as beggars in their towns, or be taken and used as slaves in their homes and worked until we die, we must learn to do the same to them. We must fight back using their ways."

Then more scornfully, he said. "If we don't, in their wickedness we might even be forced to work the very land they stole from us where our loved ones lay!"

Then to their shock, in an astonishing show of trust he broke the tribe's taboo as he avowed.

"I, Tenichi, will not be the one to till my family's bones!"

“So, I say...,” he then declared determinedly as their uneasy murmurs arose.

“...We will go to those other tribes who suffer like us. We will seek their help and we will fight them. We will take back our lands and revenge our dead. And if we die, we do so as free humans and not as homeless beggars or slaves!”

His speech ended as suddenly as it began. But there was no rousing cheer. Just a chilling predawn breeze fanned by their grim, silent, assenting nods. Not one of the five standing around him disagreed... and better still for the plan Tenichi was forming as he watched the poisonous water slipping by, not one of his new friends even cared to.

With renewed spirit, the women stepped up to clasp his hand to solemnly vow. “I too will break our tribe’s rule. I will gladly give you my name, for I know you will not use it for harm. It is Lysippe and I will join your fight to take back our land and the river, or I’ll die trying.”

Then came Tanai, who was followed by Davi and then Moxi, and finally the youngest of the group, Tenoch... “I am young, but I can throw a true spear,” he declared proudly. “And I will gladly help you bring these monsters down.”

They were only six, but they had the hearts of many, including the invisible people, as they turned to follow the river’s old course.

Then the sun rose and broke through the thinning smoke to hearten their steps while encouraging the wind to turn about and tease their ears with whispers of the dead.

“I can hear the spirits calling us,” Tenichi said, “and I think it’s a good

sign.”

Lysippe was not so sure it was tribal spirits they were hearing. “Quiet, Tenichi,” she whispered while signalling urgently, duck down. Where the group froze fearfully as they wondered, are the invaders that close to us already?

As they listened and waited, the winds in a swirl brought the voice of a new spirit. It was louder, more urgent and as shrill as a child’s voice.

## Section Ten

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"That's no spirit," Lysippe declared as she leapt up and ran into the trees, leaving Tenichi and the others to follow closely behind. A few minutes in and they all clearly heard what Lysippe had shrewdly guessed. A child was calling through a veil of tears.

"Dada, wait for me, Dada, wait..."

But Tenichi could not wait...

He crashed into the forest and did not stop running until Araui his five-year-old son was safely back in his arms.

"The men got Mama and the others," the boy offered quickly. "But they missed me, Dada and I tricked em. I pretended to be dead. And there are more of us, Dada, coming behind." The boy added as Tenichi wiped away both their tears...

Then shyly, as the others gathered about them, Araui boasted. "I told them I could find you and I did... does that make me as good a hunter as you, Dada?"

"No, my son, I think it makes you a better one than me..." Tenichi declared proudly with laughter.

"And one who I will happily follow back to the others."

And soon the six were thirty. Where, collectively, much like

reconstituted Amazonian butterflies, their wings created new winds imbued with the ability to grow into great storms. Which rage even now over the rainforests, desperately trying to beat out the illegal loggers. And the miners. The farmers and those large covetous corporations that queue up daily to take by force, if necessary, that which is not theirs to claim.

Listen hard enough to the voices in the winds and you just might hear Tenichi and his growing band of friends calling. And others from tribes all around the world, pleading for your help to save their homes and the planet from destruction...

All it takes is a cause and one step to add to the winds of change, as raised by the Amazonian butterfly's strong and hopeful beats. Yes..., just one mere step from pairs of resolute feet, that might see the defeat, of that monster's all-consuming greed and deceit...

Then imagine, hearing millions of feet stamping together, on the floors of homes and on the streets, calling to an army of believers, tattooing out the urgent message like so many relentless rallying battlefield drums... Go forth and Defeat them. Defeat them. Defeat them... Pound those feet, raise a deafening sound, and bring the planet's enemies down.

The End

For further reading:

[the amazon village with a message for the world](#)

[Amazonian Warriors at War](#)

[indigenous lands brazil tapajos hydroelectric dam](#)

www.elmundo.es (translate to English)

how a brazilian activist stood up to mining giants