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In the spring of 1997, at age 22, Meslin moved downtown (he jokes of his unsuccessful attempt to get away from Mel Lastman, then mayor of North York) and spent three years working at Doormouse Distribution, a magazine middleman that put small-run titles about alternate health, sexuality and politics (including *Adbusters*) on shelves across Canada.

Despite the egalitarian, decentralized ethos of the MC, a few leaders had emerged, including Meslin. In May of 1998, he organized Toronto's first Reclaim the Streets, an innovative style of pedestrian protest developed by British activists in the mid-'90s. Part parade, part street theatre, the demonstration was designed to challenge the supremacy of the automobile. In all, he organized three protests, but it was the final one, held in May of 2000, that was most memorable. About 250 marchers began at the CN Tower and slowly walked up the centre of York Street, blocking traffic and earning the ire of afternoon commuters. The group ended up across from the stock exchange. A DJ set up turntables, and soon the assembled activists and neo-hippies were dancing in the middle of the street—until the cops confiscated the audio cables and silenced the party.

After doggedly negotiating with local police, Meslin was able to secure an hour of electricity, provided no windows were smashed—this was, after all, only six months after the so-called Battle in Seattle, where protestors had effectively shut down a WTO meeting—and the street was returned to the same condition the activists found it in. Having arrived at a gentleman's agreement, the police officer asked, "Mr. Meslin, are there any other surprises I should know about?"

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"No, this is it," Meslin replied. "We're just hanging out." At which point, a flatbed truck full of sod appeared on a side street. Before Meslin could do or say anything, a bucket brigade formed and a significant portion of York Street was covered in a carpet of grass. The delivery was engineered by the late Tooker Gomberg, a long-time environmental activist and mayoral candidate in 2000. For Meslin, it was a dream event. A large patch of public space was reclaimed without permission: "No one was arrested, no one was hurt, and we danced on grass in front of the stock exchange. The symbolism was really powerful."