

# clamor

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September/October 2004 • Issue 28

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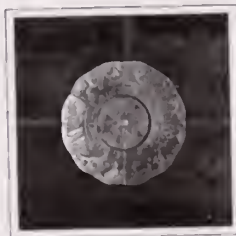
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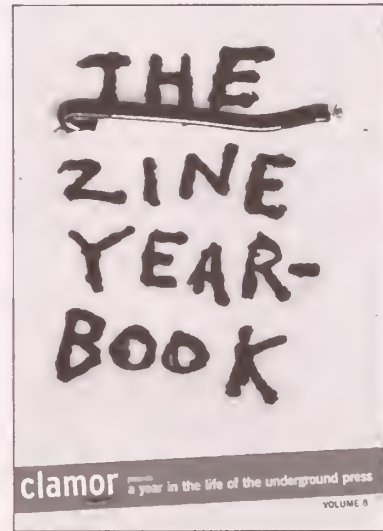
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Rates and deadlines available upon request.

Please call 419-243-4688 or visit  
[www.clamormagazine.org/advertising](http://www.clamormagazine.org/advertising)**PRINTING**Westcan Printing Group  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
Phone: 866-669-9914

**Clamor** is a bi-monthly magazine. Single copies are \$4.50 ppd and 6 issue subscriptions are \$18 ppd in the US (Outside of the US single issues are \$6 and a 6-issue subscription is \$25 in US Funds) Checks may be made payable to Become The Media

**BACK ISSUES**

Available for \$3.50 + postage.

Visit [www.clamormagazine.org](http://www.clamormagazine.org) for more info.**DISTRIBUTION**

**Clamor** is distributed to stores and distributors by Big Top Newsstand Services, 2729 Mission Street Suite 201, San Francisco, CA 94110-3131  
[info@bigtoppubs.com](mailto:info@bigtoppubs.com)

**Clamor** is also available through these fine distribution outlets: AK Press, Armadillo, Desert Moon, Doormouse, Gordon & Gotch, Ingram, IPD, Kent News, Last Gasp, Media Solutions, Milligan, One Source, Small Changes, Stickfigure, Tower, and Ubiquity

**Clamor** (ISSN 15-34-9489) is published six times a year (Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/June, Jul/Aug, Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec) ©2004 in the US by Become The Media Incorporated | PO Box 20128 Toledo, OH 43610 | Phone 419 243 4688.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Clamor Magazine  
PO Box 20128  
Toledo, OH 43610

Periodicals postage paid at Toledo, OH

# from your editors

The other name for this "Stop Bush, Start Democracy" issue was the "Why we're not holding a Kerry fundraiser" issue. There are plenty of ways to fight against Bush and for democracy without writing checks to the Democrats or even voting for them.

We certainly hope so. Because some of us don't have checkbooks. And some of us can't vote, no matter how hard we try. If you're not a citizen, or if you're serving time, or if you're under eighteen, that path to democracy is closed to you. And then there are those of us whose votes just won't count because of the electoral college or a crooked voting machine, or because the Secretary of the State of Florida crossed our names off of a list.

So we've chosen to present people who are fighting for democracy as part of everyday life. This issue is dedicated to everyone who works for what they believe in — for better working conditions, for reproductive freedom, or for preserving the planet — rather than electing someone else to do it for them.

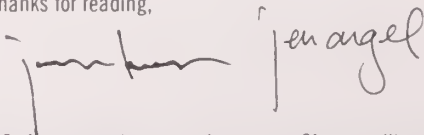
In case you've forgotten why this work is so important, Madeleine Baran and Amanda Luker have brought us a wonderful section of "Bush Briefs" detailing setbacks in reproductive health care, the environment, civil liberties, gay rights, and education — a kind of "employee review" for the president-select. And did you know that Bush has been called the "biggest spender in American History?" Norman Ball tells you all about it on page 31. And how could we forget the PATRIOT Act? Jessamyn West shows us how librarians are leading the fight against one part of that insane legislation (p.64).

We also couldn't resist a look at the creative (and hilarious) anti-Bush economy that has sprung up, from bumper stickers touting "Some People are just Too Stupid to be President" to the infamous Gwbush.org and Whitehouse.org websites (p. 22).

Of course, we're all going to the polls on November 2 — or before, by sending in an absentee ballot — especially those of us who live in "swing states" (we really prefer the name Ohio). In the end, we'll probably vote for that guy that's got a shot at getting more votes than Bush. Until we have a different voting system, like one of the ones Jeff Nall describes on page 61, that's the least we can do. And while Kerry may be rife with his own contradictions, stopping Bush now will go a long way towards weakening the imperial presidency. Let's hope in four years we're not featuring a picture of Kerry on the cover made up of pictures of the soldiers who have died in his war.

And who knows? Maybe our Diebold electronic voting machines will actually count the ballots this time. Maybe this time, thousands of African-Americans won't be disenfranchised. Democracy. That would be cool.

Thanks for reading,



P.S. A warm welcome to the newest Clamor editors, Brian Bergen-Aurand and Eric Zassenhaus, both long-time supporters. They'll be keeping you informed and entertained when it comes to sex & gender and culture.

P.P.S. Every issue, we compile helpful links on our website related to the articles in the magazine. This batch is especially crucial, with plenty of tools for stopping Bush and starting democracy, so check it out. Or, if you prefer personal interaction or movies as your source of inspiration, we'll be on the road non-stop until election day. You'll still have to check the website to get the details: [www.clamormagazine.org](http://www.clamormagazine.org)

## Mission Statement

*Clamor's* mission is to provide a media outlet that reflects the reality of alternative politics and culture in a format that is accessible to people from a variety of backgrounds. *Clamor* exists to fill the voids left by mainstream media. We recognize and celebrate the fact that each of us can and should participate in media, politics, and culture. We publish writing and art that exemplify the value we place on autonomy, creativity, exploration, and cooperation. *Clamor* is an advocate of progressive social change through active creation of political and cultural alternatives.



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## VEGANS: A PERSECUTED PEOPLE?

I was flipping through Issue 26 today, stopping to read the articles that piqued my interest. When I came to page 55, and I read the first few sentences, I couldn't help but roll my eyes and groan, "Here we go again," I thought.

I constantly find it amazing how difficult it is to get an honest and fair discussion of veganism, even in alternative media (with few notable exceptions). The first thing that jumped out at me as I prepared myself for the inevitable "I'm a vegan, BUT..." argument that I've gotten so bored of hearing, was that the author didn't mention compassion for animals as any of her reasons for being vegan. Her focus was entirely on the environmental impacts of meat-eating, and the torture and suffering of animals was not even mentioned.

You see, most vegans are vegan because they identify with the suffering of animals just like they identify with the suffering of humans. When I see an animal suffer, I ask myself, "How is that pain any less than my pain?" There is no rational argument that can make the claim that animal suffering is less important than human suffering - an animal feels pain, both physical and emotional, just as we do - and that is why we refuse to use animal products, not because we're concerned about the environment and then just apply a label on ourselves to make it easier (although most of us are concerned about the environment, the environmental benefits of our vegan lifestyle is secondary to the primary cause of simply not wanting to hurt fellow beings).

The Nazis felt like the suffering of the Jews was not as important as the suffering of non-Jews, and they felt like the cause of medical research was a good cause, so they used Jews in medical research and made advances, important advances. Did the ends justify the means then?

I don't think so, nor do I think the ends justify the means now.

Sincerely,  
Brian in Chicagoland

## ON ADOPTION: DON'T SPEAK FOR ME

Reading "They Won't Be There For You" (Jul/Aug 2004) raised some questions in my mind. Questions like "Well, gee I'm adopted, should I begin to worry and see it as this horrible trauma or just keep on thinking my life is pretty good and be very grateful to have two

loving people as my non-biological parents?" It was a well written and thoughtful article and thank you to Jessica DelBalzo for writing it. However I must stick up for myself and my adoptive parents here. They were always honest with me about my adoption, there was never shame or attempts to pass me off as their "real" baby. My birthparents were young college students, my real parents (the adoptive ones) were infertile and had been seeking to adopt for years. Back then at least it was quite difficult to adopt, perhaps now it has become a huge heartless money making machine. I was set up with my folks and let me tell you, the day they brought me home was one of the happiest days of their lives. The look of joy on my parent's face in the photos of my first day HOME is beautiful. I'm sure it was difficult for my birth mother to make the decision but I don't hold it against her, in fact I am thankful. Her decision allowed me to meet two of the nicest people in the world. But I guess Mr. Soll, the counselor from the article, would write off my strong feelings as nothing more than denial. How insulting.

Melita Curphy  
San Antonio, TX

## ON ADOPTION: THANKS FOR SHARING A FAMILIAR PERSPECTIVE

I am so excited to see Jess DelBalzo's point of view expressed in your magazine ("They Won't Be There For You," Jul/Aug 2004). As a reunited adoptee who spent over 34 years separated from my family, and as a mother of two children, due with our third child in early November, I cannot tell you how happy I am that another mother turns off the television when one of those happy adoption stories, usually sans natural mother, appears on the screen. Like DelBalzo, I am teaching my children that taking other people's children via adoption is wrong. I am also teaching them that children should stay with their natural mothers, the place that is best for them.

What a shame that Americans' desire for a child in every house has become so insatiable that sitcoms now separate children from their mothers so that the main characters can pretend to be parents. For this reason, I turned off the last episode of "Sex and the City" before it ended and I did not watch the last episode of "Friends." A "Friends" commercial that I saw on New Year's Eve sickened me so much that I

wrote an article and sent it to the Los Angeles Times. As with most articles and letters that are critical of adoption, it was not published.

Tricia Shore,  
Founder, Adoption Truth  
Van Nuys, CA

## ON ADOPTION: DELBALZO'S RIGHT

I wanted to thank you for having an article in your magazine that speaks out about the injustices of adoption ("They Won't Be There For You," Jul/Aug 2004). The author wrote about the depiction on television and in advertisements how adoption is glamorized. It seems to be a mere exchange of goods. Actually there is an exchange even if only the baby is visible. The mother exchanges her soul for strangers' happiness and ability to live a lie.

I was like Ms. DelBalzo describes in her article, without any support. I wish I could tell the world how the lawyer, doctor, and nurses treated me. In 1979 I thought I deserved to be treated in such an inhumane way. The truth of the matter is that I had no idea of what was in store for me. I told the attorney "No" and he had me drugged at the hospital for the entire time I was there. I do not recall signing the adoption papers and I was only 17. I was alone during the birth and until the papers were brought in to be signed. I wasn't allowed to speak to anyone. I have no copies of the papers or of my baby's birth certificate. They made it appear as though nothing had happened. I have no proof that my baby was born or ever existed.

Adoption has had a profound affect on her, me, my husband, and my subsequent children.

I recently met my daughter after 24 years of separation. I was never allowed to see or hold her. I think my story is very common place. Hopefully, with more articles like this, more people will be educated and one day babies won't be raped from their mommies womb.

Pamela Patterson Dupré  
Lake Charles, LA

# Classifieds

The revolution won't be televised, but you can read about it. **Books for a better world**, by Mike Palacek, former federal prisoner, congressional candidate, newspaper reporter. Please visit: [iowapeace.com](http://iowapeace.com).

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Don't you hate it when you're trying to talk to someone and they just keep staring at your bookshelf?

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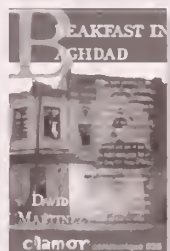
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# LOOKIN' FOR WORK

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# 11 things Bush might want to leave off his resume next year.

## Iraq and the War on Terror

Perhaps all wars are based on lies and misunderstanding, but few have been more blatantly so than this one.

Bush's reasons for war have been proven false, as no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq and any connection between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda was dismissed by the 9/11 commission. Colin Powell testified before the U.N. Security Council about the need for preemptive war in Iraq using information plagiarized from a graduate student thesis.

Continued U.S. involvement means ever-increasing casualties, and withdrawal has very real possibilities of erupting into a civil war between Shiite and Sunni factions, perhaps even sparking much larger regional conflict in the Middle East.

According to Antiwar.com, military reports indicate that the Iraqi war and post-war occupation has killed 887 American troops and injured 5,104 as of mid July. It's estimated that between 4,900 to 6,400 Iraqi military personnel and 11,000 to 13,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed since the war began. These numbers don't include those deeply traumatized by serving in such a dangerous war or tortured and shamed in wartime prisons like Abu Ghraib.

According to Congressional appropriations, the Iraq war and occupation will cost the United States from \$135 to \$166 billion. But only a fraction of this money is going to active military. In fact, a couple months into the war Bush cut "imminent danger" pay given to Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force personnel in combat zones from \$225 to \$150 a month. Meanwhile, the administration gave away several billion dollars worth of public funds to Halliburton in the famous no-bid contract to rebuild Iraq.

- Ben Bush and Mark Osmond

## Separation of Church and State

Bush's first executive order as president created the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. The ultimate goal of the office is to make federal funding available to religious groups that provide social services.

Currently, religious groups can receive federal funding if they abide by the same rules — including civil rights laws — that apply to everybody else. However, Bush is pushing legislation that would allow religious organizations that discriminate in their hiring practices to receive federal grant money.

If the legislation goes through Congress, religious groups could hire and fire employees based on church affiliation or sexual orientation and receive millions of dollars in federal money at the same time. The ACLU sued the Salvation Army for this very thing in February 2004. If Bush's legislation were imposed, the Salvation Army's conduct would be completely legal.

Perhaps the eeriest display of Bush's religious vision is found in his speeches concerning the "war on terror," which are often laced with Manichaeian overtones that divide reality into two categories — absolute good and absolute evil.

According to Bush, who named Christ as his favorite political philosopher, the United States has been called to conquer this evil. Referring to the successes of America's war on terror in a September 2002 speech, Bush paraphrased the Gospel of John, "And the light has shone in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it."

- Mark Osmond

## Civil Liberties

Civil liberties will likely be a huge part of Bush's legacy. The Patriot Act, passed just six weeks after Sept. 11, allows police to check out what you read and search your house without telling you, redefines protest as "domestic terrorism," and permits the FBI to do away with probable cause. The once-defeated Patriot II (the Domestic Security Enhancement Act) is currently being tacked piecemeal onto other bills in Congress.

To the wider world, the government's apparent willingness to hold both visitors and citizens as enemy combatants has given the United States a black eye, while the US-VISIT program's appetite for tourists' fingerprints promises to reduce the flow of visitors when it goes into effect at the end of 2005. By the end of next year, American passports could

also include a Radio Frequency Identification chip, which would broadcast personal information to anyone nearby with the ability to receive it. As the U.K.'s *The Register* notes, such chips could inadvertently put people at risk by drawing attention to them as Americans or Europeans.

Closer to home, three New York artists, Steve Kurts, Beatriz da Costa and, Steve Barnes have been subpoenaed under the Patriot Act for an art project misunderstood as a biological weapons lab; New York City has lifted restrictions, known as the Handschu agreement, on spying on activists; and the Secret Service intends to shut down the entire New York City subway when Bush accepts the Republican nomination this fall.

Don't travel. Don't protest. Stay at home. Shop if you're afraid.

- Sarah Groff-Palermo

## Education

In 2000, Bush flaunted the "Texas Miracle," claiming that Texas schools had lowered dropout rates and narrowed achievement gaps on tests. Then we found out schools across Houston were fudging numbers. One school reported a 0.3 percent dropout rate, when closer to half the student body never received diplomas. Bush appointed Rod Paige, superintendent in Houston during the cover-up, Secretary of Education.

In January 2002, Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act, setting standards for K-12 schools nationally by requiring all subgroups — racial, ethnic, economic — in every school to reach proficiency in core areas. But NCLB offers no additional funding to meet these requirements and allows states to set their own proficiency standards. Under-performing and non-compliant schools lose federal funds, encouraging the widespread practice of "teaching the test." In an effort to protect federal funding, Texas and Michigan have lowered their standards.

Opponents of NCLB include teachers, administrators, students, parents, and legislatures. Bush has turned a deaf ear to the opposition, and Paige has referred to opponents as a "coalition of the whining," and identified the National Education Association, the

nation's largest organization of teachers, as a "terrorist organization."

Further, as reductions in college and university budgets have made 35 percent increases in tuition the norm, low-income students find it harder to pay for college. Yet Bush's 2005 budget proposal refuses to raise the maximum Pell Grant award, slashes nearly \$100 million from the Federal Perkins Loan Program, and calls for the elimination of LEAP, a need-based education grant program.

- William Wroblewski

## Environment

Bush's Energy Policy Act of 2003 calls for cutbacks in renewable energy funding and an increase in fossil fuel consumption. Vice President Dick Cheney and his Energy Task Force met with 39 oil lobbyists and executives while writing the legislation.

President Bush then overturned a Clinton-era federal ruling that had banned hilltop strip mining. Next, the Bush administration pandered to corporate timber barons and authored a new forest plan, called "The Healthy Forests Initiative," mirrored after Clinton-era legislation and language Democratic Senator Tom Daschle slipped into another environmental bill in the summer of 2002. Daschle's legal jargon, backed by the Sierra Club and other "green" titans, allowed logging on American Indian holy land in South Dakota.

Bush's own forest plan, supported by the majority of Democrats in the Senate, authorized over \$760 million dollars allegedly to prevent wild fires — by cutting down over 2.5 million acres of federal forestland by 2012.

Shortly following the forest debacle, Bush began pushing his "Clean Skies" initiative, which calls for increasing the amount of harsh chemicals allowed to be legally released by industrial polluters. The legislation also aims to cut what the government calls "carbon intensity," which is a measure of carbon pollution, by measuring environmental destruction by calculating economic losses to major industries, instead of looking at scientific data. The proposed Republican 2005

budget calls for almost \$2 billion in cuts for environmental protection.

- Josh Frank

## Jobs & Health Care

Under the Bush administration, the economy has certainly taken a turn for the worst. What exactly is the damage, you ask? For starters, the nation has lost 1.7 million jobs over the past two years after adding 5 million jobs in 1999 and 2000. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, there are at least 2.5 job seekers for every job opening. Unemployment is at an eight-year high and growing — ten million unemployed workers want jobs but cannot find them. More than 4 million work only part-time because they cannot get full-time jobs. The country is experiencing the worst bout of unemployment since the Great Depression.

At the same time, workers who still have health insurance are paying substantially more for it. Workers' premium payments rose 27 percent for single coverage and 16 percent for family coverage in 2002 and are continuing to increase. According to the Census Bureau, the number of uninsured rose to over 43.6 million in 2001. Many employers are discontinuing current health care and retirement benefits to their employees. Most Americans without insurance — 80 percent — are in working families.

Frighteningly, Bush has no new jobs programs in his budget. His budget provides no new incentives for employers to pay their workers a living wage

to provide them with a health plan or a pension. Bush also opposes raising the minimum wage. Bush has provided companies with tax breaks for investment in technology while opposing tax breaks for hiring new workers. Instead, he is asking for more cuts for the wealthy, and asking congress to make them permanent.

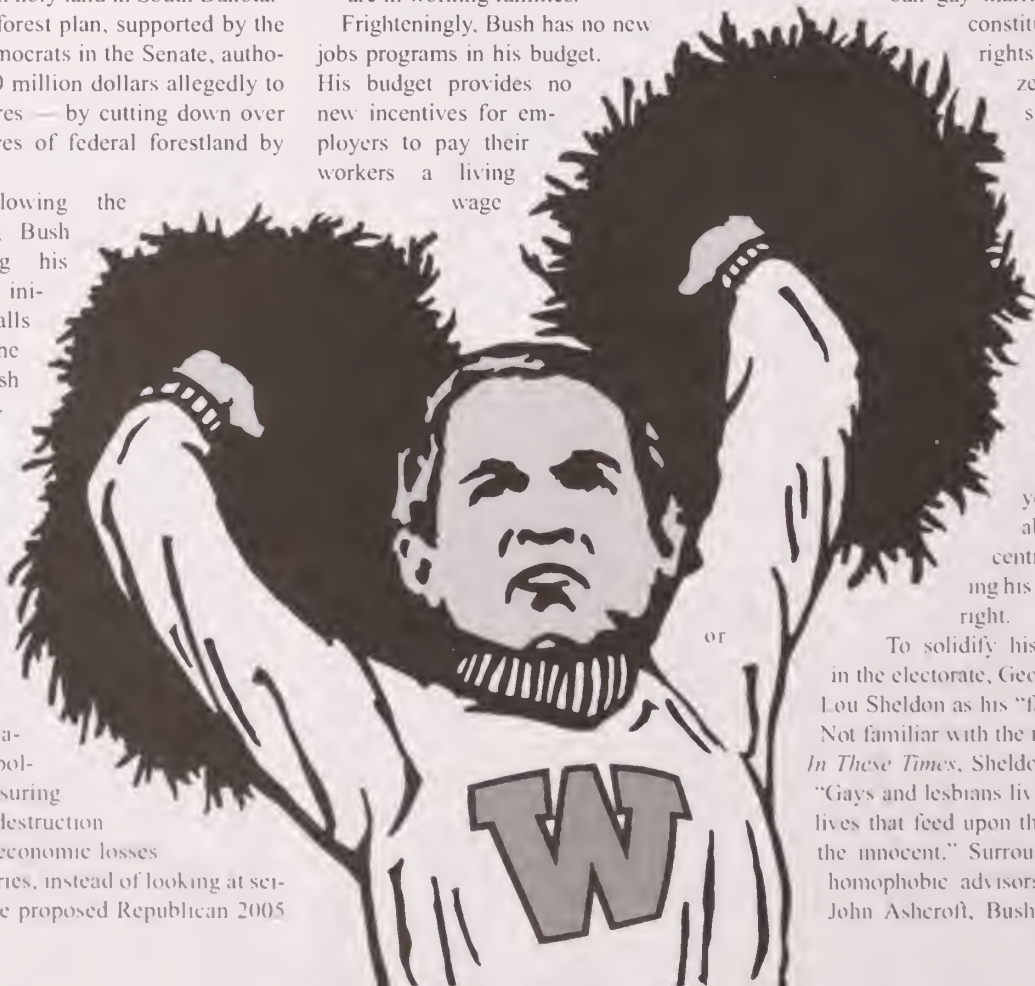
- Alison Parker

## LGBTQ Community

One of Bush's first actions as president was to appoint an openly gay director of the National AIDS Policy Office. Elected as a centrist, Bush's middle-road stance on LGBTQ issues quickly migrated to the right. In June, Bush refused to observe Clinton's federally designated Gay and Lesbian Pride Month, citing his belief that people's sexual orientation should not be politicized. Attorney General John Ashcroft subsequently attempted to shut down the Department of Justice employee gay pride observance every year since, marking the first time any federal agency has banned a gay pride celebration since they began celebrating it in the mid '90s.

An entourage of "firsts" follows the tracks of the Bush administration. When gay marriage burst onto the national agenda earlier this year, Bush rallied for an amendment to ban gay marriages, which would constitutionally limit the rights of American citizens for the first time since prohibition in the 1920s. Queers who remembered hearing the Bush of 2000 say, "The state can do what they want" with respect to gay marriage are left wondering what happened to that autonomy. In the polarized election year climate, Bush, abandoned by many centrists, is now situating his base in the religious right.

To solidify his fundamental base in the electorate, George Bush appointed Lou Sheldon as his "faith-based advisor." Not familiar with the name? According to *In These Times*, Sheldon publicly boasted, "Gays and lesbians live perverted, twisted lives that feed upon the unsuspecting and the innocent." Surrounding himself with homophobic advisors like Sheldon and John Ashcroft, Bush has spun 180 de-



grees by politicizing gender orientation only four years after asserting his neutrality.

- Steven Kelly

## Reproductive Rights

Bush's views on reproductive rights were never clearer than on the 29th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, which he declared "National Sanctity of Human Life Day." One of his first acts in office was to reinstate the global gag rule, blocking U.S. Agency for International Development funds from going to any overseas family planning organizations that mention abortion as an option. In August 2003, Bush extended the gag rule to programs funded by the State Department as well.

For the 2002 budget, Bush suggested eliminating contraceptive coverage for federal employees, though his suggestion was not followed. Then in October 2002, the Bush administration made fetuses — but not pregnant women — eligible for health coverage under the State Children's Health Insurance Program. The same month, the administration told the Advisory Committee on Human Research Protection to start considering the safety of embryos as well as living human research volunteers.

In October 2003, Salon.com reported that sex-education organizations critical of the Bush administration's "abstinence only" philosophy have been subject to repeated government audits — as many as three investigations in one year. On Nov. 5, Bush signed the Partial Birth Abortion Ban and handed the job of enforcement to the Department of Justice's civil rights division.

On April 1, 2004, Bush signed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, granting legal personhood to a fetus or embryo that is killed or injured in a federal crime. Women's rights advocates also say it was Bush administration pressure that led to the Federal Drug Administration's recent refusal to let people obtain the morning-after pill without a prescription.

- Katherine Glover

## Immigration

Since September 11, being an immigrant in the United States has gotten progressively more difficult.

Crackdowns based on minor student visa violations, old criminal convictions, and even failing to report a new address immediately have led to thousands of deportations. Some immigrants have been deported back to their original country without even getting to say goodbye to family members. Most are held without bail until a hearing determines their outcome.

The structure of immigration policing has

also changed. The old duties of the INS are now being handled by the Department of Homeland Security, a clear signal that immigration is now treated as a threat to the nation's safety.

Crossing into the United States has also become more difficult. Under the Bush administration, borders between the United States and Mexico have been saturated with high-tech security devices including ground sensors and infrared night scope cameras.

In January, Bush proposed the Temporary Worker Program, allowing undocumented workers to legally join a temporary labor program for a limited period of time. Employers have to first show that they cannot find U.S. workers to fill the jobs. Both conservatives and leftists criticized the plan — conservatives because it legalizes the status of some immigrants, and leftists because it seems more geared to providing workers for the employer than providing equal rights for immigrants.

And last year, Congress signed the Naturalization and Family Protection for Military Members Act, which promises speedy citizenship — if you join the military.

- Matt Morello

## Welfare

Bush's welfare cutbacks stem from a bipartisan consensus between the Republicans and Democrats in favor of cutting the social safety net and aggressively promoting the interests of corporate America. In 1996, Clinton signed a welfare reform bill that drastically slashed federal funds for welfare and made many remaining funds into block grants to individual states (who were encouraged to make further cuts).

Under the welfare-to-workfare model, assistance recipients were forced to work 30 hours a week, providing non-union, low-wage labor for private corporations, with much of the cost picked up by the government.

Bush has not imposed new cruelties as much as he has super-sized Clinton's (although to appease his fundamentalist base, he has added some distinctively Republican twists like compulsory abstinence education programs for poor people). For instance, he advocates cutting federal money for welfare even further and turning the Children's Health Insurance Plan and Section 8 Housing into state block grants.

Without providing new money for job training (and while submitting a budget that would cut child care for 230,000 poor children over the next five years), Bush increased mandatory workfare to 40 hours a week, and demanded that states bring ever more welfare recipients into the workfare plan. This would enlarge the cheap, state-

subsidized army of workers that the welfare system now feeds corporate America, while endangering children's lives by taking away their childcare and putting their parent or caregiver on a bus to go earn their welfare check working in a mall.

- Jim Straub

## Crime

Although Bush has personal knowledge of the criminal justice system, he has not spent much time focusing on domestic crime during his first term.

Bush cut funding for state and local law enforcement, forcing many police departments to scale back their efforts. Meanwhile, serious crimes rose by 2.3 percent, the first increase in a decade. Murders are up 4 percent and motor vehicle thefts are up 7.4 percent.

Not surprisingly, Bush consistently opposes safety devices on all new guns as well as mandatory gun safety courses and licenses before a gun purchase. He supports the death penalty and strongly opposes a national review, like the statewide survey conducted in Illinois, to determine if the death penalty is racially or otherwise biased.

In 2001, Bush-appointed Attorney General John Ashcroft issued new guidelines for seeking the death penalty. Now U.S. attorneys are instructed to consider whether the "appropriate punishment upon conviction" for an offense is available within the state. If a defendant cannot receive a death sentence under state laws, the federal government can seek jurisdiction to prosecute a crime as a capital case.

On the international scene, the Bush administration continues to push for an exemption from the International Criminal Court while internal memos leaked by *The Washington Post* indicate that Bush administration officials willfully violated the Geneva Convention and openly discussed torture methods. At the bottom of one document that approved subjecting detainees to prolonged periods of standing as part of the interrogation process, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld scrawled, "However, I stand for 8-10 hours a day. Why is standing limited to four hours?"

- Madeleine Baran

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# Virtual Voting Worldwide

New Web Sites Will Allow the World to "Vote" in November

Imagine if Iraqis had the chance this November to say, "We don't like what George Bush has done to this country. Let's vote him out of office." If Haitians, Colombians, Afghans, Palestinians, and working people from all over the world had the chance to cast a ballot and get rid of administrations that had disenfranchised them, what would the world look like?

Although it sounds like the plot of a feel-good utopian novel, some activists outside the United States have been experimenting with that very idea — creating web sites that will allow the entire world (or at least everyone with access to the Internet) to "vote" in the upcoming U.S. presidential election.

Their interesting initiatives are, of course, symbolic, aiming to make a statement rather than actually extend franchise rights to the world's population. But they share a common analysis that the U.S. government should somehow be accountable to the people around the world who are affected by its policies.

The organizers also hope that they can influence the political debate in the months leading up to the election and build links between U.S. citizens and the rest of the world.

Satya Sagar, a journalist and writer in Thailand who has written about the issue of international voting, told me in an email that the most fundamental tenets of democracy make some kind of international accountability necessary in the current political climate.

"For quite some time now, who ... becomes the U.S. president has had a serious impact on the rest of the globe in political, economic, and even cultural terms," he said. "And if the U.S. elections have such a deep impact on my life, I have the basic democratic right to cast at least a simple vote in the process."

Holland-based activist Wiebe de Jager is the creator of The World Votes, an international Internet voting web site. He seemed to share Sagar's outlook. "Formally, democracy is bound to national borders," he said via email. "With The World Votes, we wanted to exceed the

by Pranjal Tiwari

illustration Amy DeVoogd

[www.devoogd.com](http://www.devoogd.com)

borders of the nation state. Since U.S. foreign policies affect people from all over the world, we thought that it is relevant to let the world have a say in the U.S. presidential election."

To this end, The World Votes is holding a "shadow election" at the same time as the U.S. presidential election. People from anywhere in the world can register on the web site by entering their email address and nationality. Shortly before the actual November elections, the web site will send out an invitation to registrants to vote in its own poll, the results of which will be "symbolically offered to U.S. citizens," de Jager said.

So far, the response has been encouraging. The web site currently has 8,000 subscribers.

The World Peace Society of Australia is organizing a similar site, called "A U.S. Election for the Rest of the World." Sunirmalya Symons, one of the group's organizers, said that his group's decision to hold an election was sparked by a belief that the people of the world, including the American people, were not represented by the actions of the current U.S. government.

The Australia-based election is also open to people from around the world, and 6,000 people from 85 countries had voted as of June 2. Current polls show Ralph Nader sweeping the vote with 54 percent, followed by John Kerry and Dennis Kucinich with George W. Bush trailing at just over 4 percent. Voters can cast their ballot for one of the actual candidates in the race, but there is also an Alternative U.S. Election with choices such as Oprah Winfrey, Michael Moore, and the Dixie Chicks.

"We thought if we could get a message to the American people about how strongly the rest of the world felt about George W. Bush, they might look again at their president," Symons explained via email.

Another site, Voices '04, was created after the massive anti-war protests of February 2003 out of anger over U.S. foreign policy.

"The last four years, not to mention the last century, have demonstrated that U.S. policies affect the entire world in a significant way," said the web site's founder, Peter Dietz.

"We feel that it is a natural response to the current situation to cover U.S. politics without regard to the international border that separates the U.S. from the rest of the world," he added.

Dietz opted for a different approach than the virtual election format. Voices '04 compiles letters from around the world. Anyone

in any country is invited to send a letter, with letters from outside the U.S. titled "Dear America" and letters from Americans titled "Dear World." The web site has received letters from Canada, Mexico, Germany, the U.K., France, Australia, China, Austria, and Nigeria, along with several letters from the U.S.

In his letter, Abimbola Oyesanya from Nigeria wonders, "Where would I begin on the Presidency of George Bush? For me it is an act of irresponsibility by citizens of U.S. to vote a person of this character into the White House. From domestic and foreign issues that affect us all, this guy has turned the whole world upside down. It is unfortunate that the whole world cannot vote, [but] Bush's negative and inhuman policies have impacted all world populations."

Martin Elsner from Germany asks people in the U.S. to "step into the shoes of the people in South America, Vietnam, or even the Middle East who are not necessarily born as enemies of the U.S.A. Instead they are truly afraid of the U.S.A. because they have experienced how their families were persecuted, how their human rights were denied, how they were kept in poverty, etc. ... Ask yourself: would you trust such a country?"

Dietz got the idea for Voices '04 from the C. Wright Mills novel *Listen Yankee*, composed of fictitious letters from Cubans to Americans during the Cuban Revolution. "I decided to combine the personal quality of letter-writing with the massive scale of worldwide protest," he said.

Dietz added that, although it sounds cliché, he hopes the web site will establish open lines of communication between ordinary people in the U.S. and other parts of the world. "If you think about it, all efforts to expand suffrage or the scope of news coverage have begun as attempts to re-define the means of communication," he said. "The structures of power, and the status quo politics of any period, are direct responses to who is able to communicate to who, and to what end." He added that the popularity of these voting web sites indicates that "communication must be global first and national second."

Though its methods are different, the overall aim of Voices Without Votes is similar to The World Votes and the efforts of the

World Peace Society. All three initiatives see communication as the bottom line.

"A real [world] vote is not necessary," Symons said. "Americans for the next 100 years will elect their own president ... [but] we feel that more and more people from around the world need to realize that we are all a part of one world, that each of us need to realize our responsibilities not only to our country but also to the world."

De Jager agreed. "The most important aspect is that the initiative generates interesting debates between citizens worldwide, and that is, in our opinion, the most important result," he said. "I think the Americans should see The World Votes as a unique opportunity to see what world citizens think of U.S. foreign policy."

So, in between Fox's saturation coverage of the November two-horse circus, watch out for the results of the Internet's various virtual elections. Or better yet, register on

**It is unfortunate that the whole world cannot vote, [but] Bush's negative and inhuman policies have impacted all world populations.**



the web sites, cast a vote, and — more importantly — communicate with the people of the world. Because, perhaps ironically, the point these web sites seem to make is that democracy cannot be limited to the casting of a vote every four years. In the course of our discussion, de Jager reminded me of Abbie Hoffman's perceptive point that "Democracy is not something you believe in or a place to hang your hat. It's something you do." ☆

**World Peace Society of Australia's U.S. Election for the Rest of the World:**  
<http://worldpeace.org.au/virtualElection.asp>

**The World Votes:** [www.theworldvotes.org](http://www.theworldvotes.org)

**Voices Without Votes:** [www.voices04.org](http://www.voices04.org)

*Pranjal Tiwari writes non-fiction to escape from reality. He would like to hear from you at [pranjal\\_tiwari@yahoo.com](mailto:pranjal_tiwari@yahoo.com) but could not part with that ring for less than forty thousand of your earth dollars.*

# Oil-Slick Jim Moves In



Anthony Garner • www.atomweb.net/ant.html

## An Excerpt from the Updated Edition of *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy* by Greg Palast

introduction by Madeleine Baran

If the editors in America's newsrooms really valued investigative reporting, they would be bending over backwards trying to recruit the reporter who broke meticulously researched stories about how President Bush stole the 2000 election, how Bush stopped the FBI investigation into Saudi Arabia's funding of terrorist groups, and how voters continue to be disenfranchised in Florida and elsewhere. Instead, Greg Palast, who has been called the world's greatest investigative reporter, had to move to England to find recognition. He reports regularly for BBC's *Newsnight*, and has also written for *The Washington Post*, *Harper's*, and *The Nation*.

"I am the definition of mainstream in Europe," he said in a recent interview with *Clamor*. "And here I'm some kind of cult figure."

Few things seem to frustrate Palast more than poor reporting. His tone turns to disgust and anger when he talks about a note he received from a CNN reporter concerning his investigation of voter disenfranchisement in Florida. The note said, "I've been hear in the Justice Department for years and no one has taken action against the officials in Florida. If there was something wrong, they would have taken action."

"That's the problem," Palast said. "American reporters are embedded — not just in Iraq, but in the White House, the Justice Department. They're not reporting anymore. They're repeating."

An updated edition of Palast's *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy* hit stores in April. The book details everything from the election fraud in Florida to the disturbing story of how the government approved bovine-growth hormones to the reasons behind Enron's demise.

Palast hopes the new edition will help defeat Bush in the November election. "The idea is to get people doing two things," he said. "One is to get them ripped up and angry, and second is to give them the information so they'll have bullets for their guns."

I avoid *The New York Times* but lately, it's become a compulsion, though only for the new daily column titled, "Names of the Dead." Today's listing: "DERVISHI, Ervin, 21, Pfc, Army. Fort Worth."

I'm not one of those cynical people who thought Bush sent us into to Iraq for the oil. To me, Saddam Hussein was always a Kurd-killing cockroach with a Hitlerian mustache. I never liked the guy — not even when he worked for George Bush Sr.

It's worth going over the work the Butcher of Baghdad did for his Texas patrons when he was *their* butcher:

**1979:** Seizes power with U.S. approval; moves allegiance from Soviets to U.S. in Cold War.

**1980:** Invades Iran, then the "Unicycle of Evil," with U.S. encouragement and arms. (In fairness, credit here goes to Nobel Peace Laureate, James Carter.)

**1982:** Bush-Reagan regime removes Saddam's regime from official U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism.

**1983:** Saddam hosts Donald Rumsfeld in Baghdad. Agrees to "go steady" with U.S. corporate suppliers.

**1984:** U.S. Commerce Department issues license for export of aflatoxin to Iraq useable in biological weapons.

**1988:** Kurds in Halabja, Iraq, gassed.

**1987-88:** U.S. warships destroy Iranian oil platforms in Gulf and break Iranian blockade of Iraq shipping lanes, tipping war advantage back to Saddam.

**1990:** Invades Kuwait with U.S. permission.

*U.S. permission?* On July 25, 1990, the dashing dictator met in Baghdad with U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie. When Saddam asked Glaspie if the United States would object to an attack on Kuwait over the small emirate's theft of Iraqi oil, America's Ambassador told him, "We have no opinion... Secretary [of State James] Baker has directed me to emphasize the instruction ... that Kuwait is not associated with America." Saddam taped her.

Glaspie, in 1991 Congressional testimony, did not deny the authenticity of the recording which diplomats worldwide took as a Bush Sr's OK to an Iraqi invasion.

So where is Secretary Baker today? On the lam, hiding in deserved shame? Doing penance by nursing the victims of Gulf War Syndrome? No, Mr. Baker is a successful lawyer, founder of Baker Botts of Houston, Riyadh, Kazakhstan. Among his glinting client roster, Exxon-Mobil oil and the defense minister of Saudi Arabia. Baker's firm is protecting the Saudi royal from a lawsuit by the families of the victims of September 11 over evidence suggesting that Saudi money ended up in the pockets of the terrorists.

And Baker has just opened a new office ... at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. This is White House first: the first time a lobbyist for the oil industry will have a desk right next to the President's. Baker's job, to "restructure" Iraq's debt. How lucky for his clients in Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom claims \$30.7 billion due from

Iraq. Apparently this includes their \$7 billion send to Saddam to fund his bomb [see Chapter 2].

If you remember, Henry Kissinger ran away from appointment to the September 11 Commission with his consulting firm tucked between his legs after the U.S. Senate demanded he reveal his client list. In the case of Jim Baker, our elected Congress will had no chance to ask him who is paying his firm nor even require him to get off conflicting payrolls.

To get around the wee issue of conflicts galore, the White House crafted a neat little subterfuge. The official press release says the President has not appointed Mr. Baker. Rather Mr. Bush is "responding to a request from the Iraqi Governing Council." That is, Bush is acting on the authority of the puppet government he imposed on Iraqis at gunpoint.

Why is our President so concerned with the wishes of Mr. Baker's clientele? What does Bush owe Baker? It was Baker, as consigliere to the Bush family, who came up with the strategy of maneuvering the 2000 Florida vote count into a Supreme Court packed with politicians.

Over the years, Jim Baker has taken responsibility for putting bread on the Bush family table. As Senior Counsel to Carlyle, the arms-dealing investment group, Baker arranged for the firm to hire *both* President Bush 41 after he was booted from the White House and President Bush 43 while his daddy was still in office.

We know why Jim Baker is in the White House. But what was Private Dervishi doing in harm's way in Iraq? Saddam was already in the slammer and Iraq "liberated" nearly a year.

The answer came to me in a confidential document that oozed out of Foggy Bottom, one hundred pages from the State Departments secret "Iraq Strategy." It's all about the "post-conflict" economy of Iraq written well *before* American was told we would have a conflict there.

There's nothing in the "Iraq Strategy" about democracy or voting. But there's plenty of detail about creating a free-market Disneyland in Mesopotamia, with "all" state assets — and that's just about everything in that nation — to be sold off to corporate powers. The Bush team secret program ordered "asset sales, concessions, leases and management contracts, especially those in the oil and supporting industries."

The "Strategy" lays out a detailed 270-day schedule for the asset grab. And that's why PFC Dervishi was kept there: to prevent or forestall elections. Because no democratically elected government of Iraq could ever sell off its oil. Democracy would have to wait, at the point of a gun, for the "assets sales, concessions, leases" to Bush's corporate buck-buddies.

There you have it. The secret "Strategy" tells us that, if Bush didn't go into Iraq for the oil, *he sure as hell ain't leaving without it.* ☆



## Exist

Director Esther Bell

Starring Nic Mevoli and Ben Bartlett

[www.existfilm.com](http://www.existfilm.com)

Top pulls his hood over his head and pedals down another Philadelphia side street. Maybe the next person will help him find Jake. Maybe the next encounter will give him a clue. Instead, Top's frustration grows as every lead becomes someone else who cannot help him. The organizer is preparing a direct action; the filmmaker is cloistered in his basement trying to create a message everyone can understand; the gallery owner is overwhelmed by her impending prisoner art opening. Still, with each meeting Top struggles to explain himself and to help others see what's at risk. If only he could find the courage and words to spell it out. If only they knew how to help.

This is a sequence from *Exist*, the second film from writer and director Esther Bell, founder of the Unamerican Film Festival. The film made its North American premiere at this summer's Allied Media Conference in Bowling Green, Ohio. The follow up to Bell's award-winning, semi-autobiographical *Godass* (2001), *Exist* is currently making a festival tour.

*Exist* is the character-centered story of a group of squatter/activists, told from the inside out. The main characters are played by activists (Bell calls them "actorvists.") who bring a complex sensibility and realism to the film. Through Top's search, we discover not a world of flat types who are too self-absorbed to help anyone else, but people who simply do not know all the answers. We find them working on important projects that sometimes bring them together, but too often leave them isolated. When one character says, "You can't help me. And I can't help you," he is not defeated, but yearning for a day when the opposite might be true. This skeptical optimism is at the center of the film.

In a recent article from *Kitchen Sink* discussing Hollywood movies about activists, Jen Burke Anderson writes, "What I don't recognize is a world where every progressive is a no-fun prig, and every no-fun prig is a progressive. Conventional wisdom has long been that Hollywood is unapologetically liberal. But if that's so, where in the movies are the progressives I know—funny, sexy, smart, open-minded and most of all, nice?"

They're in *Exist*. Here, the characters are not idealized heroes working in utopia. They are suspicious, stubborn, selfish, jealous, compassionate, driven, intelligent, funny, sexy, and, in the end, willing to make sacrifices for long-term goals. This is the activist community I know — not always straight edged or above the fray, but aware of the power and wonder of collaboration, community, and love. This complex articulation of one activist community is the vitality behind *Exist*.

This film is a collaborative production that not only confronts Hollywood images of activists but also the standard hierarchies involved in mainstream filmmaking. From casting to workshoping the story, the film was composed through cooperation and improvisation. This approach comes across in moments of non-linear narrative, sirens and police radio calls that haunt the soundtrack, play with focus and color, and documentary segments woven into a story about people that is more than the sum of its parts.

-Brian Bergen-Aurand

# From the Desk of Karl Rove

March 12, 1998

To: Sandy Grushow, President, Fox Television Network

Dear Mr. Grushow:

I've recently been informed that Fox Television is planning several "unscripted reality TV series" for the new millennium. Something called "Joe Millionaire," where a dozen gold-diggers are duped into believing a tall, handsome man is rich. I've also heard a sequel is in the works, in which a dozen European gold-diggers are duped into believing a shorter, less-handsome man is rich.

My advice to you? Stop thinking small.

In this spirit, let me propose the following unscripted reality TV series: "My Stupid, Obnoxious, Right Wing President."

Proposal:

Here's the idea. After decades of politics-as-usual, hilarity ensues when the ne'er-do-well son of a former president is "elected" the 43<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States.

Despite a controversial election in which he doesn't even win the popular vote (I believe we can use his brother — actually named Jeb! — to help with this controversy), the "President of the United States" proceeds to act as if he won by a landslide.

Think of everything you don't want in a leader and double it, triple it, multiply it by ten.

We've had peace now for several years, so our guy will start a war in a volatile area. Better, all of his pretexts for war will prove false: "They attacked us" when they didn't. "They're about to attack us" when they're not. We might even throw in the old saw about making the world safe for democracy. Trust me, it'll be a hoot.

And that huge budget surplus that's being projected? In the trillions of dollars? He'll turn it into a gigantic deficit by — get this — cutting taxes for the wealthiest people in the country! Wow. Won't that be a kick? And since the only thing funnier than a guy getting hit in the balls is a guy getting hit in the balls twice, we'll have "the President" cut taxes for the rich twice. Maybe even three times! The middle class — or what's left of them — will be stunned. It'll be great!

And that's just the start.

Want a healthy environment? Our guy will aid polluters and logging companies.

Want an impartial federal judiciary? Our guy will appoint racists.

Jobs? Gone.

Separation of church and state? He won't believe in it. (At some point, he might even say he believes he's been "appointed by God" just to scare the pants off everyone. A real "Martin Sheen in 'The Dead Zone'" kind of thing.)

International cooperation and diplomacy? He'll unilaterally back out of international treaties and drop his drawers before the U.N. (Probably metaphorically — we haven't decided yet.)

Best of all, he won't sound presidential at all. No. He'll sound like a complete idiot. Think Yogi Berra crossed with Jim Varney. Here's some sentences we've been toying with: "If we don't succeed, we run the risk of failure" and "We're going to have the best educated American people in the world," and, my personal favorite, "Poor people aren't necessarily killers. Just because you happen to be not rich doesn't mean you're willing to kill." (Okay, maybe not that dumb, but you get the idea.)

Just imagine the stunned faces of the American people as this complete idiot "runs the country into the ground."

People in on the joke: Fox Television; "Jeb"; The United States Supreme Court; Ralph Nader, activist; *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page; The Gallup Organization; *The Washington Post* editorial page; Colin Powell, retired general; Dennis Miller, comedian; Tony Blair, Prime Minister of Great Britain; Judith Miller, New York Times reporter; Ahmad Chalabi, Iraqi patriot

The joke on those in on the joke: Those unscripted reality shows should have a second "catch" (I've heard yours is that if Joe's girl agrees to marry him, he really will become a millionaire). Here's ours:

If, despite all these disastrous policies, "the President" manages to get re-elected in 2004, then everything counts.

Everything. All of it. Can you imagine Colin Powell's face when he finds out? Or Tony Blair's? It'll be brilliant.

And if he doesn't get re-elected? Well, that's when we do our "reveal" and let everyone in on the joke, and we all laugh and breathe a big, big sigh of relief. Except for those who are already dead, of course. Or incarcerated. Or unemployed. Bitter. Distraught. Isolated. Hopeless. But even they might enjoy it when they see it all again on FOX TV, Thursday nights at 8 p.m.

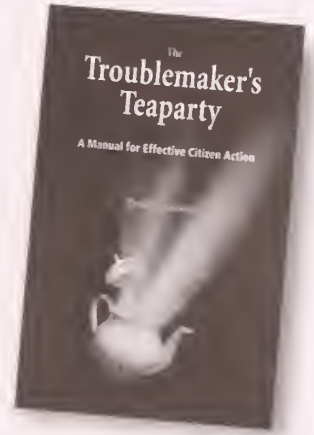
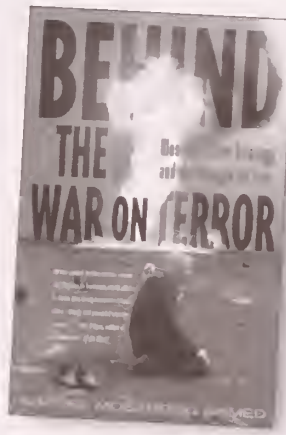
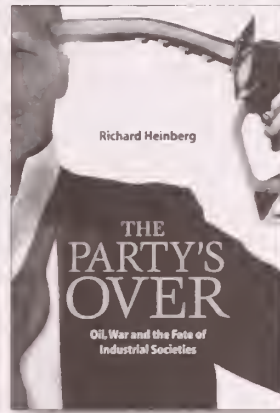
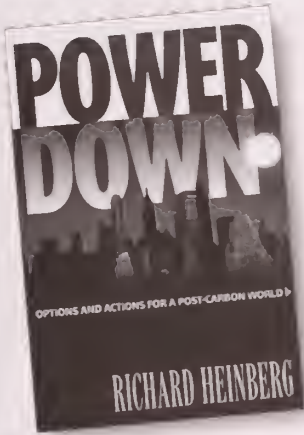
Sir, this is what I mean by thinking big. If we can pull it off, "My Stupid, Obnoxious, Right Wing President" could become the biggest joke in the history of the world.

Sincerely,



Karl Rove





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[1stbooks.com](http://1stbooks.com).

*In Memoriam* was originally inspired by a person full of hope, curiosity, and goodness, Tatiana Prosvimina, a student who died at the age of seventeen. The later poems of the collection were written in response to the reckless and immoral celebration of the militarism of the Bush Administration. After the 9-11 attacks the world needed vision, humanity, and sophistication; instead it got blind, simple-minded warmongering. The Bush Administration's selfish commitment to war and wealth has been barbaric, obscene, and monstrous.

The Administration's declaration of global war on terror is an antediluvian approach to finding ways to address the world's problems of sectarian conflict, organized crime, overpopulation, poverty, hunger, despair, increasingly virulent diseases, environmental depredation, reckless depletion of global resources, and degradation of traditional cultures by the West's culture of consumption, amusement, and spectacle.

That so many Americans voted against George Bush indicates that many millions of Americans are still inspired by a romantic idealism and spirituality rooted not in blind nationalism but in the love of family and community and in a reverence for nature--God's handiwork. This is a spirituality of love, not hate, a spirituality of the sacred moment, not of an eager anticipation of Armageddon, a spirituality of sharing, not of greed, a spirituality that comes from living wisely, not simplistically.

It will be task of Tatiana's generation to restore spiritual health to an American way of life that has become obscenely wasteful and destructive of habitat, human and natural, of families and communities, and of individuals. It will be this younger generation that will reestablish America's moral authority in the world and make America a force of good for all human beings.



illustration Nicolas Lampert

# Thorns in the Paw

We know what happened in the corporate media over the last four years: grossly inaccurate journalism, censorship and dismissals, directives on what not to report, the dawn of embedded reporting both abroad and at home, fervently patriotic news anchors, and more media consolidation. But these trends, however disturbing, have had a profound effect on independent media, increasing both the numbers of people creating alternatives and those who want to consume it. *Clamor* asked a sampling of independent media-makers to talk about significant aspects of their work during the Bush Regime: what they've reported on, what's been left out, what mark their work has made. As these accounts indicate, there's a lot of excitement about independent media right now and what it's accomplishing. There's a vigorous energy in the air and a powerful sense of compulsion, which will only grow into the years ahead.



...ence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting  
...ar weapons program"  
...that Iraq has trained al-Qaeda members"  
... Saddam Hussein recently sought significant  
...tities of uranium from Africa."  
...concerned that Iraq is exploring ways of using  
...Vs [unmanned aerial vehicles] for missions  
...the United States."



clockwise from top-left: Leticia Cortez, Vijay Prashad, Lorie Kramer, Andrew Stelzer, Silja J.A. Talvi, and Dahr Jamail

**Andrew Stelzer**

Frec Speech Radio News  
www.fsrn.org  
Portland, OR

August 21, 2002. Not a year had passed since the twin towers thing. Dissent was still largely seen as unacceptable and un-American in that time of fear (can you remember way back to those days?)

I can tell you one thing: I was glad to be living in Portland that year. There was a large, visible community that wasn't fooled. When "President" Bush came to town to raise money for Republican Senator Gordon Smith's campaign, about 1500 of them hit the streets, for so many reasons. I was reporting for KBOO community radio. The people I interviewed were upset about the loss of civil liberties, the FTAA, the destruction of the environment, the sanctions and impending war

on Iraq, the attacks on women's rights, the neglect of workers' rights, and the government's lucrative partnerships with corporate giants. The list goes on and on. The people were angry but not violent. Apparently the police didn't feel the vibe. They declared a "state of emergency" and decided to unleash the pepper spray and the rubber bullets on a crowd that hadn't broken any rules. One officer decided that even though I had been standing in the same spot, behind a barricade a few feet from him for 20 minutes with a press pass on, I needed a good spritz of pepper spray right in the eyes. They decided the same thing for a father and his one and three-year-old children. As the news spread over indymedia.org, messages began pouring in from all over:

*As I sit here with tears streaming down my face I wish that I could go there to join my fellow brothers and sisters. Everyone in*

*Chicago and in the world is so proud of you. Peace.*

*Please keep this going; Pass it around the world, we must stop this crazed spoiled child called Bnsh. He is destroying the american way of life.*  
-Sad American

*Keep talking y'all. The internet is still up, really the only tool that might get us thru this shit. Portland rocks! I love your city! Cheers from Texas, Brian.*

*I'm afraid this is just the beginning. I'm old enough to remember the anti-Vietnam War protests, most of which, just like this one, were peaceful and ended in police violence. It seems as though it's 1968, and George Bnsh is Richard Nixon. Keep on.*  
-TR of St. Paul, Mn.

*We live in the age of the Internet. The world is watching.*

The next day, the people and their lawyers decided to sue the city and the police. I could have been part of the lawsuit, but decided to stick with my role as "media." However, I submitted my account of the event as evidence. I reported the story on Free Speech Radio News. The world was not only watching but listening.

Over the next few months, the entire planet decided enough was enough.

**Leticia Cortez**

Editor and co-founder of *¿Hasta Cuándo?*  
 hastacuando@postmark.net  
 Chicago, IL

*¿Hasta Cuándo?* grew out of our belief that a publication needed to exist including youth and minorities in the political community to address issues pertinent to them and their community. This is also why it's a bilingual publication. From the beginning, *¿HC?*'s purpose was to inform and work for change. The things that were going on in the fall of 1999 shaped the first issue. Locally, gentrification was hitting the neighborhood; Mayor Daley and the City Council were passing anti-youth ordinances. Nationally, the WTO protest in Seattle was going on.

Then came the 2000 election, followed by the attendant thievery and ensuing massacre of our economy, health, environment, and educational system. The most important topic I have covered during the last four years has been the Bush Administration.

Bush has disgraced the cover at least four times since the election. We included a spread of the Bush Cabinet with bios in the issue that followed the election. In the last issue Bush is the symbol of death dressed in his flight suit (the one he wore when he declared the war with Iraq had ended) and helmet in hand. For the next issue we are focusing on this year's election.

It is hard to isolate the most important story one has covered submerged in this climate for the last four years. However, the political plague of this administration and the repercussions of their agenda at every level have been the main motive of my writing. The

reason this answer is so general is because we have to see the damage done in four years by this administration in its context. From their "election" to the prison abuse scandal in Iraq, more and more horrors come out that this administration has conjured from an Orwellian nightmare.

Beginning with the irresponsible, exorbitant tax-cuts and the massive deficit they created, Bush's appointments of judges when the Senate was not in session, the wars, privatization of the military, and the mess that is Iraq... There are plenty of examples of crimes against humanity perpetuated by this administration. History must be recorded from the angle of the other. I have tried to reflect this in *¿Hasta Cuándo?* in the topics we have covered. In the last four years there has been a steep decline in the quality of life for everyone. This administration is very dangerous and it's obvious that the planet can ill afford four more years of Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Ashcroft, Rice, Wolfowitz, Libby, Thompson, etc.

**Dahr Jamail**

The NewStandard News  
 www.newstandardnews.com  
 Baghdad, Iraq

While the Bush Administration scuttles to manipulate the news coming out of occupied Iraq with the U.S. election quickly approaching, the need for independent journalism here is more vital than ever before.

While the corporate media has been forced to acknowledge stories like the torturing inside Abu Ghraib prison, many of the outlets continue to apply the spin of "a few bad apples" to a systemic problem that has been ongoing throughout U.S. detention facilities in Iraq since the beginning of the occupation.

This is only the most recent example of a phenomenon which drew me to Iraq last November. I feel now as I did then; in general the corporate media is failing to report the reality of what is occurring on the ground in Iraq.

Because of this, there may never have been a time where the need for investigative independent journalism has been so great. In Iraq, citizens and soldiers both are continuing to die on a daily basis while the corporate me-

dia continues to report the bungled speeches of Mr. Bush during the lead up to the June 30 "handover."

As in the U.S., there is a great disparity in Iraq between what is really occurring on the ground and what the Western corporate media chooses to report.

Even with stories of torture dominating television screens throughout much of May, the mainstream stations seem to be conveniently overlooking the price Iraqis are paying for the lack of rebuilding: Flickering electricity as summer temperatures reach up to 140 degrees, an unemployment rate of 60 percent, gasoline shortages, and a security situation so horrendous that many women are unable to leave their homes for fear of being kidnapped, raped, or both.

An informed citizenry forms the basis of a democracy. Not only are U.S. citizens being deprived of access to information about the true nature of the critical situation in Iraq, they are being outright lied to by most of the corporate media outlets.

Thus, independent media holds the responsibility of telling the stories which the Bush Administration cannot afford to have people hear.

**Silja J.A. Talvi**

*Lip, In These Times, The Nation*, and many others  
 www.well.com/~sisu  
 Seattle, WA

The political climate in the U.S., particularly since 9/11, has been particularly hard on those of us pursuing investigative and social issues, reporting about topics not related to Iraq, terrorism, or electoral coverage.

My "beat" has always revolved around criminal justice, drug war, and prisons issues, and it's been honestly disheartening to see the almost complete lack of interest on the part of editors in assigning these kinds of stories domestically since 9/11. It's as if 2.1 million prisoners dropped off the map, except for the occasional story based on statistics or on some gross scandal resulting in a lawsuit.

But the truth is that the "other war" — the one being fought on our soil by governmental and right-wing forces against poor communities and communities of color — continues

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An informed citizenry forms the basis of a democracy. Not only are U.S. citizens being deprived of access to information about the true nature of the critical situation in Iraq, they are being outright lied to by most of the corporate media outlets. -Dahr Jamail

unabated. The similarities can't be ignored: Billions of dollars poured into an ineffective strategy that backfires at every turn; casualties and harshly treated prisoners of war; growing discontent, disgust, and anger among target populations. But it's difficult to get anyone in the press (and to be honest, this includes much of the progressive, independent press) to care a great deal. I value independent press above almost everything else, but it's been disheartening to hear editors say, over and over again, that there's less (or no) space for these kinds of things when we're fighting a war abroad and Election 2004 is around the corner. We simply can't ignore what's happening here — it's all interconnected.

The scandal of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib has, ironically, provided a renewed interest in prisoner issues. It took the brutality of soldiers overseas for people to realize this kind of stuff has been going on here all along. (Moreover, many of the people involved in that scandal came from U.S. prison backgrounds.)

In the meantime, the prisoners aren't going anywhere. We're adding more and more to the system every year — including scores of young adults and women with children — with devastating results. As members of the independent press, it's our responsibility to look at the hard and ugly truths. And the U.S. prison system is, unequivocally, one of the ugliest manifestations and indicators of a society gone awry.

### Vijay Prasad

Znet, *Frontline*, *Counterpunch*, *Little India*  
Hartford, CT

Who can imagine today that Sudan and Iraq had the largest communist parties in Africa and in the Arab world? If we think of Communism, we think of the Soviets, Eastern Europeans, or the party militants within the First World who struggled against the odds to bring socialism to working-class culture. If there are communists of color, they are generally treated by popular memory or by anti-communist writers as aberrations or stooges.

When 9/11 hijacked our lives, the U.S. war machine went on the path to overthrow the regimes that ruled in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Sudan. We heard that these are anti-modernist zones where women are routinely oppressed and everything rational is

disdained. The propagandists showed history the back door.

As a professional historian, I began to write in the anti-corporate Left Euro-American media about the history of communism in the Arab and African lands and on how the Left had been decimated there.

We must acknowledge how the Afghan, Iraqi, Saudi, and Sudanese Left had grown and flourished, how it had made political and cultural space for itself in regions where Islam was the main religion. For us raised in Asia, there remains little contradiction between Islam and Communism, since we remembered that the world's largest concentration of Muslims nurtured the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI). The Iraqi Communist Party holds the honor of ejecting the British-installed monarchy (1958), and the Afghan Communists took the monarchs by the hand to Constitutionalism and to feminism.

I also wrote at length about how the CIA joined with local potentates to assassinate this Left. In Indonesia alone the CIA egged on the military to murder 300,000 communists and national liberation fighters after the 1965 coup against Sukarno. Further, the CIA and the Saudis began to fund the revival of a radical Islam from the early 1960s as a counter to the growth of the Left in the oil lands.

I contributed these stories because I believe that we have to account for the creation of the political desert in much of the former Third World. It did not happen because the darker and bruised nations are bereft of reason. Quite the contrary. When reason lived in these lands, it had to be killed. But reason has a cunning way of making its return.

### Lorie Kramer

Houston Independent Media Center  
www.houston.indymedia.org  
Houston, TX

In these times of ever increasing control of information, does independent media have the power to influence government and agencies of the government on behalf of the people? If you ask Marijah McCain of Arkansas, I'm sure you'd get a resounding YES!

McCain is an American Naturopathic Medical Board Certified and Accredited (ANMCAB) naturopath with over 20 years of personal experience who has operated the

Herbal Healer Academy in Mountain Home Arkansas since 1988. HHA sells natural health care supplements and offers home study courses in "alternative" healing. Thousands of customers worldwide have written HHA testimonials from over the years. The state of Arkansas has collected hundreds of thousands of dollars in sales tax from her company as well.

Despite her credentials and longevity of practice in the state, no customer complaints, and no evidence of any harm done to anyone, the Attorney General of Arkansas filed suit against her and two local massage therapists in 2002 to try to close them down. The suit stated that she represented "a substantial danger to the health, welfare, and safety of the public." The suit dragged on, through two attorneys general, into the spring of 2003. The American Medical Association went so far as to make a public statement in support of the lawsuit against her and HHA.

McCain finally brought her case to the people and independent media. I posted the info on the Houston Indy Media website and alerted the Arkansas Indy Media and other alternative news websites. The Arkansas Indy Media folks said the story got the most response of any they had ever done. Within hours of the postings the government officials in Arkansas had a rude awakening. The response was so overwhelming that the Governor of Arkansas became "livid," according to her lawyer. State fax machines were unplugged and the state's email servers were shut down. Responses came from as far away as France and Sweden.

A settlement was quickly reached. McCain had to stop using the term "Dr." on all her literature and website, but she remains in business today, continuing to care for the people she has served for so many years.

Despite intense pressure from state government and the AMA, the defendants in the lawsuit and the rights of the citizens of Arkansas and others served by HHA prevailed because of the action taken by readers of independent media.

In my years working with "alternative news sources" this was the most dramatic example of the might of independent media that I have experienced. I am convinced that utilizing independent media can be a powerful tool to effect change when the rights and interests of the people are threatened. ☆

# Lamprooning the Buffoon

fun on the internet  
at W's expense

WORDS Richard Ristow  
ILLUSTRATION upso.org

In 1999, Zaek Exley received a cease-and-desist letter from George W. Bush's lawyer. Owner of the Gwbush.com domain, Exley routinely posted satire about the then-Texas governor's partying past, offering doctored photographs suggesting cocaine abuse and a love of hard liquor. This angered the Bush campaign, including Bush himself, who, when asked about Exley, remarked during a televised news conference, "There ought to be limits to freedom." Bush and his campaign team filed a complaint with the Federal Elections Commission and in doing so brought a wave of new traffic to the site. Eventually, the FEC dropped the complaint.

Since then, Exley has worked for MoveOn, Howard Dean, and John Kerry. Gwbush.com has been put on hiatus, while its webmaster focuses on trying to defeat Bush and elect John Kerry. But dozens of other sites have emerged in its place, the humor fueling three distinct approaches: political parodies, anti-Bush cartoons, and Presidential quotes. The following are a few of the most memorable and creative.

## Whitehouse.org and Georgewbush.org

Shortly after Bush was "appointed" by the Supreme Court, John Wooden

thought Bush's new White House would be a "super-meaty project." All he needed was a name, and the whitehouse.org web domain just happened to be free.

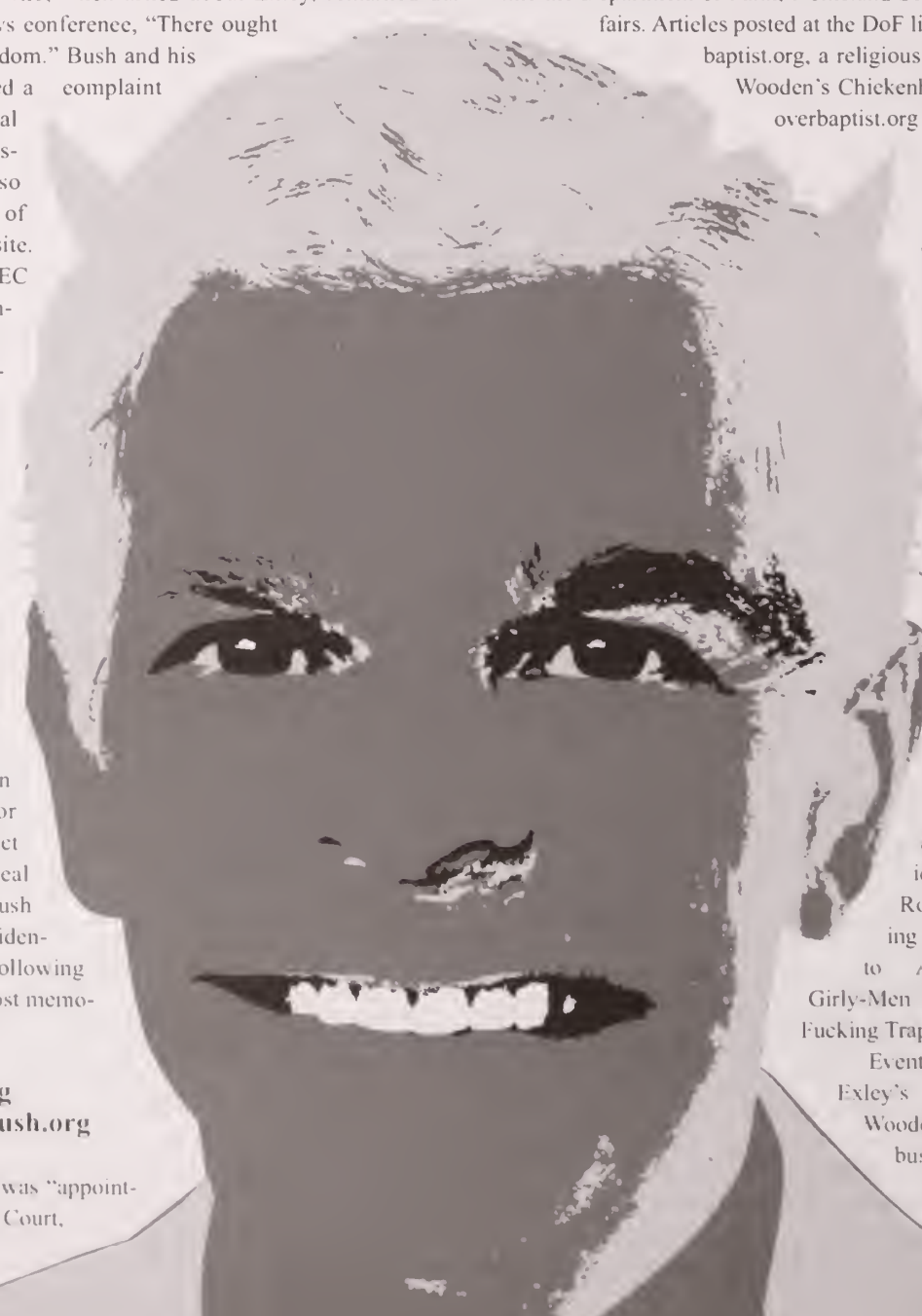
Wooden's parody is a mirror distortion of the real White House's web site. Whitehouse.org is complete with clickable links to things like the Department of Faith, Homeland Security, and Fraternal Affairs. Articles posted at the DoF link directly to Landover-

baptist.org, a religious parody site operated by Wooden's Chickenhead Productions. Land-

overbaptist.org routinely offers innovations in creation science: mappings of the sinful regions of the tongue and 60-second sermons.

Homeland Security offers strange programs like Operation Mandatory Patriotic Tattoo and the Terrorist Reading List. Back at Whitehouse.org, the main page also offers Onionesque press releases, including: "President's Armed Forces Radio Address to America's Troops on the Glorious Occasion of their Retroactive Induction into Eternal Martial Slavery" and "Transcript of President's Friendly Call to Ron Reagan, Jr., Reminding Him What Can Happen to Alzheimer's-Prone Girly-Men Who Don't Keep Their Fucking Traps Shut."

Eventually, the site caught Exley's attention, who asked Wooden to take over Gwbush.com. Concentrating on Georgewbush.org, which is closest to the real



campaign URL. Wooden and his writers are focusing on Bush's re-election politics. Highlights include faux press releases, a PDF campaign poster personalizer, and an action center allowing visitors to email absurdly vitriolic letters to media outlets. A sample salutation: "Dear ACLU-Fellating So-Called Journalist."

Satire often makes enemies, and the site has been targeted. "The Bushies didn't learn from the Gwbush.com experience at all," Wooden says. "They came after Whitehouse.org in early 2003, too. It took the ACLU to scare them away."

### Toostupidtobepresident.com

One can't mistake David Counts's flash animations for Bush's re-election material. "All the stuff I do is original and, I hope, funny," Counts states. "One of the justifications for hassling other Bush sites has been their unauthorized use of protected images, but I get around that by drawing everything."

Counts's work resembles editorial cartoons — facial features are over-accentuated, and a picture's context has a greater meaning. For example, in "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre," a man in a suit tries to brief George W. on the threat of Osama bin Laden attacking, but Bush, sawing wood in full cowboy regalia, doesn't hear him above the racket of a noisy, Fisher Price chainsaw. In "Monkey Primate and the Oily Grail," Counts borrows from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* to tell stories about selling the world on the "imminent" nuclear threat and vilifying anti-war celebrities. In "Term-Eliminator 3: Rise of the Digital Voting Machines," Count uses the Simpsons' Mr. Burns and Arnold Schwarzenegger as dark (and idiotic) characters who draw laughs, but also raise awareness about the flawed and potentially disastrous Diebold electronic voting machines. Mr. Burns plays Diebold President Walden O'Dell, who last year promised to deliver his home state of Ohio to President Bush.

For Counts, this type of parody is routine. "Familiar metaphors are the stock and trade of political cartoonists," he states. "They eliminate the need for a lot of the set-up, they depict circumstances about which people already have an opinion or feeling, and they can suggest things beyond what's depicted. Inference is a powerful tool in communication generally and in humor particularly."

Generate your own anti-campaign poster at [georgewbush.org](http://georgewbush.org)!

CLAMOR MAGAZINE  
PROUDLY DENOUNCES

**BUSH**   
**CHENEY '04**

[www.GeorgeWBush.org](http://www.GeorgeWBush.org)

Paid for by RE-SELECT BUSH, Inc.

### Dubyaspeak.com

Humor about W. Bush doesn't always need to be implied. Indeed, truth can be stranger than fiction. And in the case of the 43<sup>rd</sup> President, plain old speech beats anything comedians could dream up. With this in mind, Justin Thorne has been archiving the president's mangling of the English language. Bush has a talent for stream-of-conscious sentence structure, malaprops, mispronunciations, and backhanded compliments. Much of what the site chronicles will leave visitors simply shaking their heads. For example, when talking about Senator Frist's wife, Bush said: "He married a Texas girl, I want you to know. Karyn is with us. A West Texas girl, just like me."

Bush's gaffes are available in bookstores, but Thorne has a different mission. "The books that are out there are all about laughs, and have quotes that don't require much thought to enjoy. DubyaSpeak has gone to the length of creating the largest, most far-ranging collection of Dubya gaffes." Thorne has put together a comprehensive collection. Quotes are categorized into nearly two dozen different areas, such as Repeat Offender, which takes note of Dubya's penchant for repeating a particular set of daft phrases and concepts over and over again. Others include Dubya the Theologian, Dubya at War, Dubya on Himself, and Fresh Dubya.

### Clamor's Top-Ten Stop-Bush Slogans:

What's going to happen to all of the anti-Bush merchandise after he's deselected in 04? You may find some sweet deals on shirts, wall clocks, and bibs (yes, anti-Bush bibs). Or you could stow your wares away for a few decades and watch them appreciate, at least as a valuable remnant of this insane time in history. Whatever you do, there's plenty to choose from. :

Dick Cheney Before Cheney Dicks You  
No BUISHit in 2004  
Real Conservatives Don't Start Wars  
More Trees, Less Bush  
Don't Blame Me, My Vote Didn't Count  
George W. Bush, You're Fired!  
Bush bin-Lyin'  
Are we Kinder and Gentler Yet?  
How Many Miles Per Iraqi?  
Impeach the Punk-Ass Dictator

### The future of bush parody

Whether it's campaign parody, flash animations, or strange Presidential quotes, political humor on the Internet has evolved a lot since Exley and gwbush.com angered many with one of the first parody sites in 1999. Five years later, the expansion of information technology, political discourse, even political satire has become more democratic, accessible, and interesting. Enjoy these sites while you can. Come November, web-based political satire might not have the same ring. ☆

*Rich Ristow recently completed a masters of fine arts in creative writing at UNC-Wilmington. A prior contributor to Clamor, he has published poetry and non-fiction in a variety of places. He has a short story in newly released For Here or To Go: Life in the Service Industry (Garret County Press).*

# there's gonna be a Free Speech TV Party Tonight!

The revolution  
will be televised  
... but it won't  
be cheap.

by Jared Jacang Maher



Essentially my job, I am told, is to push a button. Specifically it's to hit an "enter" key that switches the broadcast from the Free Speech TV pledge drive being filmed live in the room behind me to the first installment of a taped Noam Chomsky lecture. A button — okay, no problem. But as I've learned in the world of progressive television, things are always a lot harder than they seem.

I watch the time-code flutter in milliseconds and realize that my seemingly brainless task is surprisingly critical. Off by even just a few moments, it could be the one small dreaded screw-up that snowballs into a crisis for the whole five-hour broadcast. The specter of a crisis — like, for instance, the satellite feed suddenly conking out, or, perhaps, a Michael Moore plug not playing on cue — is nearly written into the script for such productions. Nevertheless, what FSTV lacks in refined technical know-how and glossy presentation, it makes up for in passion and a conviction that the next big battle for independent media can and must be in the tightly-controlled realm of cable television. That is, if we can get through this next pledge-drive.

My finger hovers precipitously over the rectangular Enter key. My eyes focus on it sharply. This is what it must feel like for the guy ill-fated enough to have his finger on "the button." Such a little act, with such greater consequence. One twitch and I could cause the whole show to explode . . . figuratively, I mean. Hold steady, man.

There's 30 seconds left in the break and the camera cuts from host Emaan Halim (by day FSTV's contract administrator) to pan in on production manager Eric Galatas, who in

1999 was one of the main organizers of the original Independent Media Center that disseminated news from the tear gas-choked streets of Seattle's seminal WTO protest. Such backgrounds are not unusual in these halls. FSTV's home base of Boulder, Colorado is known less as a TV producer's Mecca than it is as a liberal soapbox for the interior West. This supplies FSTV with a staff that is more likely to have experience in direct action protest than broadcast journalism. In fact, FSTV's news director Shannon Service was a founding member of the Direct Action Network and a Ruckus Society Trainer who somehow found herself sitting in the anchor's chair.

Galatas starts off with the standard plea for viewer support but then lays into the distinct FSTV screed against the Bush Administration, the war machine, and the limp journalism of "corporate television media." Halim does a run-through of the premiums that donors will get in return for their support, including subscriptions to *The Nation* and *World Socialist Review*, and books by Howard Zinn and Jim Hightower. If it wasn't clear to viewers before, it should be by now: a PBS pledge-drive this is not.

"It's important that you call now," Galatas says into the camera. "You won't see this type of content anywhere else."

As a non-profit, FSTV functions on the operational budget of a local public channel, run mainly by media activists, interns and volunteers like me. But because it's beamed into over 17 million homes nation-wide through both the Dish satellite network and 108 community access stations, the expecta-

tions and ambitions of FSTV resemble that of a 24-hour cable news channel — minus the budget of course.

"Television is a high-cost media," explains FSTV president John Schwartz who founded the station in 1995 through an amalgamation of other public TV resources. FSTV has a budget of roughly two million dollars a year, he says, an amount that most stations burn through in a single hour producing *Survivor* or *Punk'd*. But two million is a gargantuan sum for any comparable non-profit magazine, website, or even radio station. "So something that is really inexpensive in TV terms," Schwartz says, "is still really expensive."

Normal cable networks make their income through what's called a "dual-revenue stream" which means that they earn money from both the cable operators (who get their money through cable subscriptions) and from ad revenue. FSTV earns money from neither, notes Schwartz. And so, like many anti-profit organizations, FSTV must always eye the bottom line. Certain corners are cut. People work for free, or if you are one of the station's 15 full-time employees, almost for free.

Unlike commercial television, FSTV must maintain itself off of foundation grants and also through viewer donations, which have grown from ten percent in past years to a quarter of the total revenue in 2003. To meet these projected earnings, management has upped the number of pledge drives to three a year. Five days into the ten-day spring pledge drive, and about \$120,000 in pledges have already been pulled in, roughly half of FSTV's goal. This sum may seem like an un-



godly amount for most activist organizations, many of which run on yearly budgets under \$100,000. In the world of commercial television, however, this is piddle sticks compared to the big bucks earned through ad revenue.

The cost that a network can make from a single commercial depends on the show, the time of day and the time of year. For example, a 30-second spot in the 2004 Super Bowl on CBS cost advertisers around \$2.3 million dollars, while half a minute during NBC's highly-rated "E.R." runs about \$600,000. But perhaps a more accurate contrast with FSTV would be another cable news network like CNN.

Last year, when Adbusters Media Foundation purchased a thirty-second spot on CNN's Wolf Blitzer Reports to air their infamous "uncommercials," it cost \$8,170, says Adbusters' campaign manager Tim Walker. CNN didn't respond to inquiries about how much they gross during a 30-minute show, so we'll have to figure it out ourselves. A typical time slot generally includes 23 minutes of programming and seven minutes of commercials (though some half-hour blocks have as much as 12 minutes of commercials.) CNN, then, can earn as much as \$40,850 during a single commercial break and approximately \$114,380 per show. In just one hour of Blitzer, then, CNN can hoist in more than double of what FSTV will get for an entire ten-day pledge drive.

But this is the whole point, of course. FSTV is funded by individual citizens rather than corporate advertisers. And even though most progressives have written off television completely — many activists I know don't even own a television, including a few FSTV employees — television still must be recognized as the foremost medium to reach a broad swath of America. And this is the problem. Too often media activists sing their sermons to the choir, other progressives. There's a reason why advertisers are willing to pay exorbitant amounts of cash for TV air time: to target consumers who are apt to buy your product but are not familiar with it. My uncle Steve in North Carolina isn't going to spontaneously buy the new issue of *Mother Jones* from Barnes and Noble, but he is more likely to take his thumb off the remote button for 10 minutes during his search for Sportscenter to check out an Arundhati Roy speech. He might call it Leftist garbage anyway, but at least he was exposed to it. Kill your television, activists, and you may be killing your message.

The average Dish Network subscriber is generally a person who either really likes TV or lives so far away from a major city they don't have access to regular cable, or both. This creates an interesting cross-section of FSTV viewership.

The volunteers answering the phones at the tables behind Galatas have gotten used to callers speaking in a rural drawl of one kind or another. Drunken angry crank calls are frequent and taken lightly or with humor. A caller shouting "pink-ass Commie" into the receiver might only offend the volunteer because he's actually a Pink Anarchist and will intently explain the distinction.

Then there are the hundreds of other calls from all over the U.S. From liberal Berkeley and Boston, to po-dunk nowhere where such opinions are not just unfashionable, but downright alienating.

"I live in a small town and we don't have access to anything like this around here." says Cody from Salyersville, Kentucky who calls and donates \$25.

Thomas from "the Republican heartland" Frisco, Texas stumbled onto FSTV a few months ago and caught a documentary about the Bush theft of the Florida elections. He loves this type of coverage and donated \$35.

80-year-old Harold from Upland, Indiana donated \$25 even though he's on social security. David from Roseburg, Oregon throws in \$25 because he's "disgusted by the direction this country has taken." Katherine from McKinleyville, CA says "It's time we got some truth out of TV rather than garbage."

The money slowly adds up, but it amounts to much more. The thought of all of these Americans tuned in but not tuned out makes my low-tech, inexperienced finger feel heavy with patriotism . . . or is it nervousness? It's quite a change to feel the media under your immediate control rather than the other way around. The five-second countdown has begun. Three. Two. The director looks my way. Boulder goes blank. America, meet Mr. Chomsky. ☆

*Jared Jacang Maher has written stories and articles for the Chicago Reader, Westword, Adbusters and Alternet.org. He is an editor of the literary anthology Life and Limb. Skateboarders Write From the Deep End out this summer on Soft Skull Press.*

## DECEPTION DOLLARS

They may be the most popular piece of political agitation propaganda in history, with around three million in circulation. Their message, that elements in the U.S. government are guilty for the crimes of 9/11, is horrifying and controversial, yet they make most people laugh.

"Deception Dollars" are a product of the combined efforts of visual artist Blaine Machan and political activist Carol Brouillet of the 9/11 Truth Alliance. Machan and Brouillet have produced six editions of the funny money, the look evolving but the premise remaining: to expose the dark forces that allegedly facilitated 9/11 as a "special operation" designed to create a pretext for the phony "War on Terrorism."

Candid observers will notice that on the back of each edition of the Dollar is a giant "9-11" with the letters "CIA" super-imposed in the background. In later editions oil rigs shoot out of the image of Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld, who are labeled "International Terrorists."

What is so extraordinary about the Deception Dollars is they have taken a topic that most people are afraid to touch with a pole and mainstreamed it. Deception Dollars are now being sold at \$.25-.50 each at bookstores around the country, according to reports, and the San Francisco Fine Arts Museum now has the Dollar in its collection. Anyone can order Deception Dollars in bulk from [www.deception-dollar.com](http://www.deception-dollar.com).

Brouillet puts the D-Dollars' message in context: "What we are witnessing is not a War on Terrorism, but a War OF Terrorism against the people of the United States and the world. I believe 9/11 was a desperate attempt on the part of the global elite to maintain their power using their traditional methods of war and terror. They are losing their legitimacy in the court of public opinion."

The ultimate purpose of the Dollars, say Brouillet and Machan, is to encourage people to check out some of the 23 web sites that are displayed. All of the sites feature independent "deep politics" information. In addition to the web sites, there is a growing canon of literature and videos questioning the "official story" of 9/11. The book "The New Pearl Harbor," by theology professor David Ray Griffin, emphasizes that the failure to defend the airspace and especially the Pentagon on 9/11 proves that there was U.S. complicity. And in his video "Truth and Lies of 9/11" former Los Angeles narcotics officer Michael Ruppert discusses a "revolving door" between the CIA and Wall St., and how this wealthy elite has benefited from the war economy.

"We are witnessing the greatest cover-up since the assassination of JFK, and the stakes are literally the future of humanity," said Brouillet. "The problem will not be easily solved by replacing the Bushites with another administration that is controlled by multinational corporations. We are witnessing an international ultra-elite escalating a deadly global economy of war for their own profit. It will take all of our creativity, humor, and courage as people to stop this war and evolve beyond it."

-Adam Hurter

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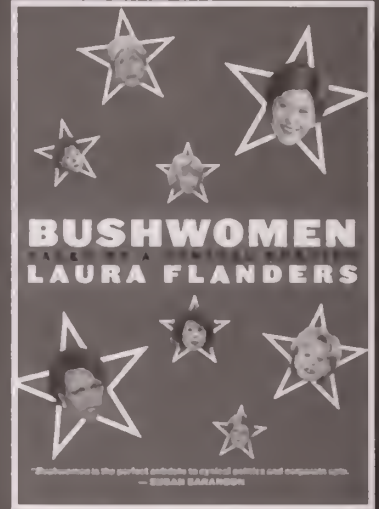
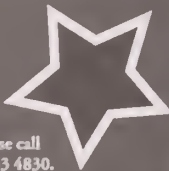
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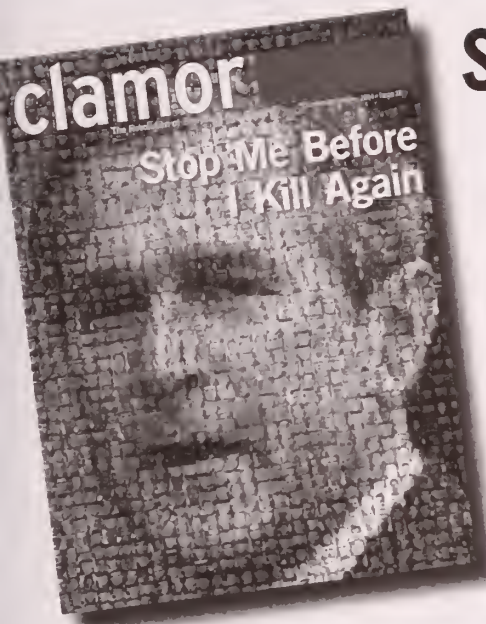
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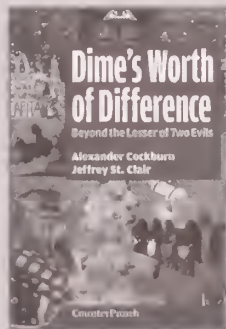
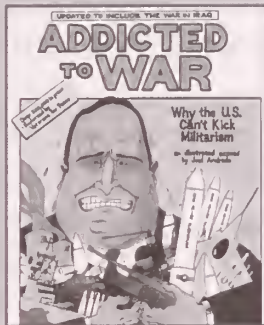
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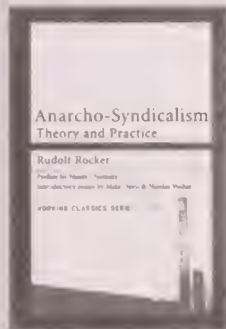
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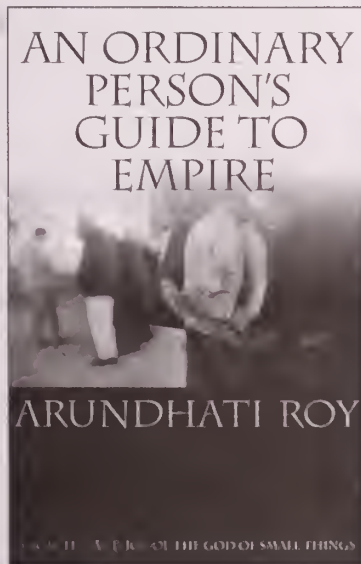


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On May 1, tens of thousands of Salvadorans filled the streets of San Salvador in an energetic mega-march to commemorate International Workers' Day. One of their main demands, as illustrated by thousands of banners and posters carried by protesters snaking their way along the four-hour march route, was to stop the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Unionists, peasants, women, community groups, and street vendors carried "No CAFTA" signs, while groups of students spray-painted city streets and walls with "CAFTA = Death." The march's tone echoed that of dozens of similar anti-CAFTA actions in El Salvador and the rest of Central America that have taken place over the past two years.

Twenty-eight days later, officials from El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the United States gathered in Washington, D.C., to sign the final draft of the agreement. In an absurd twist, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick tried to dismiss the protestors outside the gathering, saying, "You'll pardon me if I have a little bit of an ironic smile when primarily people from the United States decide to tell democracies in Central America what's good for them. We used to call that imperialism."<sup>1</sup>

# We Used to Call That

*below* Marchers on May Day proclaim, "We Demand Respect for Women's Lives, No to CAFTA"; *top right*: Groups of young people painted the city walls with "No to CAFTA"; *bottom right*: Salvador Arias, FMLN Deputy, gives a workshop on the economic impacts of free trade at the BPS Forum on CAFTA. The banner reads "Free Trade: Lots of Trade but No Freedom"



## Five Donkeys and a Tiger

Here in Central America, the concept of opening markets to free trade is not new. People have already experienced the devastating consequences of allowing foreign capital to run loose in their countries. They recognize that CAFTA would deepen and solidify transnational corporate power in the region by writing all of the rules of free trade in stone. Like NAFTA in Mexico, CAFTA would take legal precedent over national constitutions,<sup>2</sup> a massive intervention into national sovereignty.

Even without having witnessed the negotiations, it is possible to imagine the miniscule leverage with which the five tiny Central American parties were able to negotiate with the United States, an economic superpower with a Gross Domestic Product at least 140 times greater than their collective GDP.<sup>3</sup> As one rural Salvadoran woman explained it,

“A free trade agreement between the United States and Central American countries is like putting a banquet feast between a hungry tiger and five little tied-up donkeys.” The bargaining process was closed to the scrutiny of most of civil society. Government and business representatives negotiated it in secret without any participation from social movements or non-governmental organizations. With such an imbalanced and guarded negotiation process, it is not surprising that the U.S. was able to walk away from the feast having left barely any crumbs for Central America.

Of course, there are a few powerful Salvadoran families whose businesses stand to gain significantly from CAFTA. In order to get their slice of the pie, the Salvadoran elite and their representatives in government are bending over backward to help Bush get CAFTA ratified. The severely indebted Salvadoran government is spending millions of dollars

and their story is a dark foreshadowing of what CAFTA will do to workers and consumers throughout Central America. Until the mid-'90s, electricity generation, transmission, and distribution were all run by one public corporation in El Salvador. At that time, the company had around 5,000 employees, many of whom were active members of the union. Fredy Lopez, Secretary of Relations of the Industry Union of Workers in the Electrical Sector (STSEL), explains that, “The union was powerful, negotiating living wages and benefits for the workers. However, over the past 10 years, as electricity distribution has been privatized and much of the generation has been conceded, the number of workers has been reduced to around 700, with 240 affiliated union members remaining.” Meanwhile, the great justification behind privatization — the promise of reduced rates due to competition in the free market — has been

## Salvadoran Resistance to Bush's Central American Free Trade Agreement

# Imperialism

words & images Alex Modotti



MUCHO COMERCIO  
PERO  
Nada de LIBERTAD



on lobbying in Washington in attempt to sway the U.S. Congress. The government has also sponsored a glossy ad campaign to promote the treaty within El Salvador, airing television commercials showing image after image of jobs that CAFTA will supposedly create.

The right-wing Salvadoran government has also rolled out the red carpet for U.S. officials to come and promote CAFTA. In March 2004, Jeb Bush traipsed through Central America with an entourage of men in suits representing Florida businesses looking to invest in the region when CAFTA passes. The much-publicized visit came to El Salvador during the height of a highly contested presidential campaign, aiding the Salvadoran ruling party, always anxious to demonstrate its strong ties to the U.S. government. While it has succeeded in causing some public confusion, thus far, the multi-million dollar public relations campaign has not slowed down El Salvador's organized resistance to CAFTA.

### Acting on Experience

Electricity workers in El Salvador have seen the effects of neo-liberal<sup>4</sup> reforms first hand

exposed as a hoax. “Since privatization,” says Lopez, “electricity rates have increased by 750% in El Salvador.”

Lopez sees CAFTA as the final straw, not only for the electricity union, but also for the broader labor movement in Central America. “CAFTA would make it practically impossible to organize and counterattack when workers' rights are threatened. Implicit in this agreement is both the privatization of remaining public services and the politics of making labor flexible, which basically means that all of the rights the labor movement has won for workers like benefits and job security would be lost,” he says. Despite the setbacks STSEL and other unions have suffered in recent years, they continue to be an important force in maintaining workers' rights in El Salvador.

Learning from the lessons of privatization of electricity distribution, the health care workers' union (STISSS) is now leading a national effort to save public health care from privatization. The Salvadoran people have backed them in this resistance, especially during two long national health care strikes over the past four years. Eight times in 2003,

people took to the streets in historic numbers — with more than 200,000 protesters during one action — paralyzing the capital in marches that rejected both privatization and free trade agreements. This April, the union and its supporters peacefully occupied the



The Popular Social Bloc for a Real Democracy's (BPS) forum on CAFTA brought together over 300 people from all over Central America in February

Metropolitan Cathedral, demanding the right to organize and an end to privatization. When union leaders were arrested, people held a hunger strike. Nine days later, the unionists had built enough pressure to win their leaders' release from prison. Through all these struggles, the union has maintained its commitment to defending the public good from corporate profiteering by speaking out loudly against CAFTA.

Unions are not the only ones resisting, of course. The trade agreement would also have devastating impacts on the environment, women, peasants, students, and other marginalized groups throughout Central America.

In organizing resistance, Central Americans often point to Mexico's 10 years of experience with NAFTA, particularly in the agricultural sector. Traditional small farmers in Mexico have been unable to compete with the flood of highly subsidized U.S. agricultural products that have poured across the border since NAFTA was passed. According to a report by the Hemispheric Social Alliance, "Mexico is losing its food sovereignty and instead has a great dependency on imports."<sup>5</sup> This drastic change has led to the collapse of small farms, forcing an approximated one million small farmers in Mexico to abandon generations worth of knowledge of traditional farming and to migrate to urban areas in Mexico and the United States.

CAFTA was modeled after NAFTA, so the experience Central Americans would have under CAFTA is predictable. Guadalupe Erazo, of the National Association of Agricultural Workers (ANTA), explains that the Salvadoran countryside is already affected by high levels of emigration, but that with CAFTA, "The deterioration of the family in El Salvador, especially rural families, will only get worse. U.S. agri-businesses got what they wanted with CAFTA — practically unlimited access to our market for their highly subsidized goods. The result will be thousands more peasants who can no longer survive farming, and who will look to emigrate to the U.S. as their only option for survival." For that reason, ANTA is another organization in El Salvador that has vocally opposed CAFTA.

Cross-sector organizing — and cross-border organizing — is also occurring in Central America. The Popular Social Bloc (BPS) is bringing together a wide cross-section of Salvadoran society in a united front to oppose CAFTA by organizing both international forums and region-wide protest actions. The BPS has helped organize three border actions to shut down traffic between the five Central American nations party to the treaty. Madelin Brizuela of the BPS explains, "The idea of taking over the border crossing is twofold. First, we are creating consciousness in the population that CAFTA is not what our leaders make it out to be, that it will not bring good jobs or benefit our poor economies. Secondly, the action is symbolic: we are extending our hands across the borders to our Central American brothers and sisters to show the power we have in organized resistance."

#### Solidarity facing the challenge of globalization

At a recent conference on trade in Washington, Peter Allegier, U.S. Sub-secretary of Trade, used the familiar and patronizing rhetoric of the U.S. government, saying "Latin America must decide if it will face the challenges of globalization or remain in the past."<sup>6</sup> Latin Americans are, in fact, facing the challenges of globalization daily, although not in the way that Allegier intended. They are loudly and actively rejecting the U.S. imposition of a corporate profit-driven agenda in Central America, and they are building alternatives.

After the May 28<sup>th</sup> signing ceremony, the final step remaining for the Bush administration to make CAFTA a reality is its ratification in each country's congress. The Bush administration has hoped, even prom-

ised, that CAFTA would be passed this year and be ready to go into effect in 2005. The President had expected that Congress would vote this spring but, as elections approach and attacks on his economic policy grow, a sensitive and polemic issue like a free trade agreement looks like a bigger and bigger liability to campaign advisors.

However, the Bush administration also knows that waiting on a CAFTA vote is also risky because the anti-CAFTA resistance movement grows in numbers and strength with each passing day. This resistance, coupled with election year politics, has emboldened a number of politicians to take strong stances against the treaty. Congresswoman Hilda Solis from California has declared that, "Our trade policies should lift people out of poverty, not keep them in it. CAFTA is a gift to corporate interests whose priority is access to cheap labor, not protecting working families in the United States and Central America."

In the face of a growing, internationally-coordinated movement, Central Americans are optimistic. Brizuela affirms that, "With the solidarity of *compañeros* in the U.S. and our ability to mobilize in Central America, we can still derail CAFTA and instead work to create alternative economic models that improve the situation of the poor in our countries." ★

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Washington Post, May 28, 2004, p. F04

<sup>2</sup> In 1994 Mexico was forced to rewrite its constitution to comply with the rules of NAFTA, particularly the part that allowed for communal landholdings

<sup>3</sup> Calculations based on UN commissioned Human Development Reports, [www.hdr.undp.org/reports](http://www.hdr.undp.org/reports)

<sup>4</sup> "Neo-liberalism" refers in part to the politics of opening a nation's economy to international markets and capitalist investment, privatization, and eliminating protections for national production.

<sup>5</sup> "Lessons from NAFTA: The High Cost of 'Free' Trade, Hemispheric Social Alliance, [www.ase-hsa.org](http://www.ase-hsa.org)

<sup>6</sup> El Diario de Hoy, May 21, 2004, p.38

Alex Modotti is a CISPES organizer in El Salvador

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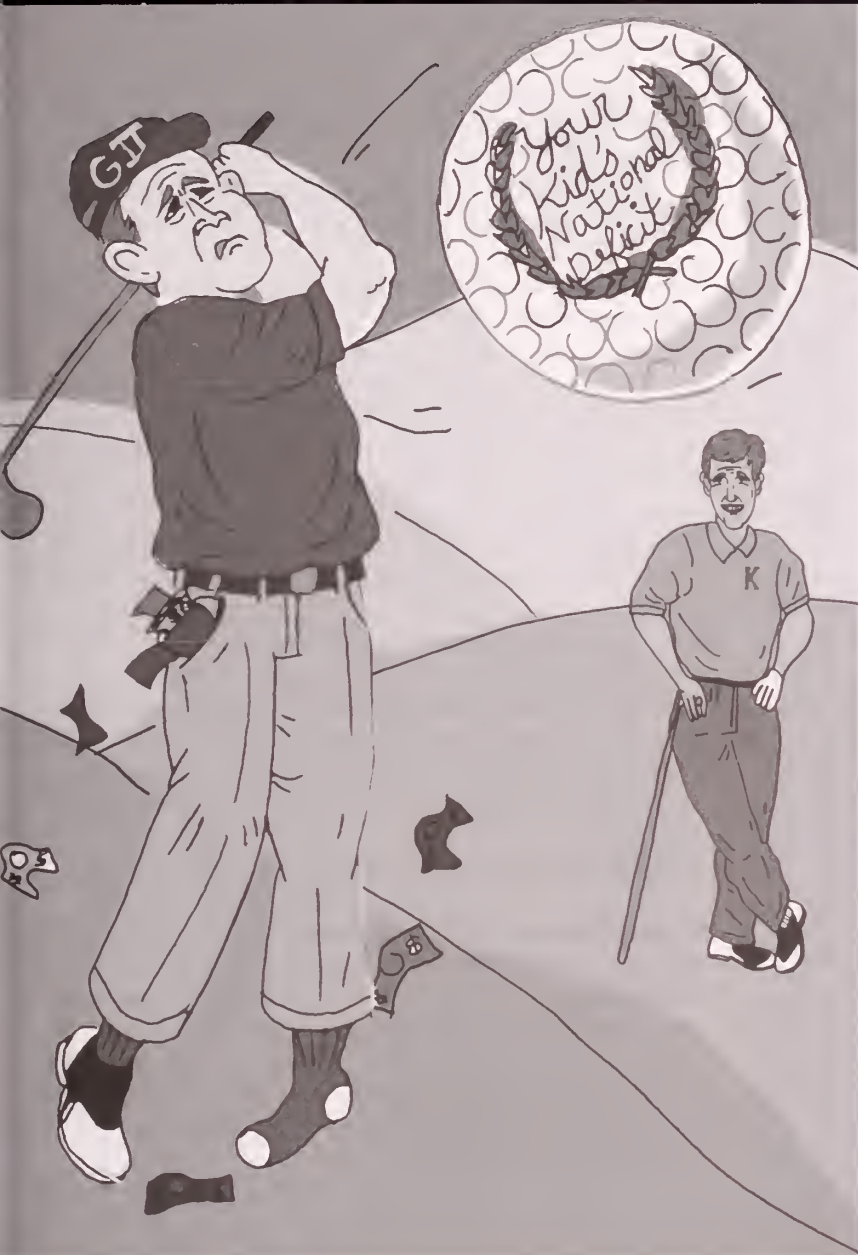
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# The Privileged Few and the Budgeted Many

Can the President Turn  
Conservatives Towards Class War?

Words: Norman Ball | Illustration: Teresa Watson

"These days, it's wealth vs. wealth with wealth mostly winning."

There is a story, possibly apocryphal, about John Kennedy turning to query an advisor during a campaign stop. Why undertake a 30-year ordeal of paperwork and cancelled checks when it would be so much easier to buy a house outright and be done with it, JFK asked. At this point, the advisor is said to have explained to an astonished Kennedy the usurious indignity known as a mortgage.

While our present-day Democratic pretender, JFK II, did not achieve uber-wealth by fortuitous bloodline, he didn't exactly earn it either. John Kerry married it. Twice. There are many paths up the mountain. But the ascent is a lot easier when you can transport your loot in a ski-lift. Unfortunately, a dearth of rich widows makes mortgage or rent payments the norm for most of us.

At least Kerry had to sell himself. George II is a virgin in the hustle and bustle of life's transactions. A stranger to the sweat of his own brow, the President likes to peddle the fanciful notion that he is a fiscal conservative. In truth, Bush is a disastrous budgeter, perhaps abudgetal by birthright.

You see, the Bush elan finds itself miles above the "need thing." George II's fiseal thermostat is not broken. It's been bred out of him. For ordinary Americans, the occasional hunger pain teaches us real life skills, such as where the refrigerator is and how to make a ham sandwich. Bush experienced no such pangs because he had a butler with a silver stethoscope who listened for the faintest rumblings in Boy George's tummy and then dashed to the pantry for a cheeseburger. While most of us were bringing macaroni and cheese to a slow boil, the Bushes were brewing a political dynasty with the Carlyle Group as dessert. It was either that or endless rounds of golf. The result is the tale of how one man's good fortune can become a nation's catastrophe.

As *Meet the Press*'s Tim Russert noted recently, no less conservative bastions as the Cato Institute and The Heritage Foundation have deemed Bush "*the biggest spender in American history.*" For those Republicans whose identity is lashed to the quaint notion of fiscal conservatism, these are strange times indeed. Their guy makes Lyndon "Great Society" Johnson look like a skinflint.

Of course there is still the obligatory rhetoric—the discredited, counter-intuitive supply-side mantras: *It's the people's money and cutting taxes in the face of growing deficits is economically stimulative.* But even the staunchest trickle-downer must be checking his barometer 'cause we're in the Gobi Desert of fiscal unchartedness. Red jerseys and blue jerseys notwithstanding, anyone with a passing interest in national solvency should take a renewed look at the old tax-and-spend Democrats. We need their budgetary discipline. At least Kerry's acquired family makes a fine



## organizer's story: Bush vs. the American Family

Ethel Long-Scott

The national economical and social policies of the Bush administration filter down to the family level in simply awful ways. Every month members of about 400 families come to the Women's Economic Agenda Project (WEAP) to receive food aid from our Prescott Resource Center in West Oakland. This little bit of extra food is needed because the income they receive from their low-wage jobs, senior fixed incomes, disability checks, public assistance checks, or reduced earning as people in recovery is insufficient to meet their basic human needs. Each visit, people tell us about an outrageous lack of health care, an outrageous lack of decent housing, a stunning lack of programs to help their kids grow up decent and safe.

Most outrageous is that these working people represent millions more in the same situation, all victims of the stepped-up war on the poor that represents the other war being waged by the U.S. government — the war they don't discuss. But, just as much as the torture in Iraq's Abu Gharib prison, the government's war on the poor is a violation of fundamental human rights as defined by the United Nations. The impact of the government's war on the poor is that increasingly people don't have enough income to deal with both rent and food.

It's significant that this is happening in California, the sixth largest economy in the world. California is one of the leaders of the national war on the poor, with its disappearing jobs, shuttered hospitals, horrendous rents and devastating cuts to public education while its corporations make off with billions.

Deep in the throes of a multi-year "budget crisis," we know this is no mismanagement of funds or a temporary slump. It is a deep economic and political crisis based on the fact that jobs are disappearing, corporations are making off with billions, and the government will cut every program possible before it touches the gargantuan profits of their corporate bosses.

Big problems demand big solutions. That is why WEAP coordinates the California Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) to build a movement to end poverty and guarantee economic human rights for all. The PPEHRC is based among working poor and jobless workers all over the country, including California and West Oakland. It brings the message that we must unite behind a broad social movement to guarantee economic human rights for all. WEAP unites poor women, and bring in others from senior groups, youth in recovery groups, labor unions and religious organizations.

We educate one another and build towards solutions to economic injustice through campaigns around Just Health Care and Free Higher Education. Ultimately we must build a movement that will lay the base for a time in this country when we elect leaders to govern in our true interests, not the interests of the wealthy. Only then will we have attained democracy.

WEAP | 449 15th St, 2nd Floor | Oakland, CA 94612  
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Ethel Long-Scott is Executive Director of WEAP

ketchup, a Reagan-era dietary staple. Our grandkids' school lunch programs may need vats of the stuff before we see the back of this \$7 trillion rich man's burden.

Let's review a sampling from George II's current Santa's list...

- \$40.2 billion to create a massive new bureaucracy to protect us from rogues wielding box cutters (President's FY2005 proposed HSA budget)
- \$53 billion to create a Star Wars program to protect us from rogues wielding missiles (GAO est. 2004-2009)
- \$401.7 billion for a reduction in the number of global despots, and even more for a two-front military capability (President's FY2005 proposed DOD budget)
- \$534 billion for pharmaceutical giants to sell seniors prescription drugs (White House est. of the President's Medicare drug plan over ten years)
- \$120 billion for manned missions to Mars and the Moon (NASA est. through 2020)
- \$24.3 billion to prop up nineteenth century energy sources (President's FY2005 proposed DOE budget)
- \$266 billion in tax cuts for the rich (combined rev. loss est. by Citizens for Tax Justice for FY2004 resulting from all three Bush tax bills)
- Even good manners (GAO est. "priceless")

And we're gonna get them all. As Bush told Russert, "...I think it's important for people who watch the expenditures side of the equation to understand we're at war. Tim, and any time you commit your troops into harm's way, they must have the best equipment, the best training, and the best possible pay." Okay, it's tough arguing for an escalation in troop endangerment. George II deftly sidesteps the expenditure issue by draping it in a war-torn flag. Budget-wise, I'd say he's skating just like a rich kid.

But then, rich kids have the option to skate. The rest of us must chart a life course around and between the twin-pylons of desire and realistic expectation. Ask your average American family what a budget is. Chances are they'll offer up a poignant refrain such as passing on the kid's braces for a college tuition fund. A family budget is a testament to painful accommodation. Hard choices are about forgoing something you really need for something else you really need, only worse. There are always blood, guts, and abandoned music lessons oozing between the line items. Every good budget is a poignant memorial to deserving deeds left undone. The operative term is *sacrifice*. But then, working people know this intuitively.

The privileged — increasingly the sole guardians of our national treasury — lack this penny-wise prowess. Vast personal wealth can undo the most earnest attempts at conservatism. Our current inherited rich guy has been an abysmal steward of the nation's fiscal well-being. True to ill-formed character and social position, George II did not hash out a budget. He offered up a self-indulgent wish-list gilded by the usual paper tigers: a money press, an *e pluribus unum* stamp, and a lifetime of privilege. Our grandchildren are now on the hook for a mortgage more onerous than JFK I's worst imaginings. If he cringed at mortgaged digs, what would Kennedy make of loans leveraged on the backs of entire future generations? ★

*Norman Ball* ([www.normanball.com](http://www.normanball.com)) is a writer and businessman living in Herndon, Virginia.

# Someone's Gotta Pay the Bills!

## An Introduction to Radical Philanthropy

by Sara Zia Ebrahimi



These days, voter registration is no longer the work of mainstream moderates such as the Women's League of Voters. Around the country, it has taken on renewed significance as grassroots groups add it as a tactic for building power within their communities. In the Philadelphia area, some truly inspiring organizing is taking place around voter registration. For example:

- ACT UP Philadelphia is actively registering those who are most affected by HIV/AIDS and is using the current election cycle to press candidates to commit to increasing AIDS funding locally and globally.
- Reconstruction, Inc., an organization led by former prison inmates, is registering ex-offenders as part of an overall strategy to win more humane sentencing laws in Pennsylvania.

• Election 2004: Vote for Homes! is registering homeless voters and is planning to conduct a massive get-out-the-vote campaign throughout the city.

• Delaware County Wage Peace and Justice has the goal of registering 10,000 new anti-war voters before the November elections in the low-income, post-industrial town of Chester, Pennsylvania.

All of these groups fight for racial, economic, and social justice. They share the common goal of turning the tide of right-wing policy making in the United States. Another important aspect they share is that Bread and Roses Community Fund is one of the few foundations supporting them.

"Reconstruction, Inc. has made it possible for community members and ex-offenders to collectively turn our personal struggles into

political struggles," says its co-founder William Goldsby. "The money from Bread and Roses has specifically allowed us to build our capacity by bringing in experienced organizers and trainers who have helped us make the connections between those personal issues and the larger systemic problems that we need to change."

Founded originally as the People's Fund in 1971, Bread and Roses has distributed more than \$8 million over the past 30 years to grassroots organizations in the Philadelphia area. Approximately 80 percent of Bread and Roses' half-million dollar operating budget comes from individual donors. Seventy percent of them give donations of \$100 or less.

### Philanthropic Mythology

For most people, the word "philanthropist" conjures images of well-to-do New England families or famous rich white men like Bill Gates. It is rare that someone like me comes

*continued next page*



## organizer's story: The Battle for the Southwest

by Karlos Schmeider

President Bush lost the State of New Mexico by a mere 366 votes in the 2000 election, making the Land of Enchantment a definite "battleground state" in this year's contest.

The stakes are high in the bid to control the world's most expensive democracy, and even New Mexico's measly five electoral votes are highly coveted. With the country evenly divided, a surprise has emerged: New voters are en vogue.

With a mission to "empower disenfranchised communities to realize racial and gender equality and social and economic justice," South-West Organizing Project (SWOP) registered nearly 30,000 people to vote in the early '90s as part of a nonpartisan effort to get low-income, working and communities of color to the polls. At the time it was the largest such effort in our state's history. That work continues today through a program called justVote.

"We're talking to our neighbors about a better New Mexico and informing each other so we feel confident we're representing community interests when we vote come November," says Victoria Rodriguez, SWOP organizer. "Yes, we're registering people to vote, but we're also asking people to pledge to actually go to the polls on Election Day."

Voter turnout has been low in recent elections, especially amongst young people: justVote tries to tackle that issue head on by reaching out directly to potential young voters at high schools, college campuses and in the neighborhoods.

"As young people, we've been pushed out of the democratic process by the parties and elected officials," says Yesenia Garcia, SWOP youth member who just graduated high school. "They all talk about bringing young people into the process, but effectively ignore us or just pander to us by using slick advertising — we're taking it upon ourselves to represent our interests."

"Most people choose not to vote even after they've registered. That's understandable considering how we've been treated. But we want to create a culture of democratic participation, even as we are discouraged to do so," says Lolita Roibal, SWOP youth organizer. "We pay a heavy price otherwise."

According to a database compiled by the Associated Press from news reports, 70 percent of US soldiers to die in Iraq have been between the ages of 18 and 27. A growing deficit also looms, in part due to the war. A January *Newsweek* poll showed 56 percent of young people say the Iraq war and the so-called "war on terror" have placed a substantial burden on people under 30 while comparatively little sacrifice is placed on those over 30.

"After years of being criminalized and stereotyped as apathetic by the media and our elected representatives, we're sure being asked to sacrifice a lot with very little promise to represent our interests," says Garcia. "[The media and elected officials] grossly misunderstand the realities facing young people today."

"The only way to protect ourselves from being left with the bill is to become involved," says Roibal.

SWOP | 211 10<sup>th</sup> St SW | Albuquerque, NM 87102  
(505) 247-8832 | [www.swop.net](http://www.swop.net).

*Karlos Schmeider is Communications Organizer for SWOP*



## organizer's story: Power to the Poor!

By Brinda Maira

Make the Road by Walking is a member-led organization based in the low-income community of Bushwick, Brooklyn. Over forty percent of the residents of Bushwick live below the poverty level, and almost forty percent rely on means-tested government benefits. Per capita income is under \$7,000, less than half the New York City average. The unemployment rate is over twenty percent, twice the New York City average, which is already among the highest in the nation.

Bushwick's economic marginalization is compounded by its political marginalization. Sixty-five percent of the community is Latino, and almost half of these Latinos are legal permanent residents. Thus, more than one-third of the adult population of Bushwick is denied the vote based on their immigration status. Bushwick also has a substantial youth population under 18 that cannot vote. For many residents, language barriers further impede political participation.

In the long-term, the political and economic marginalization of Bushwick community residents creates a lack of accountability on the part of community institutions, both public and private. Neighborhood law enforcement and city-run social services, as well as local employers and landlords, chronically exploit this lack of accountability. As a result, inequitable and unlawful treatment deeply pervades the daily lives of Bushwick residents.

While the Bush administration did not create the problems in Bushwick, the President's "War on Terror" has made things even worse, siphoning off resources that could be spent on domestic programs and further maligning immigrants.

Make the Road by Walking was founded to build a voice for Bushwick community residents, and to build power for poor people. Six years since opening our doors, we currently address a wide range of economic and social problems of concern to local people, often related to federal immigration and welfare policy. We build power for low-income residents of Bushwick and adjacent communities by enabling people to strategize and advocate effectively for themselves. This approach has helped us to build a sizeable, united and well-informed membership that has a significant impact on neighborhood life and broader public policy.

Our membership of almost 900 community residents, assisted by a staff of 14 full-time organizers, educators and attorneys, works to challenge injustice in many ways. Parents educate one another about their children's educational rights, and young people challenge neighborhood policy-makers to invest more in youth services. We work to ensure that local schools provide a safe environment for LGBT students. Our Environmental Justice Project is fighting against a neighborhood lead poisoning epidemic and unsafe housing conditions, and working to convert hazardous vacant lots into park space. We combat unlawful and discriminatory treatment of immigrants by the welfare bureaucracy and fight for improved access to healthcare in local hospitals. Our members also force employers and unions to respect the basic workplace rights of community residents, many of whom work under illegal sweatshop conditions without receiving minimum wage, overtime pay or sick leave.

All in all, these programs affirm an ethic of cooperation, mutual help, dignity and animus, while helping to make local institutions more subject to democratic community control. This work is a necessary counterweight to the Bush administration, and whatever administration follows.

Make the Road by Walking | 301 Grove Street | Brooklyn, NY 11237  
(718) 418-7690 | [www.maketheroad.org](http://www.maketheroad.org)

*Brinda Maira is School Community Organizer for Make the Road by Walking*

to mind — a late 20s immigrant turned urban hipster visual artist and nonprofit office worker. Despite my average salary, I am a serious philanthropist with a giving plan to distribute an allocated percentage of my earnings that comes out to roughly \$300 a year. I am not the aberration here. My donor profile is much closer to the norm.

Eighty percent of charitable giving in this country is by individuals. The vast majority of individual donors are middle-class and low-income people of all racial backgrounds. This has been a static trend over the last 60 years, since charitable giving in the U.S. first began being studied and recorded.

Unfortunately, less than two percent of all philanthropic dollars go toward funding progressive social change, according to a study by the National Network of Grantmakers. This is contrasted by the millions of dollars in individual contributions that support the conservative movement, as documented by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

### Strength in Numbers

In the early 1970s, groups of individuals began forming progressive community funds, like Bread and Roses, in a number of cities across the country. Their vision was to create structures that would channel money toward progressive community organizations. In 1979 the Funding Exchange (FEX) was created as a national network of five progressive foundations. Today FEX has 18 local member and affiliate member funds.

"Building a national network helped individual funds take a great leap forward," says Ellen Gurzinsky, executive director of the Funding Exchange. "Grounded in the concept of mutual support, FEX was able to provide increased visibility and financial stability that helped build both the network and individual funds into sustainable institutions that have continued to support grassroots movements over the past 25 years."

The first thing these foundations have in common is a commitment to change, not charity.

FEX supports groups working toward systemic change by altering public opinion and public policies toward greater economic and social justice. All FEX members also operate under the principle of constituent-controlled grant making. Traditionally, philanthropic funds have boards of directors who decide who should receive grants from the foundation. Most often these people are bankers, lawyers, and other professionals whose life experience is often far from those economically and socially marginalized. The philanthropic process becomes an exercise in paternalism — a traditionally-patterned relationship of money and power in which those with wealth are able to control who and what are funded.

FEX foundations have committees made up of activists who are on the ground doing the actual work, including former or current grantee organizations. These committees guide all grant-giving decisions. Cross-issue, cross-class, and cross-race groups come together to collectively decide what the funding priorities in their region should be. The power normally associated with money is shifted into a new context that is governed by a more broad-based vision.

To quote from FEX's vision statement, "Money alone does not bring about change; nor do individuals. But when people band together and form organizations to focus their collective power, social change can happen." Each of the FEX member

funds is an attempt to bring together the collective power both of money and vision for social change.

### This Program is Made Possible By...

When organizations say every dollar counts, they mean it. When they ask for donations, they *are* asking *you*. It is easy for many of us to think, "I don't have much; I'll let someone well-off take care of the financial support." But that's not the case. Grassroots fundraising is like grassroots organizing; it relies on each of us understanding our role and increased strength when we come together.

"If we believe in the need for the work," says Christie Balka, long time activist and current executive director of Bread and Roses Community Fund, "we've got to write our own checks — and add them to checks written by others. It's only when we have the resources that the Right has will be able to take the power back. And too many people are being hurt by right-wing politics to not get serious about taking power back."

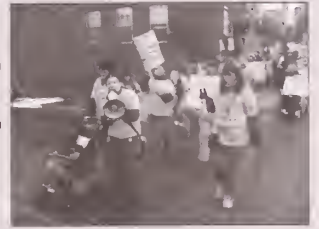
Institutions like the Funding Exchange and Bread and Roses are testament that people can pool their money collectively to support social change work. People who want to stop the policies of this horrendous administration need to push themselves to give more and to give more strategically. Educate yourself, decide on your funding priorities, and create a strategic plan for giving. Whether you can give five or 500 dollars a month, your donation will make a real difference if you donate to groups doing effective organizing for social change. In the face of the current right-wing assault, let's claim our roles not only as artists and activists, but as radical philanthropists.

For more information on the Funding Exchange or any of its member funds, visit [www.fex.org](http://www.fex.org) or call 212.529.5300. For information and resources for young people with wealth involved in social change work, visit [www.resourcegeneration.org](http://www.resourcegeneration.org). ★

*Sara Zia Ebrahimi lives in Philadelphia and is Assistant to the Director of Bread and Roses Community Fund. She has also served on the board of the Self-Education Foundation and participated in the Young Donor Organizing Alliance. When she's not asking people to donate money, her other interests include video production, cultural studies and contemporary Iranian history.*

## organizer's story: Bush's War on the Poor

Jesse Leah Vear



President Bush made it a priority to give hundreds of billions of dollars in tax cuts for the wealthy. He has proposed spending billions more on the military, oil exploration and even to send a man to Mars. Yet he has done next to nothing to provide adequate healthcare, childcare or housing for America's working families.

In Maine, as elsewhere throughout the country, the state Department of Human Services (DHS) often removes children from the homes of poor families due to conditions of poverty. Contrary to many people's notions of Child Welfare policies, more than 60% of children who are removed from their homes were never abused; they simply lack access to a decent standard of living. DHS pays foster care agencies up to \$300,000 a year for every child they place with a new family. The government should use that money for better healthcare, childcare and housing programs to. "Take away our POVERTY, not our children!" Better allocation of funds and better policy priorities are desperately needed both at the state and federal levels, because our families are being literally torn apart by economic injustice.

Founded in 2001, Portland Organizing to Win Economic Rights (POWER), is a no-budget, all-volunteer organization made up predominately of low-income and working-class people working together in the struggle for economic justice here in Maine. On International Women's Day this March, we held a march to the DHS offices to speak up for the rights of those whose children were unjustly stripped away from them. We marched behind a banner reading "Mothers of the Disappeared," to relate our struggle with that of the brave women of Argentina who stood up to a military dictatorship that brutally robbed them of their loved ones. We also carried approximately twenty-five large cut-out silhouettes, each representing a child that had been removed from their family by DHS caseworkers.

At first, many of us were worried about reprisals from DHS and also whether the police would interfere because we were marching without a permit. As we gathered, however, the shared stories of DHS abuses emboldened people. Some had driven for hours to attend, and one woman even slept in her car the night before to be there. Shared experiences united us, like that of a young woman who told us, "I asked for help and instead of helping they just came and took my kids. It's hard enough just being poor. Without my kids I ain't got nuthin' left."

The march went off without a hitch, and our story of people struggling against poverty became the top news story that night on television stations all across the state. Months later, our phone still rings off the hook with people whose families have been torn apart first by poverty and then by the system, who are glad to know that their cases aren't isolated and that people are coming together to fight for change.

POWER | PO Box 4281 | Portland, ME 04101  
(207) 681-0035 | [power@riseup.net](mailto:power@riseup.net)

*Jesse Leah Vear is a low-income rights activist working with Portland Organizing to Win Economic Rights*

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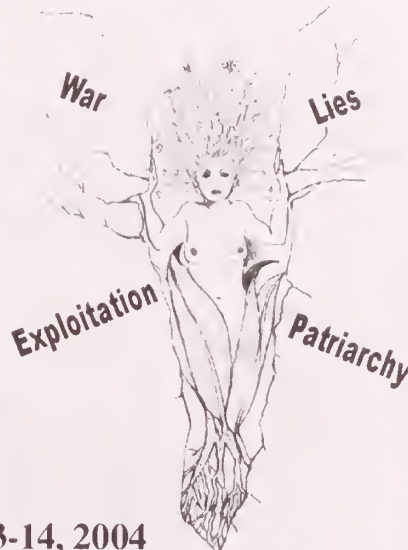
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# Who Wants to be a Billionaire?

Billionaires For Bush Kicks off a Season of Protest, Pranks, and Party-going.

On a breezy Saturday night in late May, New York's youngest Billionaires were six-week-old twins dubbed "Cash" and "Carry." They were proudly toted around by their mother and father, both in evening gowns, while other Billionaires, bedecked in their own ballroom finery, cooed over the infants in elevator lines on the three floors of Chelsea's City Stage.

The occasion for the duo's arrival — about 15 years ahead of schedule — was the Billionaires' Ball: a Spring Bling K'Ching Thing, a night-long party put on by the street theater-cum-protest group, Billionaires for Bush. "Founded during the 2000 Presidential election, Billionaires for Bush (B4B) was designed to be a strategic, grassroots media campaign that spreads like a virus" to denounce the negative effects of wealth on politics, according to the Billionaires' online DIY guide to becoming a Billionaire, available at their Web site ([www.billionairesforbush.com](http://www.billionairesforbush.com)).

Newly mobilized, strategically planned, and garnering more media attention than many of their more official and better-funded coun-

terparts on the (anti-)campaign trail, "Billionaires for Bush is a do-it-yourself street theater and media campaign," according to Pam Perd, the group's National Director for Public Relations (who provided only her Billionaire identity, "for separation reasons"). Perd's effort at separation seems to be in name alone, as she typically devotes 40 hours per week to the Billionaires on top of working full-time.

The creation of a Billionaire identity is but a preliminary step in casting oneself as a Billionaire. Billionaires for Bush's Web site lists snarky names for acolytes to assume, and encourages them to emerge from "behind closed limo doors" to engage in an intensely media-savvy combination of protest, street theater, organization, and activism. Role-

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**BillionairesForBush.com**

playing generalities may pepper the web site, but the DIY guide to becoming a Billionaire is 45 pages long and provides instructions for everything from developing a Billionaire personality (encouraging newbies to create "Your Persona & Portfolio") to planning one's own Billionaire actions (including the inside-out approach of "Counter-Demonstrating at Anti-Bush Events").

The Billionaires bank upon the creativity of their membership to embrace their story-within-a-story approach to ousting Bush, inverting typical models of protest and demonstration by subversively appearing to support that which they wish to alter. Billionaire street actions are typically peaceable ones in which it's not uncommon for actual Bush supporters, confused about the Billionaires' real intentions, to append themselves to the group in a show of mistaken solidarity. According to Perd, the Billionaires' collective straight face and singularity of focus is what keeps it so effective in "using a heaping spoonful of humor, savvy political messaging, grassroots participation, and the Internet to flush out the truth about how the Bush administration's economic policies have been a disaster for most Americans."

May's Billionaires Ball raised money for the group's summer "Swing State Limo Tour" and its upcoming actions, currently in the planning stage, in conjunction with the Republican National Convention's arrival in New York City at the end of August.

At press time, it's too soon to speculate on how many members will represent the group in New York City. If those numbers mirror B4B's exponential growth since the first of the year, it seems unlikely that convention-goers will avoid the lavishly-clad impostors. Back in January, at B4B's inaugural event — which was to kick off the presidential election

year of actions, fundraising, and demonstrations — B4B had only two chapters and a Ball with 450 attendees; May's event boasted approximately 1,100 guests while 50 new chapters have sprung up nationwide, according to Emily Wynns (a.k.a. "Lucinda Regulations"), Deputy Director of Public Relations.

Given the rapidly devolving situation in Iraq, when every passing day seems to provide anti-Bush activists with a new reason to rally to unseat him, and in an increasingly charged election season, the Billionaires' success in building membership and popularity stems from the fact that "people are looking for change," according to Perd. "People are very unhappy with the administration at this time and they're looking for a way to lend their hand to changing that." As Perd sees it, the Billionaires provide a droll, creative roadmap to effecting such change. "Billionaires for Bush works because of our tight messag-

ing and savvy delivery," she said. "We know our facts, and we are witty. Plus, it's fun to be a Billionaire!"

At the spring fundraiser, Billionaires of all ages appeared to agree. Throughout the night, party-goers in tuxedos, opera gloves, and evening gowns streamed into City Stage to watch Billionaire performers convey the group's message through singalongs, brief speeches defending the rich, and skits in which mock corporation heads and moneyed old-boy networks fought to protect their sizeable political interests.

One of its major successes is that, unlike many other protest groups, the Billionaires have been able to attract participants of all ages and backgrounds with their grandeur. Though Cash and Carry were the youngest Billionaires at the Ball, others ranged in age from seven to seventy. Ariel Willner, aged seven, was wearing a white wedding dress,

and answering to "Mary Rich." According to her mother, Toby Willner, a petite dark-haired woman only slightly less bedecked than her offspring in nuptial attire, their involvement in the Billionaires arose from their participation in the Radical Cheerleaders (defined on its Web site as "activism with pom-poms and middle fingers extended"). "I'm divorced, so when Bush got elected, I would bring Ariel with me to the Radical Cheerleaders practice because I didn't have a babysitter. She wound up learning the cheers better than me," said Willner.

Dark-haired Ariel streamed layers of tulle as she shyly circled her mother, who said "I think it's really rubbed off on

Alan Greenspend takes a load off at the ball.



[Ariel]. At school they had the students draw pictures of the flag and she wound up drawing two — one was an American flag and the other was a peace flag. It was a golden mothering moment for me,” Willner said with a laugh.

Of her own political involvement, Willner said, “I’ve been doing activist stuff my whole life. Back when I started, you did it because it was the right thing to do, not because it was fun. I think Billionaires for Bush is a great concept — it’s really fun,” she said, gesturing to the throngs of people in their finery. “A lot of people who have progressive sentiments don’t end up getting involved, because they think this is drudgery. If it’s more fun, like this, people want to get involved.”

Around Willner and Ariel, the fun took increasingly disparate shapes as the evening progressed. In the night’s earlier stages, couples waltzed to piped-in ballroom music on a darkened dance floor. An adjacent bar fashioned from folding tables had an inverted black plastic top hat on it. Intended for tips, it was emblazoned with a sign reading “BRIBES.” On the top floor, the Billionaires Follies re-purposed sing-along favorites in their own musical satire, replacing the words of the Village People’s hit “YMCA”:

*Dubya, when you're short on the dough  
I said, Dubya, call up a CEO  
Legal tender  
We'll be crossing your paws  
To make sure you're  
Soft on laws  
It's fun to say that we're your CEOs!  
President Bush, we're your CEOs!  
We're the fattest of cats  
Bucks are mutually scratched  
We cut checks and then he cuts tax!*

Somewhere between the wildly gesticulating performers and the bar was an elderly Billionaire, dapper in tuxedo and cane. Seventy-year-old Tom Uchs extolled the Billionaires’ approach. “To produce publicity like this gives strength to individuals and groups,” Uchs said. His companion, Polly Dinero, chimed in, “This puts a new face on politics.”

Dinero, a board member of Responsible Wealth, NY/United for a Fair Economy (the Boston chapter helped spawn the Billionaires in 2000) believes the Billionaires’ Bush-related efforts are only the tip of the ideological iceberg in terms of the political changes the group can effect. “Win or lose [the presidential race], Billionaires for Bush is just getting started. There are congressional races where it’s

important to bring those issues out — certain candidates are owned by rich folks.” Dinero said.

Pam Perd also believes in the Billionaires’ post-presidential future. “Corporate cronyism is not going to disappear in one election,” she said. “The Billionaires will continue to exist.” To accommodate the proliferation of Billionaire chapters across the country, as well as to a continually shifting political landscape, Perd said, “Groups can adapt into subsidiary organizations,” beneath the umbrella of the Billionaires’ anti-big money philosophy.

Formal in attire more than attitude, the flexible formulas by which the Billionaires broaden their efforts and plan their actions account for the group’s ability to stage effective actions and recruit new members far from their New York headquarters, according to Perd. Here, monthly “Billionaire Meet-ups,” open to whomever wishes to attend, generally start with proposed actions that can be reactive (tied into an upcoming news event or governmental visit or occasion) or proactive (celebrating an economic issue-based event of the Billionaires’ own conception, such as its “Widen the Healthcare Gap Day,” which was run in on June 19).

With upcoming occasions of both types in mind, the Billionaires brainstorm ideas for slogans and messages, asking themselves what their plan of attack should be as well as identifying the goals of the action (maximum media exposure being a primary objective). After breaking into small groups to make suggestions, the Billionaires reconvene and select their strongest strategies and slogans by vote.

Commanding media attention as their primary goal, Billionaires for Bush, like the presidential candidates themselves, look forward to reaching out to swing voters. The “Swing State Limo Tour” is focused upon acquiring new Billionaires by infiltrating college campuses and taking their messages to political events in heavily-contested states, including Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, and the famously pivotal Ohio. The fourth-week culmination of the Swing State Tour will send Billionaires out in force throughout the Republican National Convention and feature both the Million Billionaire March, scheduled for August 29, and the Coronation Ball, which will be held on the eve of Bush’s acceptance of the Republican nomination.

To ensure maximum involvement and mobilization, the Billionaires intend to capitalize on technology, according to Wynns. “I’m sure there’ll be a lot of email coordina-

tion, and we’ll definitely rely on text messaging,” she said.

Also on the docket for the Billionaires are potential unions with other web-savvy grassroots groups aiming to activate voters. While no connections have been formalized yet, “We’ve been making strides and alliances with various groups like Moveon.org, reaching out and being reached out to,” said Perd. “Has there been anything concrete, announced, official? No, but there are alliances being formed right now,” she said.

As the Billionaires kick into high gear in the months leading up to November’s election, demands on top-tier Billionaires are also on the rise. Perd dedicates approximately 40 hours a week to the Billionaires, and Wynns clocks a solid 25, on top of full-time jobs in both cases. “I do expect that as the summer progresses and the election approaches, we will all be under a great deal of pressure and will be faced with handling increased work and accompanying high stress levels,” said Wynns. “Come election day, I will definitely take some time to relax and take a vacation.”

Both Wynns and Perd cite the ardor and innovation of the individuals who comprise the Billionaires as their own source of motivation. “Every member is dedicated, creative, intelligent, and progressive, and being surrounded by such people is a great high,” said Perd. “I was recently asked, ‘What would you be doing if you weren’t involved in the Billionaires?’” she recalled. “Of course, I could have listed off numerous things — but I don’t think about my involvement that way. It’s not a ‘this or that’ situation. I am exactly where I want to be, doing exactly what I want to be doing and loving every minute of it.”

Back at the Ball, revelers shared Perd’s enthusiasm. A hip-hop group entreated the crowd to “Bounce, Billionaires, Bounce,” as a man in a white leisure suit and a Nixon mask straddled a beach ball painted to look like a globe. “He has the whole world between his legs,” remarked an onlooker with a maroon Louise Brooks bob, strands of pearls wound around her neck. As she exited City Stage with a tuxedoed date, they sidestepped Cash and Carry to stride past an ice sculpture in the shape of the Billionaires’ symbol: a rotund piggy bank, stuffed to overflowing with (faux) cash. Over the course of the evening, in its inevitably melty undoing, the ice sculpture streamed, sending the illusion of money trickling down. ☆

*Rebecca L. Fox is a magazine writer and editor in New York.*

# No, George, No!

## A New Pack of Kids' Books Confronts George's Juvenile Presidency

by Eric Zassenhaus



from Chad Crowe's *Curious George W.*

*"There's only one person who hugs the mothers and the widows, the wives and the kids upon the death of their loved one. Others hug, but having committed the troops, I've got an additional responsibility to hug and that's me and I know what it's like."*

George W. Bush says the darnedest things.

Whether he's enumerating our reasons for going into Iraq ("...we must not allow the world's worst leaders to develop and harbor the world's worst weapons. I got a lot of tools at my disposal, and I'm a patient man, and I'm a patient man..."), showing surprise at his victory in the 2000 election ("It's amazing I won. I was running against peace, prosperity, and incumbency"), or merely calling for the support of the nation ("People say, how can I help on this war against terror? How can I fight evil? You can do so by mentoring a child; by going to a shut-in's house and saying 'I love you'..."), the President Select seems to have a knack of transforming even the most basic sentiments into a confusing and pathetically inarticulate statement. In the weeks and months just after his supposed victory in 2000, a glut of books was released that collected his (mis)statements. Since that time, there have been enough confusing (mis)pronunciations and embarrassing quotes to fill several hundred others.

Add to Bush's ability to mangle a statement and humiliate a nation, his childish gestures and mannerisms — that shifty Dennis-the-Menace glance he gives the audience whenever he comes to the end of an orchestrated statement, his trademark half-cocked sneer grin — and his incredibly simplistic view of the world, in which everything is reduced to good evil, terrorist Republican dichotomies. The scenarios the Bush Administration is constantly finding themselves in sometimes seem like a terrifying, apocalyptic version of the capers Dennis is constantly inventing: a sort of cataclysmic Curious George.

Sensing there's no lack of lessons kids could learn from the fumbblings of the administration and its head, a number of kids' books on Bush have recently appeared on select bookshelves across the U.S. From Chad Crowe's satirizing knock-off, *Curious George W.*, to Karen Ocker's *George W. Bush Coloring Book*, to Kathy Eder & Clay Butler's more sincere, *No, George, No!*, the books draw on the many mistakes of the Man-child in Chief to illustrate life lessons to a new generation of kids, or maybe just to have a laugh at the President Select's expense.

Chad Crowe's *Curious George W.* draws on Bush's simian similarities to reintroduce him (pretty convincingly) as Curious George — the naughty chimp who's always the center of minor catastrophe. "I'd seen photos comparing [Bush] to chimps before, and his physical characteristics, coupled with his mischievous ignorance seemed to fit right in line with the original Curious George," says Crowe. In his satirical spin-off, George is constantly doing his best to impress the mysterious Man in the Yellow Hat (who bears a striking resemblance to #2 man Dick Cheney) and his cigar-chomping groupies. Cutting deals with fat cat energy CEOs, delivering billions to oil giants, dropping bombs on far-off lands — it's all part of the effort to win the affection of his yellow-hatted man. By the book's end, however, George surveys the damage and realizes, perhaps too late, the human cost of his efforts. But are all these slightly-veiled references and scenes of carnage something a kid could understand, and stomach? Chad says no: "A young audience might find the pictures humorous, but you'd have to have a background in recent political events to understand the story."

Karen Ocker, author of *The George W. Bush Coloring Book*, disagrees: "Kids are aware of the world beyond our borders. They are aware of terrorism and have experienced its sting of fear and confusion first-hand. They are aware that we are at war. To mistakenly think that policies and events in the world do not affect them seems dangerous to



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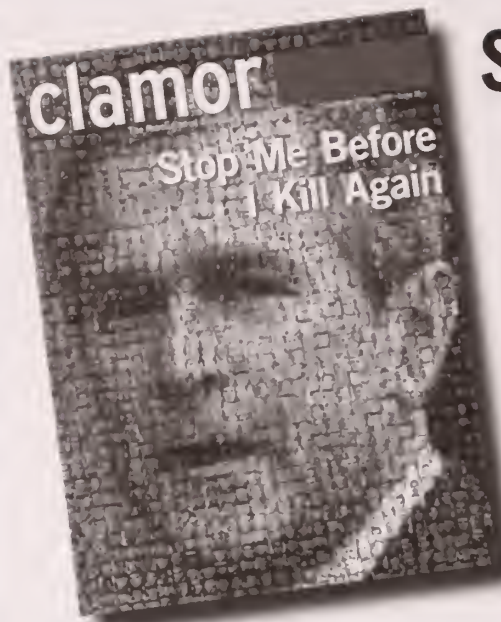
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me." Pairing the President's confused statements with the sometimes surreal images they conjure up, Ocker has created a coloring book that invites the reader to enter into the odd world of W. through his mis-statements. Take a statement like the mushy-mouthed 'hugging' diatribe above. What the hell does that mean? Nothing, really, but it does evoke some strange, perversely dream-like images, and that's exactly what Ocker explores in her coloring book: Bush and Cheney hugging each other, hugging grieving families, hugging their bombs, even as they drop them on a terrified populace. In case you missed the sarcasm, the back of the book contains a two-page "footnote" by Joley Wood, which elaborates on the President's doublespeak more bluntly, pinpointing the Bush Administration's abominable record on everything from education reform to environmental policy. "It's been great seeing kids look at the coloring book," says Ocker, "asking questions and watching the fantastic way it opens up communication between parents and kids about serious issues."

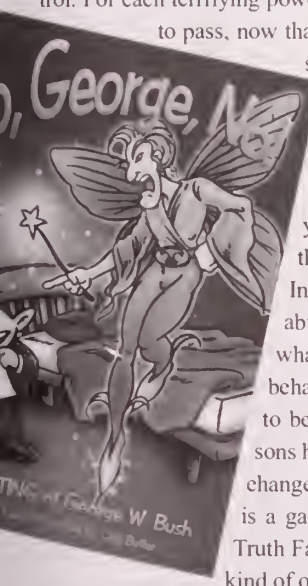
Perhaps more imaginative, if more bizarre, is Kathy Eder and Clay Butler's beautifully-illustrated book, *No, George, No!: The Re-Parenting of George W. Bush*. Here, the President, napping one afternoon in his executive office, has a dream in which he's taken back to his childhood. For the rest of the book, an oddly chubby child George Jr. spouts on about his many fantasies of world domination and economic control. For each terrifying power-hungry idea (all ideas which have come to pass, now that Bush Jr. has grown up), a "Truth Fairy" steps in to re-educate him: "No, George. No!"

The book is an imagining of what the world might be like, had a spoiled and pampered little scion been redirected at a younger age. Says Eder, "I teach young men... I often see childhood events that lead to negative behavior in adulthood. Instead of hating criminals or politicians who abuse or harm others, I prefer to look to see what caused such hatred, greed, or negative behavior... Young George needs to learn how to behave in the world, and hopefully the lessons he learns while playing 'Let's Imagine' will change his behavior as an adult." "Let's Imagine" is a game George Jr. plays with his mentor, the Truth Fairy, who bears a striking resemblance to a kind of overzealous social worker. The book comes

off as a bit didactic, and threaded into the beautifully illustrated pictures is a battle between George's sociopathic fantasies and his Truth Fairy's attempts to "re-educate" him. By the book's end, the president awakens

from his nap and, we're lead to believe, begins to rethink the way he's ruled.

There's a little irony in the fact that no one has benefited more from the perception of Bush as a simpleton than Bush himself. What might be the basis for years of summer school for most of us has been translated into a special ability for Bush Jr., as is evidenced by a number of pro-Bush books which glamorize his inability to speak — for instance, Bill Sammon's recent *Misunderestimated*. It might be that, for many Americans, a simple-minded, confused babble of ideas beats the double-speak you hear from well-seasoned, sleight-of-hand politicians like Gore and Kerry. In a number of ways, the perception of Bush as a child has done a lot to excuse his glaring errors and ingratiate him in the minds of many as an honest, if naive, straight-shooter. After all, who can resist feeling sympathy for a naughty little monkey or an imaginative plumpkin? Is there a way that this new spate of Bush kids' books, rather than highlighting the idioey of his statements and acts, might "cute-ify" the Bush Administration's policies as well-meaning, if misdirected, solutions to real problems? "I guess that might be a concern in some circumstances, as everything becomes a media spectacle for entertainment's sake these days," waxes Crowe. "So much information hits you over the head, but I think laughter is a powerful, and often overlooked, means of communicating a serious subject matter. The administration appears to handle problems in a very juvenile manner, and the results are often horrible and shocking to them after the fact, just like what happens in the real Curious George stories. So the metaphor appears to have been an appropriate one." Ocker agrees, "...people are more inclined to approach grave subjects with laughter or humor and probably more likely to share it with others." She adds, "There is certainly nothing cute about a failing economy, dead soldiers and grieving families, racial profiling, terrorism, unbridled power paired with massive arsenals of WMDs, poor environmental policies, or the angry world that Bush has alienated us from at a time when we need allies and their support the most. These issues are all depicted in the illustrations along with other quotes with less gravity that sound more like hallucinatory babble than words of a world-leader." Whether Bush's policies make you laugh, cry, or bury your head in the sandbox, Ocker says, "You just can't invent this stuff. It's laughable and terrifying all at the same time." ☆



## Work

All that is solid melts  
Independently released  
(WORKMUSIC@peoplepc.com)

Hardly an allusion to the mindless monotony inspired by the word, this CD is revolutionary hip-hop music for us, the working class. With incredible lyrical content from start to finish, it features intelligent vocal flows by an MC that spits keen and unrelenting. Yet the backbone of this project is undoubtedly the production, with its down-to-earth,

non-flashy, DIY feel that is most tangible. This collection of 15 tracks is the first full-length release by the Houston, TX based duo known as Work. A masterful collaboration by DJ Task and MC Evak, who serve up an unconventional progressive education, well versed on their subject matter. Featuring an excellent "Intro" that ebbs into "Element," a message to those egotistical, no talent MC's out there. On "Broken



segues into "Daniel," by bringing great storytelling via a convincing delivery. "Good Life" haunts the house with spoken truth and a spooky vocal loop, while "Suspension" features some hot utilization of Del the Funkee Homosa-

## SUBTERRANEAN HIP HOP

pien samples. With "Symmetry" and "Question," their production shines both musically and lyrically and the tone is undeniably subversive. Many will appreciate how Work makes their statement thematic by sowing just seeds of dissent, which ultimately grow, blossom, and spread like wildfire. This CD is subterranean brilliance and stands as a well-crafted contribution to the world of underground hip-hop. It deserves to be heard by the masses, not the mainstream. -Vigilance

# Hip Hop is Breedin' Revolution. Ya Heard?

words Aysa Massell

photos Ana Nogueira

First Nations' healer once said that the voice of the minority is the most important voice because it relates what the majority is forgetting. The so-called minority of America — the black, the brown, the yellow and red, the youth, the homeless, and the poor — can attest to many things the majority has forgotten: the prison-industrial complex, increasing poverty, police brutality, and inadequate education. These are just some of the issues that barely touch the middle and upper classes yet weigh heavily on the poor and people of color.

Underground hip hop culture, born on the streets of America's inner cities, speaks loudly and consistently of life on the local level, which has everything to do with politics on the national and even global level. Take the experience of Rico Pabon, for example, an emcee for the Bay Area-based Prophets of Rage and O-Maya. He remembers a time in his youth when cocaine suddenly flooded the streets of his neighborhood. Family members became caught in various stages of addiction and his own mom and step-dad started using heroin. It was only later in his life that he picked up a book called *The Big White Lie: The*

*Deep Cover Operation That Exposed the CIA Sabotage of the Drug War*, by Michael Levine and Laura Kavanau-Levine, and realized that there was a connection between his family's private struggles with drug addiction and big-time policymakers in the White House. Because of his personal experience, Pabon feels a responsibility to tell the truth as he sees it and share that knowledge with others through the medium of the spoken word. "People are still living with family members, a mother who is on crack, a father who is in jail, and they need to know that it's not an accident," he says. "They need to know that it's not because they're ignorant or that they're born out of sin or because they're less than somebody. They need to know that it's a system designed specifically so that certain people can stay up on top and that it can't work any other way, the system is not made so that everyone can succeed."

Hip hop music can be a pulpit from which the eloquent preach to a crowd of bobbing heads and swaying bodies. It takes a talented storyteller to capture his or her audience. As Pabon puts it, "You don't just want to write down facts and blurt out statistics; you want to really touch someone's heart and make them understand why there's a connection between them and the rest of the world."

Hip hop music at its roots is resistance culture, born of a time and place when instruments were hard to come by and people had to make do with record players and the human voice. It is a part of the folkloric tradition — simple songs that talk about everyday things. Although the technology has evolved some, the basic premise remains the same: add a voice to rhythm and you've got music to groove to.

Chuck D addressing delegates



Dead Prez performing

As hip hop music has grown in popularity, however, entertainment moguls have increasingly turned it from its roots as a subculture of resistance to an industry driven by profit and mainstream political agendas. Music videos with barely-clothed women, \$45,000 trucks, guns, and all-night dance parties depict a hip hop culture of superficiality, violence, and materialism. "The commercial side of hip hop, the side that has been bought from us, that has been taken away from us, and is now being sold back to us," Pabon says, "just reinforces negative stereotypes about all people of color and youth in general... If my eleven-year-old cousin sees only these images, it's not cool to go vote, it's not cool to smile at my brother when he walks past me, it's a threat if someone looks at you. What does all this mean? It means I'm never going to connect with my neighbor. We see each other as a threat rather than allies. We're not going to mobilize; we're never going to go to the polls, whether you believe in the system or not. Because of the way hip hop has been stolen, they can use

it as a weapon against us to make sure their political platforms continue to be exactly what they want."

Hard Knock Radio is one attempt to gather together the many diverse voices of the hip hop community and fashion a public consciousness. A daily hour-long program devoted entirely to issues surrounding hip hop music and culture on an independent (non-commercial) station, it is unique. Some of the bigger names who have appeared on the show include KRS-One, Saul Williams, Sarah Jones, Sista Souljah, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, The Coup, Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, Paris, Chuck D, and the Reverend Jesse Jackson, just to name a few. More importantly, Hard Knock gives voice to lesser-known artists and activists who are not heard anywhere in the mainstream or even the progressive media. There you might learn about the young man in Ohio who is facing up to four years in jail for producing and distributing a CD that has some violent lyrics. Equally likely, you might hear about a local natural-birthing support group or the latest merging of soul and hip hop. The programming is always compelling, relevant, and full of a variety of music.

Hard Knock Radio was born in 1999 when the 94.1 KPFA community radio station in Berkeley, California, was under siege by its managing entity, the Pacifica Foundation. Known for its hard-hitting, progressive programming and its history as the first community-supported radio station in the U.S., KPFA was in danger of becoming yet another corporate-driven radio station. Earlier in the year, Pacifica's board had eliminated the elections process and set up a self-appointing governance structure. The Executive Director of Pacifica then fired KPFA's popular general manager, Nicole Sawaya. Things became more tense as evidence surfaced that Pacifica was considering selling KPFA and WBAI in New York — two of its most beloved and most brazenly progressive stations. Radio announcers at KPFA who reported on the situation, despite a Pacifica-imposed gag rule, were fired. Eventually, Pacifica locked out all staff and prepared to stream in programming from KPFA in Los Angeles. Outraged KPFA supporters flocked to the station and held demonstrations and sit-ins, and the hip hop community was an integral part of the protests. Weyland Southon, executive director, co-founder, and co-host of Hard Knock Radio, describes the way the hip hop commu-



nity eventually helped to win access back into the station:

*"The hip hop heads among the staff and the community decided to organize and get back into the station. We held dance parties out in the street, break dancing contests, street battles, poetry readings. When we did win access back into the station we demanded primetime airtime. We just felt like we could give voice to a community that's not heard, we could bring a new audience to KPFA that is not heard, and that we could push the envelope and break all the rules. The assumption is that hip hop youth don't want to analyze so there's not a forum. We give them a forum where they can exchange ideas, share strategies, and hear music that other radio isn't playing."*

Unfortunately, Hard Knock remains a rare voice on the airwaves. However, there are other movements afoot that are advancing the reach of politically-conscious hip hop. *AWOL Revolutionary Artist Workshop* magazine, a project of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, is a prime example of hip hop activism reaching a national population. Currently working on their third issue, the people at *AWOL* have hit upon the perfect combination: a visually stimulating, politically packed magazine that includes a free CD compilation of mostly underground hip hop artists, all for five bucks an issue. Walidah Imarisha, editor of *AWOL* and half of the dynamic spoken word duo Good Sista, Bad Sista explains the origin of the magazine:

*"A few years ago, it was brought to [the attention of CCCO] that there were no materials aimed specifically at people of color even though they are the most recruited populations by the military. People of color are really in an extremely vulnerable position due to economic factors — what we call the poverty draft. We say that there is a draft going on when people don't really have any other economic options. They are being drafted, not recruited. AWOL was conceived as a tool to utilize so that folks could have a forum to talk."*

Over time, the magazine has evolved to encompass not only militarism in society, but also prisons, poverty, and sexism, among other important issues. The editors are continually recruiting youth to write stories, submit art, and send in tracks of their music, and as a result their readership has responded with interest and enthusiasm. The magazine is distributed primarily by grassroots means — volunteers who go into the schools alongside military recruiters and hand out copies of *AWOL* as an antidote (half of what *AWOL* prints is given for free). Despite the pressures of working daily with issues of war and injustice, "What really keeps my spirit up," Imari-

sha says, "is to be able to listen to that music coming in, to listen to how creative, how amazing, how aware people are all over the country. We get tracks from all different kinds of folks. Most of them are people who are living under the gun, and to hear them be so true and committed and focused is really inspiring."

As it gains strength, hip hop culture has become more refined and politically savvy. The result is a potentially powerful new political movement that focuses on electoral politics to achieve its goals. The National Hip Hop Political Convention was held June 16-20 in Newark, New Jersey, in an effort to develop a hip hop political agenda, register hip hop voters, and eventually run candidates at the local and national levels. With over 5,000 participants, 400 delegates from around the country, and 20,000 new registered voters, the three-day conference/convention was a resounding success. One of its major achievements was the successful ratification of a national hip hop political agenda focusing on five major areas: education, economic justice, criminal justice, health, and human rights.

Dereca Blackmon, co-chair of the Bay Area Local Organizing Committee for the Hip Hop Convention and executive director of Oakland-based 'Leadership Excellence' says, "We dealt with the criminal justice agenda — ending the persecution, prosecution, and incarceration of drug users, youth, and political activists. [We also addressed] the end of mandatory minimums, the overhaul of the prison system, looking at rehabilitation as opposed to punitive measures, and making sure that prisoners have voting rights, educational opportunities, and safety." One of the most impressive aspects of the convention, Blackmon says, was the dedication of the organizers leading up to the event and the emphasis they placed on the action plan, which included setting timelines and implementing accountability measures. She noted that some states like California, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania sent many delegates and invested a high level of depth and thought into their agendas. This served as a model for other delegates who weren't quite at that level. As part of the action plan, The League of Pissed Off Voters will provide training to people from around the country who are interested. Blackmon expects this will result in a higher degree of political sophistication as well as a greater public awareness of the hip hop political agenda.



activist Marinieves Alba speaking next to her father and Young Lords founder, Panama Alba

However, Blackmon is also quick to point out that electoral politics is not a panacea. Many of the delegates are organizers in their communities and therefore recognize the strength of direct action. Political organizations in the hip

hop community, she says, need to be built from the ground up. "The kind of change that our constituents want to see is local. In many cases, they don't necessarily feel the difference between Democratic power and Republican power in terms of how it pans out — whether they have jobs, quality schools, or justice in the criminal injustice system... A critical issue that is incredibly powerful across the country and came up for almost all of the states that were present is police brutality. The prison industrial complex is just not being addressed at the national level at all. But it's one of the most pressing issues in urban environments and certainly the hip hop generation. That's an example of something that would not be on the radar without the existence of a collective like ours."

When asked how hip hop impacts social change and political movements, Blackmon responds, "By giving voice to the voiceless. From the beginning, hip hop was about people who felt marginalized, people who felt their experience, their voice, their culture, their creativity, and their politics were marginalized."

Hip hop will continue to serve as a platform from which youth and people of color can speak and have their voices heard and acted upon. Perhaps radio stations will begin to play more of the thousands of artists who are putting out socially conscious music and maybe television will sport hip hop news anchors and talk show hosts. One day, hip hop may cease to be criminalized by the police and instead recognized as a significant contribution to American society and politics. Or, it may remain underground and continue to inspire the disenfranchised, who seek alternative ways of living and governing themselves.

☆

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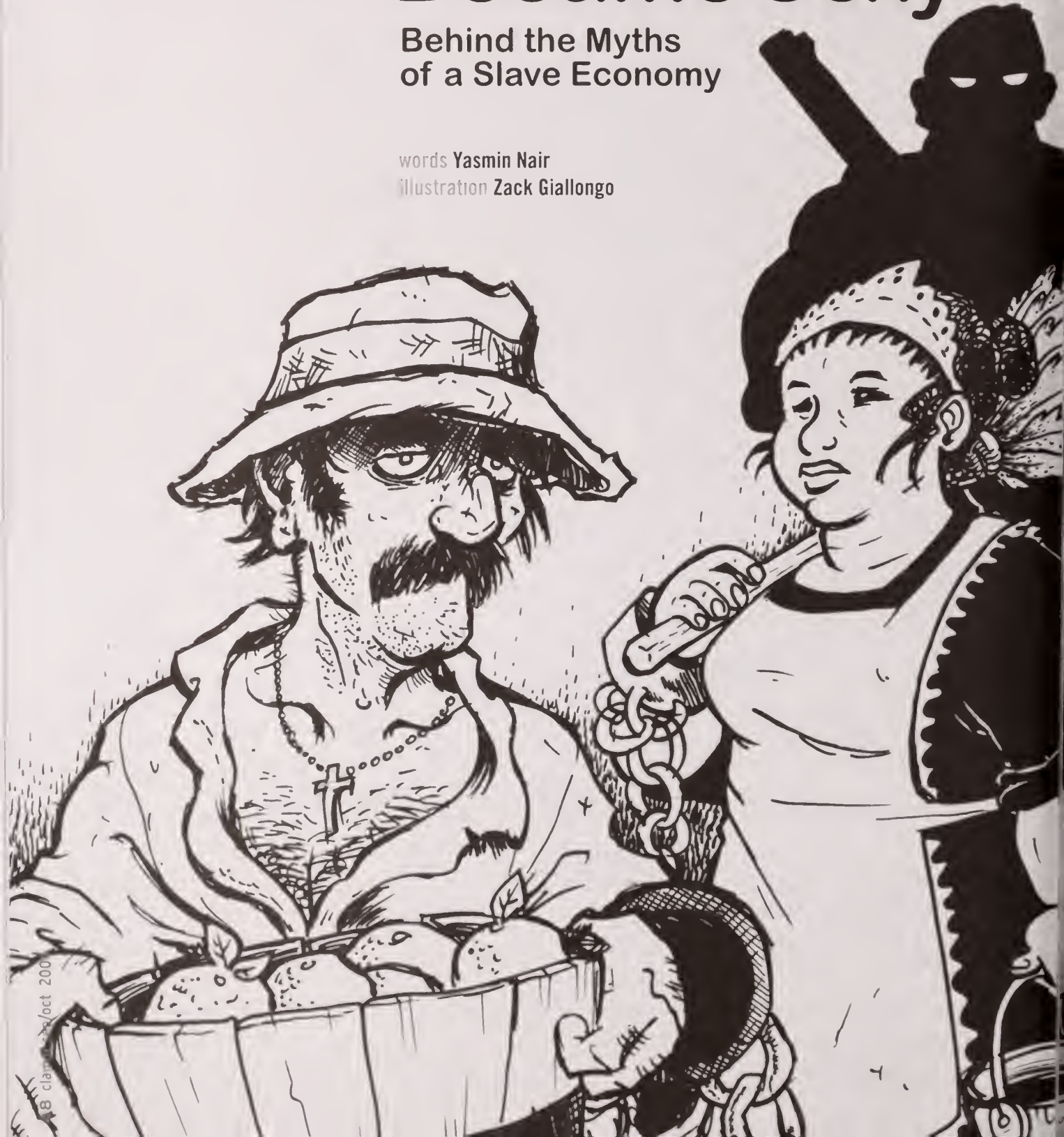
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# How Trafficking Became Sexy

Behind the Myths  
of a Slave Economy

words Yasmin Nair  
illustration Zack Giallongo





**S**uddenly, trafficking is in the news. And it's sexy. NBC's "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit" has dramatized the issue twice this last year. In one episode, a predatory Russian trafficker entices a barely pubescent American girl with e-mails so alluring that she runs away to join him. Once in Russia, she begins a tangled relationship with her captor, and he sells her body as she falls into a drug-induced stupor. Eventually, of course, she is rescued by NYPD's finest but not before viewers get glimpses of the explicit web photos the Russian uses to advertise her services. Another episode is about children imported from Africa by a Nigerian trafficker. Things go awry when one young boy dies from what looks like a ritual hanging. Eventually, the detectives discover that an art professor had rented the boy for sex and that he killed the child when he feared his wife would discover his pedophilia.

Most of us think about trafficking in these terms, as a phenomenon that locks women and children into sinister sexual relations with unscrupulous foreign men or secretly sadistic liberal intelligentsia. We also think of it as something that happens outside the boundaries of the United States. However, the trafficking of human beings as unpaid labor is in fact widespread within the United States and not as solely sexual as mainstream media images suggest.

It's not that stories about the sexual abuse of trafficked humans and of many prostitutes are not true or relevant, but focusing on the morality of prostitution or on highly individualized stories does not

explain the institutional and widespread nature of trafficking. According to the Department of Justice, approximately 700,000 persons are trafficked worldwide and about 50,000 of them are trafficked into the United States. According to a 2003 Department of Health and Human Sciences survey, 54% of those trafficked into the US are male, 46% female. Only 4% are minors. Some may enter the country on work visas but soon find themselves at the mercy of traffickers who take away their passports and legal documents. They find themselves stranded in a strange country and unable to speak to anyone outside workplaces, which include farms and sweatshops. Actual numbers are admittedly hard to pin down because trafficking's success depends upon its tightly-knit networks and its ability to deliver laborers who will not reveal themselves for fear of retribution from their captors. Depending on the sources, the numbers are either higher or lower than those above. Regardless of where you look, though, it's clear that human trafficking is a serious problem.

In terms of gender and the question of forced sex, the facts are also hard to determine. Most males enter the country as agricultural workers and most women become domestic workers, but their actual work might be a combination of the two. Domestic work might include conditions of sexual slavery and, for that matter, although less obviously, so might agricultural labor. It's impossible to determine at what points the lines might blur between the kinds of "work" that the trafficked are forced to do by their captors, regardless of gender. The

only thing that's clear is that trafficking includes but is not limited to sexual servitude. Given the difficulty in determining the exact nature of this indentured labor, how did trafficking become a media story primarily about prostitution forced upon women and girls?

Trafficking became sexy in part because the most vocal anti-trafficking activists are also often those who protest against prostitution per se, arguing vehemently against the concept of sex work: the exchange of sexual labor within consensual relationships. Among these, Donna Hughes, a professor of Women's Studies at the University of Rhode Island, has written against the distribution of condoms to prostitutes because it would legitimize prostitution. Hughes's call to eradicate prostitution was noted and echoed by Nicholas Kristoff who chronicled, in his *New York Times* op-ed articles in the early part of this year, his efforts to "buy the freedom" of two teenage Cambodian prostitutes and return them to their families. Kristoff's sanctimonious pieces reminded me of Americans who take candy to starving kids in places like India, believing that a few nuggets of crystallized corn syrup might alleviate systemic conditions of poverty and hunger. Hughes and Kristoff present such personalized narratives about the

times so that they might file charges against their captors without fear of deportation. The detection and prevention of trafficking is particularly complex because they have to happen within the nexus of international law and domestic policies and those trafficked may find it difficult to seek redress especially when, as is often the case, they lack the social and economic means to argue for their rights. For instance, the T-Visa application asks for \$200 in application fees alone, along with other filing charges. Since trafficking effectively creates a large pool of slave labor, how is a trafficked person to gather the money to apply for a T-Visa? Moreover, who are the traffickers and the trafficked? And, how do people end up within the growing slave economy of the United States and what keeps the system going?

I posed some of these questions to Elissa Steglich, Managing Attorney of the Midwest Immigrant and Human Rights Center, a counter-trafficking project at Heartland Alliance (HA). HA, a Chicago-based non-profit organization that provides legal and social services for the impoverished, has been working on trafficking since approximately 1996. Staff members came across instances of trafficking in the course of routine work on immigration cases. Without a widespread public

**Contrary to the increasingly present media representations, traffickers are rarely the evil men operating out of pure malice; they're sleazy but often innocuously so. Many traffickers are part of the immigrant communities they exploit, from places as different as Jamaica and Russia. They are often men — and women — who return to their homes of origin with stories of economic success and promises of taking fellow immigrants towards more of the same.**

supposed evils of prostitution with only tangential discussions about the economics of prostitution. Ultimately, their narratives imply that trafficking is only about sex.

Peter Landesman's story in the January 25, 2004 *New York Times Sunday Magazine* further emphasized the sexual aspect of trafficking in highlighting the extent of sexual slavery within the United States. While such facts are important to the public, the cover photograph echoed our collective ambivalence about adolescent female sexuality: a young girl in a Catholic School uniform sits on the edge of a bed with bare knees and a bit of thigh tantalizingly exposed. Sex sells, and while that's not in itself a bad thing, the photo seemed at odds with a piece designed to invoke the brutal sexual exploitation of young girls.

With regard to sex and trafficking, the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, ratified in 2000, carefully separates forced sexual labor from prostitution. The definition of trafficking is "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by improper means, such as force, abduction, fraud or coercion, for an improper purpose, like forced or coerced labor, servitude, slavery or sexual exploitation." And further on: "With the exception of children, who cannot consent, the intention is to distinguish between consensual acts or treatment and those in which abduction, force, fraud, deception or coercion are used or threatened." It's clear that trafficking is difficult to track and prosecute without clear guidelines that encompass a range of forced human relations. It's especially hard to prosecute because most of those trafficked may risk their lives or be criminalized and deported as illegal aliens.

Following the UN Protocol, the Clinton administration passed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (VTVPA) in 2000. The Act provides for temporary Non-Immigrant T-Visas for vic-

recognition of trafficking, HA's only legal recourse for victims was to help them claim asylum.

In 2000, HA joined the Freedom Network, a consortium of 22 organizations formed in response to the VTVPA. Members recognized that the new legislation would mean renewed efforts to identify and aid those who might not know about the support available to them. They also expanded the definition of trafficking to include mail-order brides tricked into sexual and domestic servitude. With regard to the financial burden of the T-Visa, Steglich informed me that the Department of Justice has been generous about granting fee waivers when applicants are assisted by agencies such as hers. But most of the trafficked work in isolation and are unaware of their rights. For that reason HA conducts workshops and maintains links with community agencies and activists including those related to social service and domestic violence. They, in turn, are able to alert HA to instances of trafficking.

In the course of its work, HA and other organizations like the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) have unearthed surprising facts about the demographics of both traffickers and trafficked, who come from varied educational, ethnic and racial backgrounds. A number of the trafficked are US citizens whose drug dependency and homelessness make them especially vulnerable to traffickers. Those trafficked often owe large sums (at some counts as much as \$3000 or more) to the traffickers. They become indebted because they believe they are purchasing legal visas and that they can eventually earn enough to repay their debts. Once in the United States, they are forced into indentured labor and their debts never disappear. Very often, traffickers will threaten their captives and their families left behind if they try to escape.

The largest problem in detecting and fighting trafficking, Steglich told me, is that most people don't recognize trafficking when they see it and have misconceptions about how it occurs and to whom.

The truth about trafficking is that it happens around us every day. Contrary to the increasingly present media representations, traffickers are rarely the evil men operating out of pure malice; they're sleazy but often innocuously so. Many traffickers are part of the immigrant communities they exploit, from places as different as Jamaica and Russia. They are often men — and women — who return to their homes of origin with stories of economic success and promises of taking fellow immigrants towards more of the same. Those who use unpaid illegal labor do so in order to cut costs, and are as likely to be small farmers in the North East as large orange-growers in Florida. Those who use unpaid domestic labor range from United Nations officials to professionals of various sorts. Trafficking occurs within our everyday reality, and within the same economy that gives us relatively cheap milk and orange juice because of cheap and abundant labor.

We're used to seeing but ignoring the vast numbers of janitors, bus people and farm hands silently working around us, so it comes as a shock when a case of trafficking is exposed. In 2001, the Ramos brothers were arrested for exploiting 700 workers on their citrus groves in Lake Placid, Florida. The workers were invisible only because labor usually goes unseen in the United States: the vast enterprise operated within plain view of a Golf Club attached to a retirement community. The discovery of trafficked labor shocked the community only because it forced them to open their eyes to the everyday economic conditions that make their world possible.

As Americans, we like our garbage collected on time and we want to pay the least possible amount for groceries. We don't care to know the truth about the labor that makes all that possible. We grumble when the price of gas goes up and we are especially testy around the issue of outsourcing. But even as we worry about "our jobs" being sold away to faceless masses in India and China, we are surrounded by the benefits of slave labor. Commentators often refer to trafficking as the "dark side of globalization", but the phenomenon flourishes in the United States for an old-fashioned reason: the need to maximize profits while minimizing expenditures.

To blame trafficking on globalization and price competition ignores the fact that an economy that actually values human labor and the health of workers would make modern-day slavery untenable. When trafficking seems to be about sex and violence, we're more able to connect with and eulogize the "victims". We see ourselves rescuing hapless young women and children but prefer not to think about supposedly abstract issues like labor and fair wages, even though those affect us in intimate ways.

Trafficking survives because it's a part of our daily lives, not because it emerges from distant shores and invisible networks of pure evil. Trafficking is only partly about sex and more about the price we pay for a carton of orange juice. ☆

**To report a case of trafficking, call the Human Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline: 1-888-373-7888.**

*Yasmin Nair is a Chicago-based academic and writer. Her current projects include a book about deviancy and a series of pieces about fashion, death, and debt. She may be contacted at: [nairyasmin@yahoo.com](mailto:nairyasmin@yahoo.com).*

# More Sex Emails, Please!

By Benn Ray

Now here's a sentence you don't hear every day: "I don't get enough sex-related emails." Our inboxes are deluged with ads for generic Viagra, lonely barely legals looking to meet for a lucrative online chat, women and the animals they love, pumps and pills to enlarge things that most likely don't need enlarging, and (if you're lucky) the occasional dirty email that was meant for someone else but accidentally sent to you.

If you're looking for sex-related, informative email newsletters you can browse through on those lazy Fridays when half the office is out and you are mentally, strap one of these on for size. (Visit the URL to subscribe to the newsletter.)

## Scarlet Letters

[www.scarletletters.com](http://www.scarletletters.com)

The groundbreaking website offers a newsletter that tells you when to visit the site to check out new information. Scarlet Letters is all about creation, seduction, and genre-fucking, and that's the sort of content they offer. They have everything from photography and illustration to prose and poetry to essays, commentary, and mixed media reviews. Plus, their name is a Hawthorne reference, ironically used, of course.



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## Sex News Daily

[www.sexnewsdaily.com](http://www.sexnewsdaily.com)

They claim to be "The World's Most Interesting Real News," which may be slightly hyperbolic, but descriptive nonetheless. SND is more like a sex-related media filter blog in email form. They claim to offer a "fascinating journey into human sexuality" and at times they succeed. Their content is made up of small write-ups with links to larger news stories from elsewhere on the web. These stories run the gamut from pop-culture (Ken & Barbie relationship quandries) to news of the weird (a woman Googles a blind date which leads to his arrest) to gender politics (dowry issues) and science to fashion (chastity belts for men?). The charm behind SND is they surf the web for this stuff so you don't have to.

## Society For Human Sexuality Lists

[www.sexuality.org](http://www.sexuality.org)

The SHS offers two different lists. The monthly SHS Announcement List supplements the Seattle Sex-Positive Resource Guide and contains additions, corrections, and special events held that month. The SHS Discussion List is a high-volume open forum for a frank and candid discussion of human sexuality, where everything from pornography vs. erotica to the legitimacy of sexual surrogates is fair game.

## Toys In Babland

[www.babeland.com](http://www.babeland.com)

This newsletter is one of those crafty blends of content and product. Toys In Babland is an online (and brick and mortar) sex-toy store that distributes its own newsletter showcasing different toys you can purchase from them to spice up a sex life which may be running bland. They also offer an advice column called Ask Rachel and Claire which dishes out sex advice that is of the "what kind of strap on should I use" and "what video would help me the most" variety. It's always nice thumbing through catalogs of toys, and this is the newsletter equivalent of doing just that.

Sign up for any of these newsletters. They prove that sex-based emails don't have to be trash (but "trashy" never hurts).

# From My Lai

words **Dave Arenas**

Illustration **Brandon Bauer**

In the discussion about the abuses revealed at Abu Ghraib and the interrogation techniques US soldiers and intelligence personnel have used at Guantanamo Bay, the media continues to make comparisons to the My Lai massacre of 1972. As with the My Lai massacre, there is still a debate about whether just a few individuals committed these acts or if they were only one example of following widespread orders and policy US military commanders and government officials established. What has been lost in the debate about Abu Ghraib and My Lai, perhaps because of its shocking nature, is the question of the use of sexual violence in both incidents.

At both Abu Ghraib and My Lai, US soldiers used sexual violence to terrorize the indigenous population. Despite the focus on what US soldiers did to the victims, the question remains of how our planning out and enacting such sexual violence, as well as our reasons for using such a tactic, reflect upon the United States' thinking about sex, gender, and race. What examining the My Lai massacre serves to point out, in the long run, is that even in the aftermath, gender and race are employed not only for intimidation but also in an attempt to recover a belief in the messianic mission of the US soldier and ultimately US foreign policy.

These questions about our own thinking with regards to the victims of US abuse are important because they turn the lens back onto US ideology and activity. The use of sexual abuse in both My Lai and Abu Ghraib hit a deep nerve within the US consciousness as it struggles with the history and the present of sexual abuse within its own society. The raping and killing of non-combatant women and children at My Lai, shown in graphic photographs to the world, and the depiction of forced homosexual acts among male prisoners at Abu Ghraib, broadcast across television screens around the globe, shocked the US public. The sense about these US troops, whether mythical or not, is that average, patriotic North Americans are not capable of such sexual violence. In both incidents, it is not that North Americans appear as brutal as their enemies. Rather, revelations of such actions make North American troops seem even more brutal and ruthless than their enemies. While accounts at Abu Ghraib are too fresh and still scanty for in-depth analysis, the accounts that have emerged from My Lai, particularly that of Lt. William Calley, help us better understand not only the motivations behind these atrocities but also the ensuing justifications for ongoing US aggression and occupations.

On March 16, 1968, approximately more than a month after the Tet offensive and after three months being first assigned to Vietnam, Company C, first battalion



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# to Abu Ghraib

## Race and Gender, Rape, and Failed Messianism: A Repeating Theme of US Culture and Expansionism?

of the twentieth infantry, proceeded on an offensive mission to My Lai, one of four subhamlets in Son My Village. Their deployment was to be part of a search and destroy mission, in which commanders and troops expected heavy fighting. In such a mission, commanders did not give clear directives regarding the treatment of combatants. Soldiers understood that the order for search and destroy meant that the soldiers had to destroy any support structures, such as food supplies and buildings. Crucially, the unit had already suffered twenty-eight casualties with five wounded without any active engagement with the enemy prior to the attack on My Lai.

During the briefing prior to the assault, commanders told the US soldiers that the non-combatants would be at the market that day and that the only people in the village would be Viet Cong guerrillas and regulars. Concomitantly, commanders said that the area would give stiff resistance, but that this would be an opportunity for the Company to “get even” for losses suffered. The anticipation was high for a combat situation, to the point that if the village offered any resistance, US retaliation would be fatal.

In the aftermath, US soldiers killed approximately 400 elderly men, women, and children at My Lai. Of that number, according to one army investigator, Andre Fcher, approximately 120 were women and children. There were no North Vietnamese regulars. South Vietnamese irregulars were not present in the village, and the village gave no resistance to the US troops. During the operation, US soldiers rounded up and machine-gunned prisoners, mostly women and children. Systematic rape became pervasive during the carnage with soldiers violating Vietnamese women and children by group or individually. The soldiers killed most of the Vietnamese they raped and threw them into nearby ditches. Soldiers interrogated others in order to find out whether there were Vietnamese guerrilla groups in the area. If the Vietnamese prisoners failed to answer, or did not answer convincingly, the soldiers shot them as well.

The systematic manner by which soldiers of Company C raped women and children before, during, and after the My Lai incident points to the use of rape as a systematic means of terrorizing the community, specifically the women, to prevent them from giving support to the enemy. Cynthia Enloe has pointed out that the tactic of rape by soldiers also hardens the soldiers to the atrocities that they commit against an enemy population. Rape becomes a discipline of maleness, according to Enloe, whereby routine acts of violation against women accustom the soldier toward even more destructive acts of violence. The soldier internalizes the performance of rape as an act of exerting power over those women whom he cannot control by other means.

The soldier also learns to view the enemy, particularly women, as degraded and not worthy of ethical consideration. Through the systematic and routine use of rape in the occupation and destruction

of communities, he learns to suppress any ethical standards that may make him hesitate to act violently toward civilians. Furthermore, should the women and the community be innocent of giving support to the enemy, such indiscriminate acts of rape and mass killing signal the lengths of violence to which the soldiers will go should the community decide to support the enemy in the future. Targeting women as a means to terrorize the community as a whole, and other women in particular, points to the fact that military organizations hold a predominantly male understanding of community structure and the vulnerability of women.

In the aftermath of this event, Calley was the only officer to be tried and convicted for killing civilians during the massacre. From Calley’s accounts and testimonies, his actions were confined to killing — with no indication that he had participated in the acts of rape. In explaining his actions at that time, he discusses not only the sense of messianic mission, which he learned in the army, but also his view as to why the My Lai attack failed. In his account, he uses gender and race to point out not the failures of the US soldiers who were there but rather the failure of Vietnamese culture at receiving such aid.

Calley does not see his actions in terms of personal spite. Nor does he see the Vietnamese as human beings. Rather, he shows how he saw them as objects he needed to eliminate and how he saw his own actions in accordance with his training. He says, “As for me, killing those men in My Lai didn’t haunt me. I didn’t — I couldn’t kill for the pleasure of it. We weren’t in My Lai to kill human beings, really. We were there to kill ideology that is carried by — I don’t know. Pawns. Blobs. Pieces of flesh, and I wasn’t in My Lai to destroy intelligent men. I was there to destroy an intangible idea.” In his discussion of My Lai, his gendering of the enemy as male allows him to objectify the Vietnamese as non-living matter while erasing the memory of the non-combatant women and children he executed. The question of women does return when he recounts his personal relations and explains the deficiencies of the Vietnamese culture he sought to save.

Through his descriptions of the Vietnamese women with whom he had had relations, Calley portrays Vietnamese culture as incapable of receiving US help. In one example, he discusses Yvonne, a woman of Vietnamese and French descent, who worked as a prostitute to support her mother, who was also a prostitute. As he describes Yvonne, Calley also identifies his own maleness as being the one who is there to help and links that help to the North American way of life that he offered her. His account registers his shock and helplessness over her situation, as he points out, “But a woman ought to have something more. A husband. A family. A drive to the suburbs every day: I just don’t know, but I say there’s something more, and Yvonne was just cheated of it. I wanted to seize her and say, ‘Jesus Christ! Believe me! It isn’t life! It isn’t the way the world is! Let’s steal away

**The systematic manner by which soldiers of Company C raped women and children before, during, and after the My Lai incident points to the use of rape as a systematic means of terrorizing the community, specifically the women, to prevent them from giving support to the enemy.**

to America! I'll show you!' A daydream, but I was in Vietnam to help these people, right?" In the end, Calley concludes that he could not help her because she could not fit into the American way of life.

In his view, the people from his community would not accept her. Thus, he blames her for failing to show the ability to assimilate. He also concludes that she was unwilling to be helped, at least in the way that he wanted to help her, as she did not want to leave her mother. Calley explains his vision of the Vietnamese people as potential threats and incapable of accepting US aid in the example of Yvonne. At the same time, through her example, he explains the failure of the Vietnamese culture through its unwillingness to accept what he sees as a better life. Thus, when he says, "I can't help the Vietnamese people," it is with this view of Vietnamese women as being trapped within their own culture.

In the case of My Lai, one sees two roles for race and gender in the enactment of rape and mass killing as tools of military occupation. Through race and gender, soldiers such as Calley and the popular media often rationalize rape as an act of frustration and desperation with the resistance of the people the soldiers sought to save rather than as a means of terror and degradation. Race and gender also become a means for erasing the humanity of the victims of such abuse while exculpating the perpetrators. Blame is ultimately put back onto the victims.

At Abu Ghraib, the roles may seem reversed, in that US soldiers and interrogators directed the abuse at males while some women guards participated in the abuse. And, the US government and the US press have yet to fully investigate how guards and interrogators treated women and children prisoners. However, what is clear in the case of both Abu Ghraib and My Lai is the fact that both military and intelligence personnel used sexual violence as a systematic weapon of terror. At the same time, at least in the case of My Lai, the collective US thinking about race and gender continues to project the blame onto the victims. Whether or not this thinking will continue to emerge in the aftermath of Abu Ghraib has yet to be seen. The fact remains, though, that the use of sexual violence to humiliate prisoners comes from an historical tradition of US military and intelligence policy. The fact that we as a nation do not critically examine this historical tradition reveals the pervasiveness of a collective denial about the violence of US national culture and thinking. ★

*Dave Arenas works as an ESL instructor in Chicago and is presently doing researching into the roles that auto-didacticism, creativity, and resistance play in the formation of egalitarian learning communities.*

## BOUND GENDER

**Kings and Queens:  
Queers at the Prom**  
Edited by David Boyer  
Soft Skull Press  
www.softskullpress.com



I do not know much about prom. I missed mine — never noticed it had come and gone. About a week after, though, I overheard my High School Spanish teacher talking with the girl I was seeing. Mrs. Thomas was incredulous. She could not believe I had neglected my "prom duty" and told my girlfriend she should dump me. I walked away from my eavesdropping and awaited the outcome. I never mentioned what I overheard. My girlfriend never dumped me, and we never spoke of the prom. We broke up nine months later, after I left for college. This is my prom story. This story and what I have learned from Brian De Palma and John Hughes movies are pretty much all I know about prom.

Leave it to a book on queers at the prom finally to spark my interest in the event. *Kings and Queens* is a great idea and an interesting set of personal stories that kept me smiling and musing from start to finish. Designed to look like a yearbook, it recalls over 60 years of high school fear, anger, disappointment, friendship, and glee. But there is more to it. This book asserts that for practically every American born in the twentieth century, prom is a point of reference. And, it takes that point of reference and weaves American history around it. Most of these stories of being homosexual in America do not fit prom mythology. Yet, woven between the sociology of Amy Best and the oral history of Studs Terkel, they convey a history attuned to race, class, sex, gender, religion, and, of course, social rituals seen from the outside. *Kings and Queens* is a terrific introduction to the history of being queer in America, and it might just make you want to dance to Faithfully.

-Brian Bergen-Aurand

**Without A Net: The Female  
Experience of Growing Up  
Working Class**  
Edited by Michelle Tea  
Seal Press, 2004  
www.sealpress.com



"At Halloween, we got yelled at or whipped for throwing eggs, not because it was childish and rude, but because we were screwing with the food supply."

- Tina Fakhrid-Deen, from "Ghetto Fabulous" (in *Without A Net*)

I don't tend to read anthologies the whole way through, but this time I had to. I had known about *Without A Net* since the call for submissions had gone out, and still was blown away by the success of the completed project. The book includes work by well-known writers such as Dorothy Allison and Eileen Myles as well as many talented emerging writers. In this collection editor Michelle Tea (author of *The Chelsea Whistle*) has compiled accounts from 30 (either assigned at birth and/or presently identifying as) female writers who share the experience of having been raised poor or working class.

Through various topics, ranging from racism to housing projects to experiences in academia, the book as an entirety is diverse and each story is self-contained and complex on its own. *Without A Net* manages to capture the multi-layered experience of poverty in North America by examining such notions as what it means to grow up working class with parents who hold onto middle class ideals, how a changed financial situation does not necessarily mean jumping classes (parents becoming employed, children having the opportunity to go to university, or families changing neighborhoods), and why the (mis)conception of not being deserving affects so many (whether in terms of an education, an

expensive coat, or the freedom from torment). The book touches on the ideas of having no exposure to upper and middle classes, not knowing you are poor (in contrast with having constant knowledge of your family's poverty), being denied available resources and care because of social stigma, and realizing the implications of wanting to get out of and/or return to the working class.

In separate pieces Terry Ryan and Silas Howard discuss the plots and schemes people come up with to get by, and to sometimes fund getting to also do what they wish they could do for pay. Lis Goldschmidt and Dean Spade together take up the emerging hip-ness of white-trash-chic and "trailer trash" theme parties. Various authors, including Shawna Kenny, talk about the experience of poverty being blocked out people's memories later in life. There is hardly a story in the entire anthology I couldn't pull a quote or an idea from, but most of all I would urge readers to check out the stories by Joy Castro, Siobhan Brooks, Wendy Thompson, Nikki Levine and Tina Fakhrid-Deen.

I don't know that it would be possible to have an anthology like this be entirely representative without it being 900 pages long, or one in a larger series of books, but Michelle Tea does a good job of it. Some of the stories ran into, or overlapped with each other, but appropriately, as many of the experiences of growing up working class do too. *Without A Net* finally captures the experience of growing up poor and working class by people who did, and not by middle-class feminist, left-leaning authors and well-meaning activists who didn't.

-Tara-Michelle Ziniuk

# Women in Power

by Janis E. Malaby

No office continues to prove as impervious to women candidates as the Presidency of the United States of America. Perhaps it is time to consider seriously the end of men dominating this seat of power, especially since the "Dubya" administration.

Across the world, women have had the opportunity to rule or run their nations. The first elected female leader in contemporary history dates back to 1953, Suhbaataryn Yanjamaa of Mongolia. In 1979, Margaret Thatcher was British Prime Minister. Currently, Mary McAleese is president of Ireland. By now, it's almost normal for women in other countries to run for president and win. What's keeping the United States behind the times?

## Mary Robinson—Ireland

Take Mary Robinson for example. In her seven-year incumbency during the majority of the 1990s, Robinson succeeded at not only being the first woman president of Ireland, but also succeeded at adding a couple more firsts to her name. Robinson was the first person to defeat the two largest political parties, becoming the first non-Fianna Fáil (Republican) president in 70 years when she won as the first Labour party president.

Robinson addressed many issues that have made her one of the most notable and successful presidents of her time. She campaigned for the liberalization of laws inhibiting divorce and abortion and was also a humanitarian, justice and human rights activist and placed importance on the needs of developing countries.

A couple months prior to the end of her term in office, Robinson resigned and was

appointed High Commissioner of Human Rights for the United Nations.

## Corazon Aquino—Philippines

Corazon Aquino served as the first woman president of the Philippines from 1986 to 1992. Although some often did not take her seriously, she did a lot for the greater good of her country. Succeeding her assassinated husband, Aquino was a politically inexperienced housewife who took control of a volatile nation. With the country split on her leadership, promises of reforms failed and economic difficulties plagued her. There were even six attempts to overthrow her.

Despite the opposition, Aquino managed to start a revolution, giving the power back to the people and restoring democracy in a nation that had been under a long dictatorship. Aquino eliminated communist and Muslim threats that affected the stability of the nation, and she initiated an economic recovery. Aquino also wrote a new constitution appropriately titled the Freedom Constitution. Overall, her work wasn't a bad start to get the country back in shape.

In the end, Aquino received several prestigious recognitions of her accomplishments, such as the United Nations Silver Medal and the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award.

## Violeta Barrios de Chamorro—Nicaragua

From 1990 to 1997, Violet Barrios de Chamorro ended a civil war, brought her country back into one piece, and was able to stimulate a broken economy that had been one of the worst in the Western Hemisphere. The remarkable thing is that she did all this even though she had never held office before her

six years as president.

Chamorro was a revolutionist who used her family newspaper to help overthrow the Somoza dictatorship. In the beginning of her term in office, Chamorro faced a broken country with a civil war, rising unemployment and strikes. But she brought about an end to the longtime Sandinista control of the military, ended the U.S.-backed Contra war and established foundations for national reconciliation—not so bad for being the first woman to govern a Central American nation.

Meanwhile in the United States, many women have tried to take the role of President, but none has succeeded. Victoria Woodhull was the first female Presidential candidate in the United States in 1872. She was nominated by the National Woman Suffrage Association in New York City and was the first woman to address Congress on the 15th Amendment, assuring all citizens the right to vote. Shirley Chisholm was nominated for President in 1972 and was the first female black member of the House of Representatives. Patricia Scott Schroeder was a congresswoman running as a Democratic candidate for the nomination of president. But Schroeder withdrew before the party convention. Following in her husband's footsteps, Elizabeth Dole ran in 1999 but withdrew because of a lack of funding. Carol Moseley Braun ran in 2004 but also succeeded from the race.

Over half a century since the first woman president, the United States of America still hasn't given women the chance. Especially after this administration, maybe we should take a look into electing a woman President. ★

## POINT & CLIT

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Made by California Exotic Novelties and distributed by Toys in Babeland, the "Laptop" vibrator — a small vibrator that plugs into any USB port — is probably the perfect companion for cybersex. The small fingertip vibe plugs easily into the keyboard or the side of your laptop, and is about one inch long. I loved that the clasp could fit near the tip of your finger for lots of maneuverability or near the base of your finger for clit stimulation while your finger(s) plays

inside. It comes with a soft ribbed sleeve that I found unnecessary, but you might find comfy. As someone who loves vibrators, I'm often disappointed by new toys that promise power but fail to follow through. Despite its small size, I found both low and high speeds satisfying. This powerful little vibe is ultra quiet — perfect for nighttime use when others are sleeping and includes an extra-long cord to encourage creativity. Best thing about it? No batteries needed, so you'll never be disappointed by low/no power as long as you're near a computer. I think this will stay right here in my desk drawer. Thirty-two bucks is worth it.

-Anita Spanking

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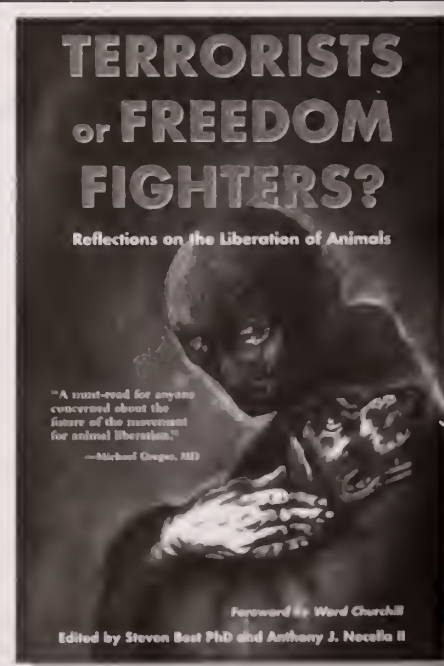
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# alone <sup>the</sup> amongst Bushies

by Todd Steven Burroughs

## Laura Flanders is the People's Pundit

It's been easy to ignore Laura Flanders. Yes, she's been on CNN, Fox News Channel and "To The Contrary," a national PBS chat show from the wide-ranging perspectives of different women, but only occasionally. "I'm interviewed once in a blue moon to twice in a blue moon," Flanders said of the cacophony of initials. She's a dying breed — a longtime progressive radio host (Air America, "Democracy Now," "CounterSpin") who has actually earned the right to be on radio and television by doing reporting. She's an interesting media personality — a pundit who smiles like a human being and not a snarling tiger. She's an anomaly: a strong person and personality unafraid of being nice, and a public debater who actually thinks before she speaks. Flanders is proud to be strongly to the Left of the camera in the Land of The Talking Heads.

Her colleagues join her in pride. "Her credential for being on the radio is not having a lot of opinions," said Janine Jackson, program director of Fairness And Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR), a progressive media watchdog group based in New York City. Flanders was the founder of FAIR's Women's Desk, and co-hosted "CounterSpin," FAIR's nationally syndicated weekly radio show, for several years, at least three of which with current co-host Jackson. Flanders is first a journalist who earned her pundit stripes through reporting. Jackson reminded. But Flanders embraces analytical opinion. "She's not going to muzzle herself and muzzle her brain," said Nicole Sawaya, Flanders's boss at KALW-FM, a public radio station in San Francisco. KALW's "Your Call" has been hosted by Flanders since 2001. (It's now hosted on alternate days by Flanders and Farai Chideya, a Black woman who made waves a decade ago as a 20-something *Newsweek* correspondent, first-time author, and CNN pundit.) But Flanders, 42, has been on-air since the mid-1980s, working her way up the Pacifica Radio/alternative radio circuit.

Flanders is not a kook like Ann Coulter, but she takes punditry very seriously. "To me, it's not a game, it's not a show." She explains that it's really about continuing a tradition of dissent — George Seldes, I.F. Stone, Ida B. Wells, et. al. But does she ever pal around with her fellow talking heads? "We get friendly with each other a little bit .... [but] I can't imagine going out to dinner with any of them, it wouldn't be a relaxing dinner anyway. It's not like we're all buddies, anyway."

And if they were, it's not like she has a lot of time to do that sort of thing. From her plugged-in New York City loft, she prepares for "The Laura Flanders Show" — her weekend program on Air America, the embryonic liberal news-talk answer to the Right's collective hate-radio roar — and does KALW's "Your Call" two days during the week. And then there's writing for publications like *The Nation* and *CounterPunch* and websites like *workingforchange.com*. And then there's all those meetings. And then there's...well, a life. "Compare

me to [Pacifica Radio's] Amy Goodman and I'm a loafer," she said, laughing.

"I see Laura as one of the all-too-rare intellectuals ... and truly progressive voices," says Jackson. She can field many perspectives, "but at the same time she's not a boring egghead. I'm thankful that she has the platform that she does. I just wish it was bigger."

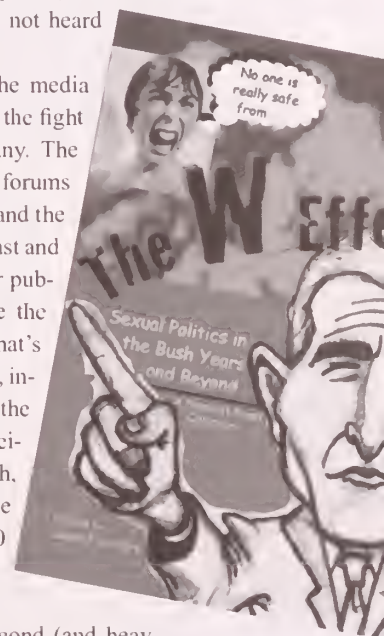
Flanders does, too. But in the meantime, she's learning. From call-in talk radio ("Most of the experts are in the audience and if you speak to them not in the lowest common denominator, but the highest common denominator, they will respond") and from television's power to represent opinions of people not heard and seen otherwise.

As a rare progressive voice in the media wilderness, the London native is in for the fight of her life, and she's in good company. The Left, she argued, is building its own forums to counteract the Heritage Foundation and the army of Right-wing syndicated broadcast and print pundits who, in her view, get their public policy agenda implemented before the rest of the country even figures out what's happening. These new forums, she said, include: The Progressive Media Project; the Institute For Public Advocacy, and Pacifica Radio's "Democracy Now," which, in its eight-year history has become the closest thing progressives have to a "60 Minutes."

And books. *Bushwomen: Tales Of A Cynical Species* is Flanders's second (and heavily footnoted) book, with a third, the anthology *The W Effect: Sexual Politics In The Bush Years And Beyond*, just arriving in bookstores this past June. *The W Effect's* contributors include feminist writing stars as Jill Nelson, Vandana Shiva and Barbara Ehrenreich.

But how much does Flanders' work really matter in a nation whose Establishment considers Bill Clinton a progressive and George W. Bush a moderate? "I'm grateful she's out there," said Jackson of Flanders. "But I worry that she's lonely."

It's been easy to ignore Laura Flanders, but *Bushwomen* is making a mark. It is a deft blend of well-documented reporting, instant history and media criticism, with just the right dashes of humor. It tells the story of how the Bush administration redefined feminism and civil rights to fit its own reactionary purposes. The work profiles the Right's top female leaders and how they got to power. Very familiar names — Laura Bush, Christine Todd Whitman, Condoleezza Rice,



Elaine Chao, Lynne Cheney and Karen Hughes, among others — get a critical evaluation, and are found wanting, to say the least.

In the Bizzaro feminism world Flanders has thoroughly documented, women in the Bush administration are “invaluable to the President, [but] under-scrutinized in the press.” This allows them to wreak public policy havoc on environmental regulations, pervert memories of the Civil Rights Movement, help steal Presidential elections, and just plain lie. Flanders defines the Bushwomen — the females who serve either as cabinet members or sub-cabinet members — as “an extremist administration’s female front. Cast in the public mind as maverick, or moderate, or irrelevant, laughable or benign, their well-spun image taps into convenient stereotypes, while the reality remains out of sight. If women were taken more seriously, the Bushwomen con job wouldn’t stand a chance, but in the contemporary United States, it just might.”

Included in *Bushwomen* are stories of Katherine Harris, Christine Todd Whitman and Gale Ann Norton. Harris was the Florida Secretary of State who was so openly partisan that Republican Party staffers used her offices and its computers during the 2000 Presidential election recount. She’s the one that got thousands of Blacks purged from the voting rolls in Florida. (Remember: Bush “won” that state in 2000 by just 537 votes.) Todd Whitman was the Environmental Protection Agency head who had declared Ground Zero fit for breathing (and profit) less than one week after 9-11. Secretary of the Interior Norton never met a corporation she didn’t like — and, seemingly, didn’t help secure mineral-rich land without worrying about pesky things like clean air.

Flanders’s own profession does not escape her author’s stern gaze. The nation’s elite news media, particularly *The Washington Post*, have a lot to apologize for in their handling of these women, argues Flanders. *The Post*, she reminded, devoted a whole article on Katherine Harris’ makeup (albeit done by the newspaper’s fashion reporter). And, she adds, the fight on the Bush-era Civil Rights Commission between conservative Abigail Thernstrom and liberal Mary Frances Berry was described by *The Post* as a “catfight” instead

of a serious dispute over alleged rug-sweeping over the Florida debacle. *The New York Times*, in a profile of Rice, talked about her hair and clothes (“She is always impeccably dressed, usually in a classic suit with a modest hemline, comfortable pumps and conservative jewelry”). There have been other articles in *The Post* and other elite media on these personalities and issues. But the fact remains that these articles, or their particular emphases, wouldn’t exist if their subjects had penises.

*Bushwomen* is powerful enough on race to straighten Huey Freeman’s hair. It catalogues virtually every move Bush has made using race and gender. It documents how, as women of color, Rice (“[S]he had the advantage of not looking like an oilman”) and Chao would use their personal histories as media shields against criticism, subtly playing on the paternalism of the white men who run America’s nearly all-white newsrooms. (Rice, a member of Birmingham’s light-skinned elite, remembered well the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church explosion in 1963 that killed four little Black girls. Another young Black girl who grew up there would be diametrically opposed to Rice as an adult. Her name is Angela Davis.) Rice’s long road to arch-conservatism is paved with grants and access to political power and corporate boards, making it a typical Bushwoman story. Flanders correctly wrote that

Rice has played into America’s self-sustained “fuzzy” memories about race. Freeman — the fictional everyman activist of “The Boondocks,” the syndicated comic strip — is wrong about helping Rice by getting her a blind date; Rice doesn’t need a man as much as she needs a conscience.

“By their individual accomplishments,” wrote Flanders, Bush’s top women “are supposed to prove that opportunity exists for all.” But it’s all myth, reveals the author: virtually all of the Bushwomen are heavily funded by foundations and corporations — and, ironically, are now direct beneficiaries of the feminism they now symbolically represent and actually disdain. And always nearby, *Roe vs. Wade* swings on the margins of public debate like Edgar Allan Poe’s pendulum.

Until now, it’s been easy to ignore Laura Flanders. *Bushwomen* has already penetrated *The New York Times* bestseller list. But still, her watchdog could be barking in vain, since its masters have taken out their hearing aids for anyone Left of the Democratic Leadership Council. She is using fact-checked words during a period in which televised images plaster over what is left (and Left?) of the American consciousness. Anyone grinding his or her teeth watching the Establishment Media’s wall-to-wall coverage of the Reagan death and funeral got a painful reminder of that. So starting from scratch seems to be the progressive’s stock in trade.

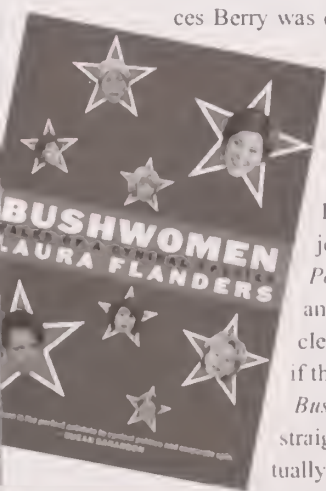
So, then, why do all this work when “flyover country” — loudly represented by those very angry people who call C-SPAN’s “Washington Journal” every morning and ditto Rush and his clones on the radio every weekday afternoon — is converted by a certain mythological view of America, not facts? (After all, generating sales worthy of *The Times*’ acknowledgement was no shoo-in in 2004, even if you do have a radio show.) Flanders and Co. hope their collective effort will turn a Confederate Gray — er, Red — state a comfortable shade of Blue this November, but that isn’t the point. It’s to remain sane.

“She truly wants people to change,” says Sawaya of Flanders. “She truly wants people to think.” Flanders projects a level of intensity that some might see as intimidating, according to Sawaya, but some would also see it as being alive.

Jackson said that if media critics judged success and failure by institutional change, they would have packed their bags and gone home long ago. “It would be hard to get out of bed in the morning.” But there has been a major shift in public opinion over the last 20 years, she maintained: before FAIR, most Americans saw their news media as sacrosanct; now, thanks to people like Flanders, media are seen by public as a large and powerful collective political interest, capable of being pushed by activism. People like Flanders, she explained, promote sanity. They inform the Left, she asserted, while taking that perspective into the Reagan Republican-Soccer Mom mainstream. “I think there is a value in that,” Jackson added.

Flanders said that just educating would be enough. “What we’re trying to do is to keep alive almost a language of dissent,” she says. “I don’t think I’m advocating a solution.” The days of worldwide Liberate have faded like old tie-dye, becoming as nostalgic as the Afro Pick. “I think we’re involved in a very, very, long term project. I don’t know if we’ll see it. I’m not as sure.” But she’s happy about her goal: generating progressive, feminist media criticism that goes beyond the conventional wisdom. ★

Todd Steven Burrroughs, Ph.D. ([tburrroughs@gmail.com](mailto:tburrroughs@gmail.com)) is an independent researcher/writer based in Hyattsville, MD. He is a primary author of *Civil Rights Chronicle (Legacy)*, a history of the Civil Rights Movement, and a contributor to *Putting The Movement Back Into Civil Rights Teaching (Teaching For Change Poverty & Race Research Action Council)*, a K-12 teaching guide of the *Civil Rights Movement*. He is writing a biography of Death Row writer Mumia Abu-Jamal.







# Voting for the Ones You Hate The Most

words Jeff Nall

illustration Willie Johnson

Does your vote really matter? Is it true what they say, that you hurt democracy when you don't vote? Or is the reality that your vote is doomed to be lost in either a computer glitch or simply purged by crooked politicians? Does all this "choose or lose" hype really mean anything, or is it an unintentional subterfuge covering a much more serious problem?

Since the 2000 election, voters have become more informed about the voting process and mechanics, voicing a variety of concerns over everything from antiquated voting machines and the loitering chads they sometimes produce to high-tech voting machines and their propensity to malfunction, and even that electronic votes might be susceptible to manipulation. Despite all this talk, one particularly contentious (and fundamental!) aspect

of obtaining a fair vote has gone relatively unmentioned: the way we count (attribute value to) each vote.

To understand the importance of this issue, look no further than Ralph Nader's current presidential bid. Many Democrats have released statements pleading Nader not to run, fearing Nader might receive enough votes to escort George Bush into another four years at the helm. When very liberal publications like *The Nation* (whose editorial board dedicated a full page to imploring Nader not to run) find it in their best interest to discourage a progressive candidate from running, a flaw in the system is as evident as a porous, open sore.

Putting the issue into perspective, Serj Tankian, who helped form an activism web site, [AxisofJustice.com](http://AxisofJustice.com), explained his dilem-

ma in deciding how his progressive organization would tend to the 2004 election.

"Who would Axis of Justice speak on behalf [of]?" he asked. "I don't think that Kerry nor Bush really want universal health care. It's a difficult thing in that sense."

The election of 2000 would not have come down to a few thousand potentially miscounted ballots in Florida, had the preference of third party voters been considered in determining whether Bush or Gore should become president. Currently winners of the presidential election need not obtain 50 percent of the popular vote. In fact, our nation's history of presidential elections is littered with elections "stolen" because of the poor voting method we currently employ. The 1912 election, for example, allowed more than 25 percent of the nation's votes to be devoid of

value because four well-known candidates ran for office: Woodrow Wilson (Democrat), Theodore Roosevelt (Progressive), William H. Taft (Republican), and Eugene Debs (Socialist). Four decent candidates helped to significantly split the vote in four directions. As a result, Wilson was elected into office by winning little more than six million of more than 15 million votes.

Time and time again, those who vote for candidates outside of the two major parties witness their preferences concerning the top two candidates being banished without consideration. Such black-and-white results should be expected from the current Plurality Method and its mentality of "one vote, one candidate." The consequence of limiting a voter's influence forces the debate over voting with one's ideology or voting the lesser of two evils. Idealistic ballot casting (voting for the candidate you really want) has the tendency to help the politician you least favor in becoming elected. This alone should signal the need for reform to all voters — even conservatives. After all, the plurality method helped Bill Clinton roll into office in 1992.

Clinton was elected in spite of having been more than six million shy of 50 percent of the popular vote. Though he beat out George Bush by more than five million votes, approximately 20 million Americans who voted for Independent Ross Perot had their opinion completely ignored; they had no opportunity to choose between Bush and Clinton.

In 1996, more than eight million voters who voted for someone other than a Democrat or Republican were refused the opportunity to choose who they preferred because they dared to base their vote on the candidate whom they felt was most suitable for the job. Again, in 2000, the votes of nearly four million Americans were excluded from the process of choosing a leader even though the popular vote of both major candidates differed by far less than one million votes. While nearly three million Americans believed Ralph Nader to be the best person to shape up the Oval Office, the vast majority of those bastardized voters may have expressed a preference for Al Gore over George Bush if they were given the opportunity. This would have likely changed the outcome of the 2000 election significantly.

Believing that Ralph Nader is most suited to be president shouldn't deny someone the right to express a preference between the two top candidates, after his or her first choice has been eliminated from the race. One of the more popular alternatives is Instant Runoff Voting (IRV). According to the Center for Voting and Democracy, a Maryland-based non-profit organization dedicated to fair elections, "Instant runoff voting is a winner-take-all, constitutionally protected voting system that ensures a winning candidate will receive an absolute majority of votes rather than a simple plurality. IRV eliminates the need for runoff elections by allowing voters to rank their candidates in order of preference." In such a system, each voter ranks as many candidates as they would like to take office starting with their first preference. The majority vote must be attained. If, after the first round of tallying votes, no candidate has earned the majority then the candidate with the least favor among voters is eliminated and the process/count begins again. But rather than disregarding those votes cast in favor of the eliminated candidate, the second choice then becomes the candidate most favored (and so on). Currently Australia, Ireland, and San Francisco use IRV.

Rob Richie, Executive Director for the Center for Voting and Democracy, believes IRV will achieve fair representation in the White House.

"We've put our money on IRV for a couple of reasons. One, there's a simple logic to it, which is people have preferences as long as their first choice has a chance to win. Typically, they want that person to win," says Richie. At the same time, he says, if a person's first choice fails to climb into the top two candidates, his or her second choice would be counted.

Robert Loring, owner and director of AccurateDemocracy.com, also believes IRV is the best method for selecting a President. "The election of a president, governor, or mayor who can veto legislation needs to be linked to the rules and time of election for the legislature," he said. "Otherwise the two powers are more likely to reach a deadlock over differences in policy and funding. IRV then is the best rule for electing a chief executive."

Reflecting the opinion of many progressives, Tankian also believes that IRV would solve his own voting dilemma. "When I vote, I want to vote for someone I believe in. It's different when your choice is to basically vote for Bush or vote against Bush."

Another inclusive form is Borda's Method. Within this strategy, only one tally is made, similar to the current Plurality Method. However, voters retain the right to rank each candidate according to their preference (first, second, third, and fourth choice, according to the number of choices). In the instance of a four-person election, a voter would give four points to his or her first choice, three points to the second, two points to the third, and one point for the fourth, but rather than leading to multiple eliminations and runoffs, the candidate with the most points, rather than the most votes, wins.

Approval Voting is another alternative to the Plurality Method. Approval Voting allows voters to vote for as many candidates on the ballot as they like while withholding their approval for a candidate they do not support. The winner of such an election is the candidate with the maximum number of votes. According to The Election Methods Education and Research Group (EMERG), the advantage Approval Voting has over other methods is that it is cost effective and needs little to no new equipment. However, Loring said, it is far more complicated than it appears. "Approval is simple to tally and appears simple to voters. But in fact it forces them to make strategic calculations about how many candidates to approve, so its results are a bit unpredictable and might be erratic," he said. "One of the problems with Approval Voting is that the voters and vote counters cannot tell the difference between a first choice and lower preferences."

Although the benefits of implementing election reform via changing the method of calculating votes is great, numerous obstacles inevitably lie ahead. Election reform is a slow process, especially when many have never even considered an alternative voting scheme. Additionally, citing what he calls "institutional inertia," Richie explains that people are also more likely to deal with the current system rather than call for implementing a new one. Unfortunately, the result of stagnating reform will be the continual robbery of an eclectic,

The current Presidential voting system glares with all of its ineptitude into the faces of millions of American voters, many of whom are tired of having their opinions reduced to either-or voting — a banal segregation of ideas.

free political marketplace where an exchange of innovative ideas and radically diverse politics exists. "The realities of the current system is that people do divide votes," Richie said. "People suppress candidacies."

The current Presidential voting system glares with all of its ineptitude into the faces of millions of American voters, many of whom are tired of having their opinions reduced to either-or voting – a banal segregation of ideas. With so many groups like MTV's Choose or Lose program, Punkvoter.com, AxisofJustice.com, Rockthevote.org, and others investing both time and money in bringing new faces to the polls this election, one must consider that a truly fecund political landscape may not depend so greatly on encouraging the rest of America to cast their vote. Rather, the prosperity of our democracy and fair representation in government may have more to do with allowing voters greater preferential leeway and apportioning greater value to the opinions of those who do reverently cast their vote for President of the United States. ☆

*Jeff Nall is a Central Florida based writer and has contributed to publications such as Z-Magazine, Liberty, Impact Press, Toward Freedom, and Ume (web-watch). You can contact Jeff at Sableide@yahoo.com.*

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### We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party

By Mumia Abu-Jamal  
South End Press, 2004  
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Full of revelations and recollection, death row journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu Jamal's sixth book *We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party* is the work of a scholar, of a revolutionary, of an idealist and a realist.

As the Philly chapter Minister of Information at the age of 16, Abu-Jamal shares his memories as snapshots of a movement. He was there not only as witness to history, but as creator and shaper of it, whether it was the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention held in Philly in 1970, or Chicago scant hours after police had murdered Fred Hampton and Mark Clark.

Abu-Jamal's book is not the tale of heroes and leaders, personalities and revolution superstars. It is the tale of the thousands of every day foot soldiers, the black, energetic youth who flocked to the party and who fed children, distributed blankets, sold papers, slept in collective housing, and were prepared to (and did) give their lives for what they believed in.

And there is no sainthood in this book. Abu-Jamal shares the Party's triumphs as well as their mistakes, and makes a space where the reader can hear not only his political voice others analyzing those mistakes and offering strategies for any person who is still struggling to change a system that no more works today than it did in 1960.

Looking back with four decades of knowledge and reflection, as well as a whole lot more political experience, Abu-Jamal talks about the east coast/west coast split between the Panthers, the ideological (and personal) conflicts in the organization, while keeping in the front that the downfall of the Panthers was orchestrated by the FBI and their COINTELPRO (counter intelligence program). And he oughta know, since the FBI started their file on him at 16, and now have thousands of pages on this brotha (and no doubt growing everyday).

"The Party, like the proverbial cat, had many lives. At some phases of its life, it ran with grace and purpose, at others, it limped, wounded by external and self-inflicted injuries," he writes.

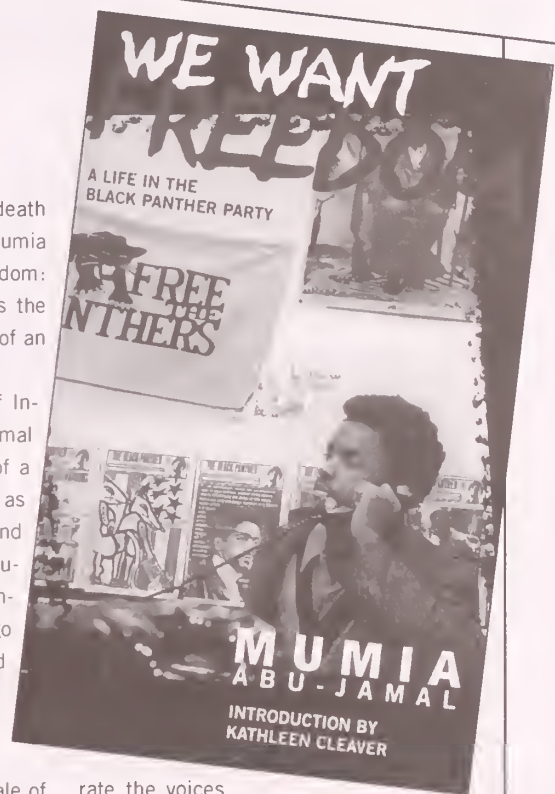
One of those self-inflicted injuries was sexism, and Abu-Jamal attempts incorpo-

rate the voices of women, not just as an afterthought, but an integral part of the story. Perhaps even more profound than the chapter he dedicates to sexism within the Party, "A Woman's Party," Mumia incorporates the voices of women throughout the book.

Sharing the story of Naima Major, a Panther member in the Bay area, Mumia writes, "Although her name may be little known by those who have read the popular literature produced around the Black Panther Party, her story is actually closer to the norm of a woman's life in the Party. Hard work. Hard study. Jailed lovers. Survival. Striving. Times of promise. Times of terror. Resistance to male chauvinism. And hope."

This book is impressive in its own right, but becomes mind boggling when you realize that Mumia wrote it in a cell by hand with only the inside of a pen (as the pen casing "can be used as a weapon"), having to write everything out twice for fear guards may come in and destroy his creation. That he has so many first hand account, most of them unpublished until now, is powerful, as he could not go interview them, could not call them, could not drop them an email. That Mumia could do what others, out here and free with monetary backing of big publishing companies could not, is the essence of the Panther spirit that lives on.

-Walidah Imarisha



# It's none of your damn business

## what our patrons are reading!

National Library Week was in April, and President Bush "celebrated" by making stump speeches in favor of the USA PATRIOT Act [USAPA].

USAPA has been with us since October 2001, when an alarmed Congress hastily passed the 300+ page bill giving the US Government unprecedented leeway in the War on Terror. Attorney General John Ashcroft gave Congress one week to pass the bill without making any changes, saying Congress would be at fault if further terrorist acts occurred while they were debating it.

Like many of the other US-declared not-strictly-wars of the last five decades — most notably the War on Drugs — the War on Terror pits US might and righteousness against a shifting unknowable opponent in a battle that is more of an unending skirmish than a true tactical engagement.

The PATRIOT Act increased the surveillance and investigative powers of US law enforcement without including the normal checks and balances that would prevent these powers from being abused.

Librarians were particularly concerned about the implications of Section 215, which allows for relaxed standards in obtaining search warrants, requesting information, and inspecting records from institutions such as libraries and bookstores. There is an associated gag order, meaning that when the feds come knocking at your library's door, it's illegal to tell anyone that they've been there. Section 215 "sunsets" the last day of 2005. Bush and Ashcroft have been lobbying hard to see that it doesn't.

Librarians were not amused.

The taxpayer-funded USAPA-apologist website [IfandLiberty.gov](http://IfandLiberty.gov) raises the alarmist claim that the USA PATRIOT Act is necessary to avoid the use of libraries by "terrorists and spies" in ways that threaten national security. It addresses the concerns of librarians and the ACLU in a section titled "Dispelling the Myths."

Librarians got annoyed.

John Ashcroft gave a speech in late 2003 in which he actively ridiculed librarians' resistance to the USA PATRIOT Act stating, "According to these breathless reports and baseless hysteria, some have convinced the American Library Association (ALA) that

under the bipartisanly enacted PATRIOT Act, the FBI is not fighting terrorism; instead, agents are checking how far you've gotten in the latest Tom Clancy novel."

Librarians got organized.

Carla Hayden, ALA's President, issued a strongly worded public statement telling Ashcroft to give us data instead of derogatory remarks. She wrote: "Rather than ask the nation's librarians and Americans nationwide to 'just trust him,' Ashcroft could allay concerns by releasing aggregate information about the number of libraries visited using the expanded powers created by the USA PATRIOT Act."

She got Ashcroft on the telephone and got him to agree to declassify a Justice Department report on USAPA's Section 215 and provide information about law enforcement's requests for library records. The Department of Justice released a memo the next day quantifying the number of such visits as "zero."

The number given in the DoJ memo directly contradicts an earlier study done by Leigh Esterbrook at the University of Illinois' Library Research Center which revealed many libraries that had received visits and requests for records from local law enforcement and the FBI. Fifteen libraries stated "there were questions they did not answer because they were legally prohibited from doing so."

The study also touched on what librarians were doing besides just waiting for the knock on the door:

They were instructing their staff and their board about current laws and policies regarding patron privacy — laws that are superseded by Section 215 of USAPA.

They were making signs to notify their patrons that their privacy was not as secure as it once was. While saying that the FBI had arrived was illegal, saying that the FBI hadn't arrived \*yet\* is still legal. As an elected member of the American Library Association's governing Council, I was particularly peeved by the gag order and the snotty talk about librarians. I half-seriously created a series of "technically legal" signs for libraries that would let patrons know that their privacy rights were being eroded while still being within the letter of the law. Much to my

surprise, they caught on and can be seen in public libraries in Vermont and elsewhere.

They were deciding which circulation records to keep and which to purge under the assumption that requests for records are most invasive when there are records to give up. The patron has returned the book, yes? Then remove the fact that she ever checked it out. This is happening in small libraries like mine as well as big libraries like the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay and Boulder Public Library.

They were working with their elected representatives like Bernie Sanders of Vermont to introduce and try to pass legislation that exempts libraries from the invasive snooping of the feds: the Freedom to Read Protection Act. Trina Magi, a UVM librarian, has become something of a celebrity for her work with Sanders, traveling around the state holding town meetings to let citizens know about this new affront to liberty.

They were working with their regional library association and in their towns to pass local legislation against the PATRIOT Act. According to the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, four states and 326 cities and towns have passed resolutions against the PATRIOT Act to date.

And they were writing articles like this one. I'm a public librarian in Central Vermont. I have no special superpowers other than laser-beam righteousness when political players exploit fear for a power grab. If my librarian colleagues and I can rise up from our reference desks and work against the PATRIOT Act, then so can you. Join us. ☆

**update:** As this article was going to press, the Sanders et. al. Freedom to Read Amendment -- which would have prohibited using federal funds for Section 215 surveillance on libraries or bookstores -- failed in a 210 to 210 vote, after the roll call voting time was extended. Nine Republicans who had voted "yes" on the amendment were strongarmed into changing their votes in twenty minutes. ☆

*Jessamyn West runs the activist librarian weblog [librarian.net](http://librarian.net) and is a public librarian in Vermont.*



words Ari Paul photo Mike Medow

## The Evens

Ian MacKaye &  
Amy Farina  
Return to Their  
Roots With  
New Project.

One of the most essential elements of punk rock and the scene that surrounds the genre is the concept of "Do it Yourself" or "DIY." No promoters, no entourages, just a band carrying their instruments, playing in a warehouse, a basement, anywhere were the players and their friends can plug in an amp and rock out.

No one knows more about this philosophy than Ian MacKaye. Emerging out the underground hardcore scene in Washington D.C. that bred bands like Bad Brains, MacKaye, while still in his late teens, became the front man for Minor Threat in the early 80s. Minor Threat spawned a huge following, and upon its breakup, MacKaye became the singer for Fugazi, a socially conscious hardcore band with a successful career. And since the days of Minor Threat until now, he has maintained Dischord, an independent record label.

But in the days of the Van's Warped Tour and punk bands signing on to corporate labels, it is feared that the lack of the DIY lifestyle in the scene asserts that punk is, indeed, dead. In the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of *Punk Planet* magazine, a letter to the editor lamented that the DIY aesthetic was nowhere to be found, even amongst small local artists.

But MacKaye is bringing it back in a way few of his followers would expect. His new project, The Evens, which has him on guitar and vocals and his partner Amy Farina on drums and vocal, is a bare-bones duo embarking on a radical, yet simple endeavor. With no plan for a record, playing in art galleries and record stores instead of bars, and promoting themselves only by word of mouth, The Evens are touring and sharing their music in a participatory fashion where the music is the only thing on stage, and fans are watching their project evolve, instead of seeing a polished result fresh from the recording studio.

They played for attendees at the Allied Media conference in Bowling Green, at a teen center in Ann Arbor, at a natural history museum in Ithaca, and at other more obscure venues. "I have to say there is a traditional approach," MacKaye said, "I want something that puts music in the focus." Venues such as bars and clubs that are smoky where people are drinking provide too many distractions, he insists. What he wants to do, and what The Evens are doing, is playing for a group of people in a room, where they quietly take in his music, while MacKaye and Farina play and have a chance to speak with their fans after and during the show. "We're trying to fuck with the form," he said.

Mike Medow, who helped organize The Evens' performance in Ann Arbor in June, said that MacKaye was actually "pissed that we had two openers." MacKaye adjusted to the environment, however. He sat cross legged and attentively watched Eliza Beatrix Godfry play an acoustic set while drinking a cup of water, nodding when she hit a note or busted a lyric he appeared to like.

"It's an incredible experience," he said, "it makes me think about early punk rock, just a band in a room playing for their friends." At

the Ann Arbor performance, MacKaye insisted that the audience chant during the breakdown of their song "Mount Pleasant Isn't," which is about a riot involving police brutality in D.C. ten years ago. When the audience chanted, "The Police will not be excused, the police will not behave," MacKaye smiled when he saw that the Ann Arbor crowd was enthusiastic to play a role in the show. He said, "Essentially, all I ever wanted to do was be in room singing with a group of people."

Lauren Heidke, attending The Evens' show in Ann Arbor, classified their work as "Politically-electronic-haunting-folk." It is most of these things. Electronically, MacKaye uses only one guitar and no public address system, just a set of amps. But the ominous nature of The Evens is a departure from the adrenaline pumping sounds of Minor Threat and Fugazi, and perhaps for the better, even if his earlier projects were as socially conscious as The Evens.

Commenting on their song "You Won't Feel a Thing" he says it is about how the U.S. government is bombarding us with warnings about terrorist attacks, which in turn makes us numb to the real violence that goes in America. This ultimately gave MacKaye a chance to speak his mind about politics, saying that young kids should vote. "I apologize if there are any Republicans here," but urged those over 18 to register and vote for the candidate who is less likely to take the nation to war. He didn't name a candidate specifically.

Some punk icons like the Dead Kennedy's Jello Biafra are touring to get punks and progressives to vote in November 2004. Even Fat Wreck Chords has gone high-tech and created PunkVoter.com and has put out a Rock Against Bush CD featuring 26 bands, including Social Distortion and Anti-Flag.

MacKaye's more grassroots approach could also add to the general effort to get kids to vote. Not only is the forum for political discussion that The Evens create more fundamental than the organizing for things like PunkVoter.com, but The Evens music, which is more akin to the likes of Billy Bragg than Jello Biafra, inspires more political consciousness. There is simply more emotion created when The Evens lead a chant about a riot in D.C. than Mike Ness screaming about how much Bush is an idiot.

The Evens have no immediate plans to record an album; MacKaye hopes that an album will occur naturally when the project is ready to depart from the conventional practices of the recording industry. He speculates that if and when an album is released, "it will probably be on Dischord." ☆

*Ari Paul is a columnist for Citizen Culture, and has written for the Ann Arbor News, High Times, Baghdad Bulletin, and Creative Loafing.*

These are the names of more than 1,000 coalition soldiers that have been killed in the war in Iraq as of July 11, 2004. More than ten were killed so recently that the names haven't been released yet. While the U.S. Government does not keep records of civilian deaths abroad, the web site www.iraqbodcount.com estimates as many as 13,000 civilians have been killed since the invasion began. For more information on coalition and civilian casualties, and the Iraq occupation, please visit http://www.clamormagazine.org/iraq

- Acosta II, Michael D
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Acosta Steven
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Adams Michael S
Adams Thomas Mullen
Addison Jamaal Rashard
Adle Patrick R
Aiken Tristan Neil
Aibuti Stephen John
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Ballard Steve Alexis
Bangayan Solomon C
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Barnhill Edward C
Baro Dilerio Carlos
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Barrera Michael Paul
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Baumann Olaf S
Bean Jr Alan N
Beaulieu Beau R
Beaupre Ryan Anthony
Beckstrand James L
Beeson Russell
Belanger Gregory A
Bell Aubrey D
Bellard Wilfried Davrusse
Bellavia Joseph P
Bennett William M
Benson Robert
Bernal Gomez Jose Antonio
Bernstein David R
Bert Idoe Joel L
Bertolino Stephen A
Best Marvin
Bibby Mark Anthony
Biskie Benjamin W
Blair Michael Edward
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Blair Thomas Alan
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Blair Ernest M
Blankenbiller James D
Blankenstaff Joseph M
Blumberg Trevor A
Blumman Jeremy L
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Boiling Todd J
Boiling Craig A
Boinger Jr Doyle W
Bohr Kelly
Bohrerakis Aleksey
Booker Steven Alexander
Boone Karen E E
Boyd Rachel K
Boyd Matthew George
Boyd James R
Bos Hesy P
Boys Noah T
Bozard Edward W
Bradley Travis
Bradley Kenneth R
Brandt Sacy
Brandt Anthony R
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## REASON #117

**What's the difference between Bush and Kerry?**

**Bush:** He wants to outlaw abortion and has so far taken 11 executive actions to undermine reproductive rights.

**Kerry:** Has a long history of defending a woman's right to choose and wants to keep abortion safe and legal.

The next President will have the power to appoint two seats to a Supreme Court that is already only one vote away from overturning *Roe V. Wade*, which would effectively outlaw abortion on a national level.

Bush has made it clear that he will appoint anti-abortion judges in his next term. Kerry has made it clear that he will appoint pro-choice judges. You decide who is going to protect your personal liberties.

**Make a choice while you still have a choice.**

# JOIN US!

Paid for by Punk Voter