

"The first step in a fascist movement is the combination under an energetic leader of a number of men who possess more than the average share of leisure, brutality, and stupidity. The next step is to fascinate fools and muzzle the intelligent, by emotional excitement on the one hand and terrorism on the other."

Bertrand Russell

<http://www.politicalstrategy.org/archives/000869.php>

How The Bush Gang Stole Its Third National Election in a Row

By William Hare

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The 2004 election theft marks the third in a row for the Bush Gang. While much has been written about 2000, unfortunately the pivotal 2002 mid-term elections came and went in a torrent, which was the way that Republican strategists wanted it. The one thing they fear is sober reflection followed by solid investigation. Fortunately they have the complaisant mainstream corporate media looking the other way.

The 2002 mid-term elections were viewed as a grand triumph for George W. Bush since he ostensibly "defied" the tradition that incumbent chief executives suffer losses in such contests. While the corporate media saluted him for his efforts and he received congratulations from "liberal" pundit Paul Begala on CNN's Crossfire, disturbing trends were observed by those detached enough from mainstream media ozone to investigate.

In Minnesota Democrats were united behind Walter Mondale as a replacement for the recently deceased Senator Paul Wellstone, who had perished in a plane crash, against Democrat turned Republican Norm Coleman. After some tough moments Wellstone had weathered well-financed Republican onslaughts to secure a lead in the polls before his tragic demise. Those same polls found Mondale maintaining a lead going into Election Day, upon which a big surprise was recorded and Coleman emerged the winner.

Republican Senator Wayne Allard was running behind in Colorado with the momentum going in the other direction. When the results were revealed he, like Coleman, had won in a final surge that the pollsters failed to detect. The identical phenomenon occurred in New Hampshire, where popular Governor Jean Shaheen, who had been on Al Gore's short list for the vice presidency in 2000, appeared on her way to the U.S. Senate. The pollsters were once more revealed to be dramatically wrong as John

Sununu Jr. pulled through with another one of those 2002 Republican final surges to nip his opponent at the wire.

The most widely observed case of Republicans seemingly clutching victory from the jaws of defeat occurred in Georgia. This is the state where Karl Rove enticed lackluster Congressman Saxby Chambliss to run against Vietnam War hero and incumbent Senator Max Cleland. Despite shameful television ads showing Cleland alongside Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden the incumbent appeared to have weathered the storm and was ahead in the polls, as was Democratic Governor Roy Barnes. On Election Day the Republicans had scored two more of those amazing come from behind victories in the face of negative poll forecasts as Chambliss and Republican gubernatorial candidate Sonny Perdue both won.

A few perceptive analysts observed the strong showings made by Chambliss and Perdue in polling areas when the widely heralded new Diebold voting machines were in use. They dovetailed this information alongside the fact that similar machines were being used in the other races in which Republicans had scored dramatic triumphs.

John Zogby had proven himself to be one of the nation's most reliable pollsters in 2000, when he correctly analyzed Gore's final surge and ultimate victory in the popular vote category, as well as in the Electoral College but for the fraudulent efforts of Jeb Bush and Katherine Harris in Florida and the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court majority in Bush vs. Gore, in which Federalist Society partisans Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas refused to recuse themselves despite conflicts of interest.

It is interesting to note that the usually reliable Zogby along with some of his professional colleagues, who had followed the aforementioned senate races closely, were mysteriously off by margins as high as 10 to 13 percent. These key races made the difference as Republicans took control of the United States Senate and Bush was saluted for his successful barnstorming on behalf of Republican candidates.

Despite all kinds of promises to fix things so that the 2004 presidential election could go off without major hitches, what occurred was a malicious mix combining the worst of the 2000 and 2002 scenarios. When the exit polls proved to be highly errant in key battleground states such as Ohio and Florida the mainstream media simplistically explained that Bush voters had demonstrated a greater reluctance to talk to pollsters than did Kerry supporters.

This argument sounds as convincing as the one Republicans made in 2000 that the reason why so many chads were spat out in Florida did not relate to the age and unreliability of the machines, but because large numbers of voters decided at the last second to not vote for president, resulting in half-hearted stabs at the paper before them. The same media that recited this nonsense repeatedly, as long as James Baker could say it with a straight face, is now attacking Internet critics citing corruption in the 2004 vote as "spreadsheet conspiracy theorists."

The latest effort in the feeble mainstream media assault occurred today when the Miami Herald published an article contending that Bush really did carry Florida by securing Democratic votes in the traditionally conservative northern tier of the state. CNN Online immediately picked up the story and ran it. The information was meant to refute the contention that Bush's total was inflated by the new touch screen voting machines used in the Sunshine State. The story covered three small counties with four digit figures as part of a smokescreen dodge to avoid the harsh reality that something was truly amiss in the 2004 Florida presidential count.

When Robert Parry of the ConsortiumNews.com site recently noted that Bush had what appeared to be highly inflated vote totals in the heavily Democratic southern counties of Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade, the Washington Post criticized him and fuzzed up the process by using the same argument posed today in the Miami Herald. Bush had won because of his strength among conservative Democratic elements in the state's northern tier.

Parry immediately rebutted the article by pointing out that his survey had deliberately avoided the state's notably conservative north with its smaller population and concentrated on the traditionally vote rich Democratic counties concentrated near Miami. In this connection it has been reported that Bush may have received some 130,000 to 260,000 unaccounted for votes in the state's southern region. Where did these votes come from?

The reason why the media seeks to shift the focus to the state's northern section is that it is far easier to bootstrap the Bush victory alongside Karl Rove's frequently repeated goal of adding some four million votes from the 2000 total from conservative Christian evangelicals. From the clumsy manner in which the mainstream media seeks to take Robert Parry and others to task for pointing out voting discrepancies it is obvious that no solid foundation exists supporting the alleged Bush-voting surge.

On Election Night Ken Mehlman significantly crowed not about Republican gains in the north but in the south, especially along the Interstate 4 tier known as the I-4 Corridor. His effusiveness was sought to spin optimism for a Florida victory, but in focusing on this area the question once more surfaces: Where did this sudden surge of Bush votes come from? Meanwhile in Democratic stronghold Broward County the new Bush-appointed Supervisor of Elections, Brenda Snipes, announced shortly before the November 2 election that over 90,000 absentee ballots had not been sent out. This discovery came after her office had been flooded with calls from concerned voters who had not received their absentee ballots.

Snipes eventually appealed to Secretary of State Glenda Hood in Tallahassee to resolve the problem. What happened? We do know, however, that Hood is wearing Katherine Harris's old mantle well. She helped Jeb Bush prepare another "felon list" to disqualify African American voters, just as her predecessor had infamously done four years ago. There was another sea of "spoiled votes" tossed into receptacles. Guess where they predominantly came from? If you said African American precincts you are one hundred percent correct.

Greg Palast uncovered the Florida fraud involving Jeb Bush and Katherine Harris four years ago. Significantly, his reporting came from the BBC and not an American outpost, since the mainstream media turned deaf when he came calling. After investigating the 2004 election he announced that Kerry had won both Ohio and New Mexico. Palast noted that the "spoiled vote" discard piles were awesome in both states, with African American precincts singled out in Ohio and Hispanics from predominantly Democratic voting stations debited in New Mexico.

Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell lived up to his anticipated billing by progressives of being the "new Katherine Harris." An African American, Blackwell followed orders from the Rove machine obediently. In African American precincts Blackwell threw up significant roadblocks. African American areas were provided with woefully small numbers of voting stations.

This tactic insured long lines. The media reported the lines within the context of a huge and unanticipated turnout. That was wrong. Instead, as Ralph Nader noted, what occurred was a pre-designed effort to force African American voters to stand in seemingly interminably long lines to vote. "Due to the long lines many voters became disgusted and left, not voting at all," Nader explained.

Oh yes, and about those voting machines! There were numerous discrepancies, particularly in Cuyahoga County, bastion of Democratic vote rich Cleveland. That same phenomenon occurring in Democratic South Florida of Bush votes popping up unexpectedly occurred in Cuyahoga County as well. In fact, there were many precincts where there were more Bush votes than registered voters.

Too little has been written thus far about what had to be a major element of Karl Rove's current theft, not allowing a repeat of 2000, when, through the Supreme Court stopping the Florida vote recount, Bush "won" in the Electoral College while losing the popular vote to Al Gore. Rove set the stage for the vote theft by announcing his target of four million new voters from the Christian evangelical ranks.

The complaisant mainstream media has embraced a stated objective as accomplished fact by reporting endlessly that Bush won by turning out committed voters responding to the urgency of such "social issues" as gay marriage, stem cell research, and trimester abortion. Again, where are the supporting figures? Those "spreadsheet conspiracy theorists" keep unleashing more figures to support their view with regularity.

On Election Night, when a potential Ohio vote recount was discussed, CNN's Jeff Greenfield noted that Bush held a 3-point edge over Kerry in the popular vote. He cited this lead as a reason why such recounts would be unlikely to succeed.

Greenfield's conclusion rests on a highly controversial figure. With as many voting machine discrepancies as have already appeared, and with Bush boasting top heavy margins in southern states, the distinct possibility exists that votes were added to his total in "friendly" states. Some of you will recall the so-called "Thanksgiving stuffing" of four years ago when Florida Republicans padded Bush's figures with late arriving veterans' votes after the Democrats were once more being accused of being unpatriotic in allegedly turning their backs on the men and women who serve America.

On the subject of machine discrepancies, Ralph Nader lent his support to a recount in New Hampshire after a computer specialist observed that Bush was achieving disproportionately high vote figures in counties Al Gore had won substantially four years ago. While Kerry won New Hampshire by a close margin, Nader was correct in observing that if large numbers of bogus Bush votes are uncovered following a recount this could serve as a warning bell concerning a national pattern.

Nader's comment prompted me to think back to Election Night, when I observed that John Zogby was reporting that the presidential race in Virginia was too close to call. In Zogby's subsequent Electoral College forecasts he ceded the Old Dominion to Bush, but the fact that the pollster found the race that competitive at the end indicated that perhaps Kerry would receive more southern votes than anticipated. A thorough analysis of polling figures near the end of the race indicated that in such states as Arkansas and North Carolina, the home state of Kerry running mate Senator John Edwards, the Democrats were running respectably.

The fact that Bush not only swept the south, but did so in such devastating fashion, is contrary to many poll findings, including normally reliable state polling organizations. Adding votes to the Bush total from his strongest region, where such figures were not as likely to be challenged as in other regions, would be a way of padding the Republican candidate's total.

As for John Zogby's reaction, he has indicated on his website that, based on his findings, the reported election results appear suspicious. An article on his site written by Colin Shea was called appropriately, "I Smell a Rat."

Even Bush apologist Dick Morris appears squeamish about events. The veteran political consultant conceded that exit polling has become advanced almost to the point of established science and is scarcely wrong. To justify what happened in the November 2 election he has accused the Kerry campaign of rigging the exit polling results. What a pathetic response. If Rove had any kind of information, or even a suspicion, he would pounce.

What is needed is a comprehensive national recount and analysis. Greg Palast has committed himself to such an effort. So has Bev Harris of the Black Box Voting site. The Green and Libertarian parties are to be commended for their efforts in seeking an Ohio recount, as is Nader for supporting such an effort in New Hampshire.

Veteran historian and political journalist Ronnie Dugger wrote an article entitled "How They (the Republicans) Could Steal The Election This Time". It was published in the August 16-23 issue of The Nation. I reread it before preparing this article. The only changes Dugger would need to make if he wanted to run it again would be to change his tenses from future prospective to current perspective.