

## How Bush Backers Stole the 2004 Election

By Sherwood Ross

President Bush carried Ohio, Iowa, and New Mexico in 2004 because vast numbers of ballots cast by minorities for John Kerry in those states were never counted, an investigative reporter says.

In New Mexico, which Bush won by 5,988 votes, 33,981 ballots were not counted; in Iowa, which Bush won by 10,059 votes, 36,811 ballots were not counted; and in Ohio, which Bush won by 118,599 votes, a whopping 239,127 ballots were not counted.

According to reporter Greg Palast, (a former fraud investigator before turning reporter for BBC-TV) exit polls of voters leaving the voting booths revealed all three states had gone for Kerry by margins of two to four percent. Yet the official count later gave them all to Bush by one or two percent.

Q: So what happened?

A: Nationally, a total of 3-million votes were never counted --- a high percentage of them cast by African-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and other minorities. Palast spells out how it was done in his new book, "Armed Madhouse" (Plume):

2004 saw the introduction of the new "provisional ballot." The Black Caucus wanted them so that a voter could get a ballot even if the voter's name did not appear on the rolls. In theory, the "provisional" would be marked, then kept aside and reviewed after the polls closed.

Under the "Help America Vote" Act of 2002, signed by President Bush, States were required to give out provisional ballots to those who wanted them.

But, Palast says, the law "does not require states to count them." Thus, of 3,107,490 provisional ballots handed out on election day, 2004, 1,090,729 were trashed. "...the provisional voters who were rejected had a dark hue," the Palast says, and there were enough of them to swing the three States to Bush.

Besides provisional ballots, there were

1,389,231 "spoiled" ballots, cast by voters who may not have punched their card hard enough or whose "x" was too hard to read, Palast says. "We know that a bit more than half, about three-quarters of a million of those uncounted votes, were cast by African-American voters," Palast states. How does he know? Well, almost all provisional ballots rejected "were from 25 'urban' areas. Any guesses about the color of the urb?"

Finally, 526,420 absentee ballots never got counted, either, and "In swing states, absentee ballot shredding was pandemic," Palast discovered.

In Ohio's Cuyahoga county, you can superimpose a map of the precincts with high numbers of "spoiled" votes over a map of African-American neighborhoods. They're practically identical. Indeed, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission found only 1.6% of ballots by white voters were rejected. But 14.4% of ballots cast by Black voters got trashed.

What's more, on Voting Day, the Republicans "launched a massive multimillion-dollar campaign of mass challenges of voters in Black precincts, concentrating on Ohio," Palast writes. The attack was a legal no-no as the Republican National Committee had signed a no-race-baiting decree in 1981 pledging it would never again engage in this shoddy tactic. Besides Ohio, the GOP challenged thousands of African-American voters in Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

Another trick used in the 2004 swindle was to not fix broken voting machines --- the sort that mutilated ballots--- and plant them, as Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell did, in minority precincts. Did the bad machine spoil your ballot? Too-o bad! In New Mexico, nine out of 10 ballots that were rejected were cast by non-Anglo voters, Palast said.

Still another ploy is the undervote: In Jacksonville, Fla., a Republican voting supervisor removed several machines from Black precincts. This was also done in Ohio, where Blacks and students waited in some

precincts for seven hours or longer to vote. Many discouraged voters walked away, never counted. Palast said this reduced Kerry's net vote in Columbus, Ohio, alone by an estimated 9,000+ votes.

As for absentee ballots, in Arapahoe County, Colorado, three times more absentee ballots mailed to Democrats "failed to return" as compared to Republican ballots. As for those that were returned, a total of 526,426 absentee ballots from around the nation were received but not counted, Palast said. And guess what? In strong Kerry precincts, "voters were 265% more likely to have their absentee ballots tossed out than voters in Bush-majority precincts."

"Absentee balloting in the USA is the greatest expression of mass faith since the Hebrews walked across the Red Sea bed trusting the Lord would keep the waters parted," Palast writes. "The difference is, in 2004, the absentee voters mailed their ballots to Pharaoh's clerks."

The above are just some of the deceptions used to cheat Senator Kerry out of the White House in 2004. If you doubt Mr. Bush would steal a national election, keep in mind he has deceived the American people about Iraq's WMD, lied to the public that his underlings do not torture prisoners, trashed President Nixon's honorable stand on germ warfare, scrapped President Reagan's good work against nuclear proliferation, and politicized the Federal government, subordinating the public good to what's best for his Republican chums. My hunch is in 2008 a lot of thoughtful Republicans will cross over to vote Democratic. The big question is, who will count their votes?

P.S. And speaking of a level playing field for all income groups, what about switching election day from a week day, when so many people have to work, to a weekend, when wage-earners can get away from their jobs? And why isn't it mandatory for voter registration forms to be published in all newspapers so readers can fill them out at home at their leisure?

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## How the GOP Plans to Steal the Next Election Too

By Matt Sullivan

The Republicans have a multi-prong strategy for steeling the 2008 election.

Prong one: Targeting voters based on race.

Greg Palast has written extensively about GOP election theft since before the 2000 elections. In his latest release of *Armed Madhouse* he has a chapter called "Caging Lists: Great White Republicans Take Voters Captive". He writes about Timothy Griffin, Karl Rove's assistant. Griffin, according to Palast, was behind a scheme to wipe out the voting rights of 70,000 citizens prior to the 2004 election. Griffin's targets: Black and Hispanic voters from Democratic precincts. These groups were singled out because they are likely to vote Democratic, and because they may be away from their address of record. But there's a catch, targeting voters where race is a factor is a felony crime under the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But instead of being prosecuted for his crimes, Mr. Griffin has been made the US Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas.

While Mr. Griffin has said he would step down if he had to face Congressional confirmation, the Attorney General was able to appoint Griffin to the law enforcement post using an odd little provision secretly slipped into the USA Patriot Act that could allow Griffin to skip Congressional questioning altogether.

Prong two: The Fraudulent Fraud Squad.

As detailed by Richard L. Hasen in *Slate*, the Republican party is behind an effort to suppress poor and minority voting by imposing strict voter identification requirements justified by bogus claims of voter fraud. American Center for Voting Rights, the only prominent organization claiming that voter fraud is a major problem warranting strict rules such as voter-ID laws—simply stopped appearing at government panels and conferences. Its Web domain name has suddenly expired, its reports are all gone, and its general counsel, Mark "Thor" Hearne, has cleansed his résumé of affiliation with the group. Hearne won't speak to the press about ACVR's demise and no other group has taken up the "voter fraud" mantra.

And why would they--the idea of massive polling-place fraud (through the use of inflated voter rolls) is inherently incredible. If someone wanted to use polling-place fraud to swing an election they would have to figure out who the fake, dead, or missing people on the registration rolls are, and then pay a lot of other individuals to go to the polling place and impersonate the fake

voters, without any guarantee—thanks to the secret ballot. And they run the risk of being detected and charged with a felony. And for what—\$10? The only way to buy votes in an enforceable and safe way would be to watch as the voter cast their absentee ballots. (Notably, ACVR and supporters of voter-ID laws have generally supported exemptions from ID requirements for voters who use absentee ballots.) Polling-place fraud, in short, makes no sense.

ACVR's mission was to provide intellectual cover for Republican efforts to promote the absurd idea that voter fraud was a significant problem. The demise of ACVR has been precipitated by the recent investigation of the US Attorney firings. Make no mistake about it, the US Attorney scandal is about past and future vote suppression and election fraud. Prosecutors unwilling to parrot the GOP mantra of voter fraud, or to prosecute dubious voter fraud cases, have now been replaced with party loyalists willing to carry water for the Rove scheme.

Prong three: High-Tech Election Theft

The third prong of the GOP plan to steel elections is massive vote-rigging as Steve Rosenfeld and Bob Fittrakis have documented in great detail: They write:

"There is more than ample documentation to show that on Election Night 2004, Ohio's 'official' Secretary of State website -- which gave the world the presidential election results -- was redirected from an Ohio government server to a group of servers that contain scores of Republican web sites, including the secret White House e-mail accounts that have emerged in the scandal surrounding Attorney General Alberto Gonzales's firing of eight federal prosecutors.

Recent revelations have documented that the Republican National Committee (RNC) ran a secret White House e-mail system for Karl Rove and dozens of White House staffers. This high-tech system used to count and report the 2004 presidential vote-- from server-hosting contracts, to software-writing services, to remote-access capability, to the actual server usage logs themselves -- must be added to the growing congressional investigations.

The software created for the Ohio secretary of state's Election Night 2004 website was created by

GovTech Solutions, a firm co-founded by longtime GOP computing guru Mike Connell. He also redesigned the Bush campaign's website in 2000 and told "Inside Business" magazine in 1999, "I wouldn't be where I am today without the Bush campaign and the Bush family because the Bushes truly are about family and I'm loyal to my network."

Ohio's Cedarville University, a Christian school with 3,100 students, issued a press release on January 13, 2005 describing how faculty member Dr. Alan Dillman's computing company Government Consulting Resources, Ltd, worked with these Republican-connected companies to tally the vote on Election Night 2004.

"Dillman personally led the effort from the GCR side, teaming with key members of Blackwell's staff," the release said. "GCR teamed with several other firms -- including key players such as GovTech Solutions, which performed the software development -- to deliver the end result. SMARTech provided the backup and additional system capacity, and Mercury Interactive performed the stress testing."

On Election Night 2004, the Republican Party not only controlled the vote-counting process in Ohio, the final presidential swing state, through a secretary of state who was a co-chair of the Bush campaign, but it also controlled the technology that allowed the tally of the vote in Ohio's 88 counties to be reported to the media and voters.

Make no mistake. The GOP, despite overwhelming unpopularity among voters, intends to maintain its power by voter suppression, racial targeting, and outright fraud.

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## Bush Authorizes New Covert Action Against Iran

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covert action is now being escalated by the new U.S. directive, and that can very quickly lead to Iranian retaliation and a cycle of escalation can follow."

Other "lethal" findings have authorized CIA covert actions against al Qaeda, terrorism and nuclear proliferation clearly targeting Iran.

"The entire plan has been blessed by Abrams, in particular," said one intelligence source familiar with the plan, referring to Deputy National Security Advisor Elliott Abrams. Abrams' last involvement with attempting to destabilize a foreign government led to criminal charges. He pleaded guilty in October 1991 to two misdemeanor counts of withholding information from Congress about the

Reagan administration's ill-fated efforts to destabilize the Nicaraguan Sandinista government in Central America, known as the Iran-Contra affair

"There are some channels where the United States government may want to do things without its hand showing, and legally, therefore, the administration would, if it's doing that, need an intelligence finding and would need to tell the Congress," said Richard Clarke, a former White House counterterrorism official.

A presidential finding for such operations may satisfy US law, but it is unlikely that inserting covert agents, funding terrorism and propaganda, and supporting insurgent groups within Iran conforms to international law.

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## Was Iraq Invaded to Boost Oil Prices?

Value of Exxon Reserves Rose by \$666 Billion

By Sherwood Ross

Saddam Hussein may have been deposed in order to limit Iraq's oil production and thus keep world oil prices artificially high. This could be the real reason behind the invasion of Iraq by the Anglo-American forces and their allies.

According to Greg Palast's new book, "Armed Madhouse" (Plume), "When OPEC raises the price of crude, Big Oil makes out big time." Palast makes the point Iraq's output in the 2003-05 period following the invasion saw a decline in oil production. In fact, it dropped to below the level of the 1995-2003 Oil-for-Food arrangement that allowed Iraq to sell two million barrels per day to raise cash for humanitarian purposes. "Whether by design or happenstance, this decline in (Iraqi) output has resulted in tripling the profits of the five U.S. oil majors to \$89 billion for a single year, 2005, compared to pre-invasion 2002," Palast writes.

He points out the oil majors are not simply passive resellers of OPEC production but have reserves of their own which rise in tandem with oil prices.

"The rise in the price of oil after the first three years of the (Iraq) war boosted the value of the reserves of ExxonMobil Oil alone by just over \$666-billion," Palast wrote. What's more, Chevron Oil, "where (Secretary of State) Condoleezza Rice had served as a director, gained a quarter trillion dollars in value."

Another big winner in the Iraq war is Saudi Arabia. The war-stoked jump in oil prices, Palast writes, put \$120 billion in Saudi Arabia's treasury in 2004, triple its normal take.

Among the big losers have been American motorists, now paying about \$3.30 for a gallon of gas. What's more, the oil price spike has punished U.S. industry, costing America an estimated 1.2-million jobs. "Higher borrowing costs for business since the beginning of the Iraq war are bleeding manufacturing investment," Palast adds.

Rising oil prices are an anomaly. The world's petroleum reserves have doubled from 648 billion to 1.2 trillion barrels in the past 25 years, Palast reports. According to free market laws of supply and demand, discovery of these immense new pools should cause prices to drop.

Big Oil's interest is in "suppressing production," Palast writes, stating "An international industry policy of suppressing Iraqi oil production has been in place since 1927."

Iraq has 74 known oil fields but only 15 are in production and 526 known pools of oil of which only 125 have been drilled. In 2005, Iraq exported only 1.4 million barrels of oil daily, less than under Hussein, less than half its old OPEC quota, and less than a fourth of its ultimate capacity, Palast reports.

"Though technically owned by the Iraqis through their state oil company, we can expect the (Iraqi) crude to be gathered and controlled downstream by the same old hands, British Petroleum, Chevron and other IOC's (international oil companies) that first drew that nation's borders, politely fulfilling Iraq's quota assigned by the Saudis, no more, maybe less," Palast writes.

In addition to clapping a lid on Iraqi production, Palast charges the U.S.

"promoted sabotage of oil piping, loading and refining systems in Venezuela" to limit that country's production.

Palast reminds that Venezuela, once the top exporter to the U.S., broke the back of the 1973 Arab oil embargo by replacing the oil withdrawn by Saudi Arabia. "(Hugo) Chavez, despised by Bush, was not likely to save Bush's bacon by busting another embargo. Therefore, Chavez had to go immediately," Palast writes.

Palast says that OPEC is a front for the IOC's. "If oil companies had created this cartel to fix prices, that would have made it a criminal conspiracy---cartels are illegal. But when governments conspire for the same purpose, the illegal conspiracy turns into a legitimate 'alliance' of sovereign states. OPEC's government cover makes the price fixing perfectly legal, and Big Oil reaps the rewards."

What's more, Saudi Arabia and other OPEC nations take Americans' money at the pump, and in their heating and electric bills, and use it to buy up U.S. government notes. In 2005, Palast said, \$243 billion in petro-dollars was collected from Americans by OPEC. Foreigners then bought up \$311 billion in U.S. government debts.

"All the goodies, from nuclear subs to tax cuts to war in Mesopotamia appear to be 'free' to the taxpayer," Palast writes. "It's all just put on the tab, the national debt, including the interest on it. The actual cash needed to pay for these budget busters is first collected from U.S. consumers via the hidden oil tax for which Mr. Bush takes no blame."

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### Air Strikes from page 1

other types of bombs in Iraq last year as part of 10,519 "close air support missions," author Turse said.

According to Les Roberts, co-author of two surveys of mortality in Iraq published in the British medical journal *The Lancet*, "Rocket and cannon fire could account for most coalition-attributed civilian deaths." The magazine quotes him further as stating, "I find it disturbing that they (Pentagon) will not release this (figure), but even more disturbing that they have not released such information to Congressmen who have requested it."

Turse's article is titled, "The Secret Air War in Iraq," and alleges "The devastation from U.S. bombing is underreported---and may be increasing." He writes, "That an occupying power regularly conducts airstrikes in or near dense population centers should have raised serious concerns in the mainstream media, unfortunately, reports on the air war are sparse and mostly confined to regurgitations of military announcements."

"...Until reporters begin bypassing official U.S. military pronouncements and locating Iraqi sources, we will remain largely in the dark regarding the secret and deadly U.S. air war in Iraq," Turse concludes.

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