

I WANT MY COUNTRY BACK

BY REVEREND BILLY LLOYD HULTS

*"I'm tired of fundamentalist preachers.
I want my country back."
—HOWARD DEAN*

I too, want my country back. I want my Constitution back. I'm tired of watching my civil rights being destroyed in the name of Homeland Security. I want Congress to take back the right to declare war that it unconstitutionally granted to the executive branch.

I want the Supreme Court to uphold the Constitution it is sworn to defend and define by making every vote count in every election.

I want my vote back. I don't want some computer program that I can't access to tell me who won and who lost an election

I want my land, my water, and my air back. I'm sick of seeing it sold to the highest bidder.

I want the media back as a voice of the people, not just a parrot for the corporations that want us to be consumers not citizens. I want Edward R. Murrow back and I. F. Stone and Walter Cronkite. I want the Fourth Estate to do its job in a democracy; to inform the electorate.

I want our troops back home. I want our military to serve with honor and to defend democracy, not attack other countries because we fear what they might do or because they have something we want—like oil. I want our children to stop killing children in other countries.

I want my flag back. I'm tired of seeing it used as a weapon and a symbol that separates our people rather than uniting them.

I want my pride in my country back. I want to be able to hold my head high when I say I'm an American. I want the respect of the rest of the world back. I want my country to once again be a beacon of hope and example to the rest of the world of what freedom and democracy can be, a model for the future, a leader in human rights, a demonstration of what tolerance and patience can accomplish.

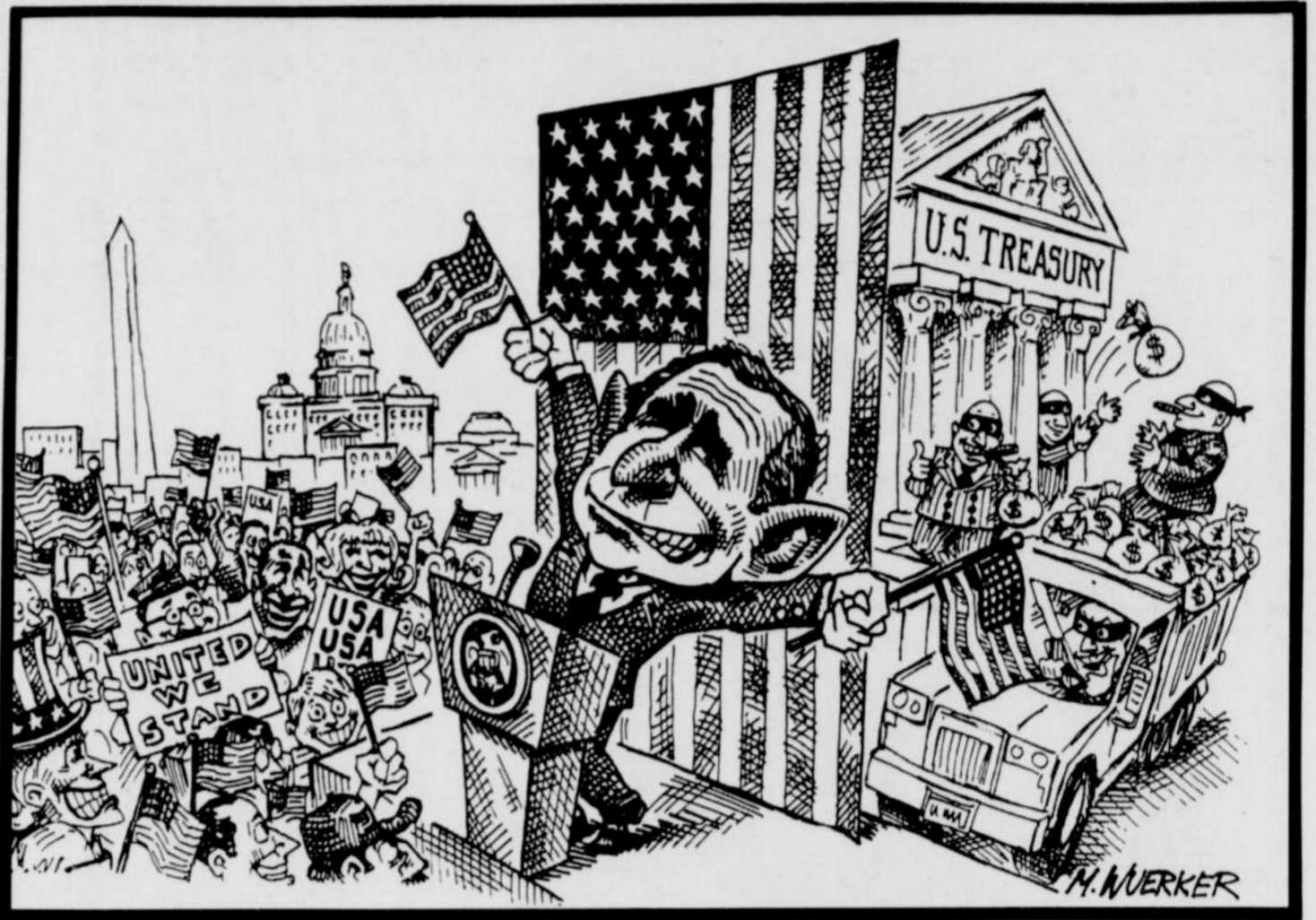
And I want my money back. I want taxes to be paid equally by all Americans. I want government contracts to be bid on, not granted to cronies. I want corporations to pay their share and not be allowed to use offshore mail boxes to cheat the American people out of the services they need and pay for.

I want the churches to return to the business of making peace rather than making money and making laws.

I want my time back. I don't want to have to take the time to march in the streets to let my government know how much I disagree with how it is running the people's business.

I want my country back!

The Reverend Billy Hults is editor/publisher of the Upper Left Edge, which is on sabbatical. Howard Dean is a former governor of Vermont and a Democratic candidate for President in 2004. "I have been looking at the candidates," the Reverend Billy says, "and believe Howard Dean has the best chance of beating the current occupant of the People's House. I also think he has the best chance of turning this country around and giving it back to the people. I urge others to find out more about him for themselves. I also encourage everyone in this country to get involved in the next Presidential election. It will probably be the most important election in our lifetime."



MATT WUERKER

HORATIO ALGER ON CRACK

BY DORIS HADDOCK

"I would rather be exposed to the inconveniences attending to liberty, than those attending too small a degree of it."

—THOMAS JEFFERSON

People who have an educated view of what is happening in the world understand that U.S. policy is not serving justice or peace, and they understand that the world's environment is now gravely endangered by official U.S. policy. It is frustrating for these people to sense that, after several decades of dumbed-down education and constant media misinformation, they are now a minority in America, or at least that is the way elections are turning out.

Most people, in fact, want the environment protected, and they want the U.S. to be an agent of justice and peace in the world. Turning that real majority into a political majority will be difficult, but the prospect should be encouraging to those who care.

One strategy that ought to be considered is appealing to the American right. The present assault on the Bill of Rights by the military-industrial complex ought to and can create a common cause between the more thoughtful members of the right and the left. Those on the right who feel that their powers have been undermined—the power to raise their families according to traditional moral values, for instance—need to understand that the only way to protect a family now is to preserve personal freedom, save the human scale of the economy, and save the very environment.

What we are seeing now from the far right is not conservatism at all. It is fascism: the imposition of a national and worldwide police state to enforce a narrow world view that enriches and empowers the few at the expense of the many, and gives no respect or honor to other cultures, ways of living, or opinions. To call that conservatism is a crime against the memory of America's great and true conservatives, who might think that government ought to be less involved in daily life than we old liberals do, but who nevertheless stood for the core American values that today's leaders undermine at every opportunity.

We are living in the harsh world invented by a handful of corporate raiders whose values are completely foreign to the fairness and moderation that had so long served as the proper foundation of American success and the American dream. This new world devolved as if from a virus, and the new business hero, a Horatio Alger on crack, did very well. A Darwinian system of corporate survival assured the most carnivorous, rather than the most responsible, have risen to lead our most powerful commercial organizations. These super wealthy predators, through their political patronage, control both political parties. They control Congress and the White House.

If we Americans are split into two meaningful camps today, it is not right versus left. The two camps are these: the politically awake and the hypnotized—hypnotized by television and other mass media that dangle packaged candidates and oft-told lies, people who are suckered into forking over their own best political interests.

It is all done to politically prolong the open season on anyone, conservative or liberal, who places morals over profit, as the billionaire corporate takeover artists bag their catch for the day. And in their bags are our freedoms, our health care futures, our old age security, our family time, our village life, our small businesses on Main Street, the middle class itself, and our position of honor in the world.

Political success is often a matter of empowering people. The instincts of the American right are not evil—they are all for moral living and family strength. And they are good fighters. We have different views of the role of government, but we can arm-wrestle over that in good humor after we have together saved the world from the forces of greed and corruption that are our common enemy today.

Doris Haddock, aka 'Granny D', walked 3,200 miles across America to draw attention to the need for campaign finance reform. She has sixteen great-grandchildren. Her article has been reprinted from Orion.

**COLUMBIA RIVER
MARITIME MUSEUM**
VISIT THE MUSEUM SHOP
IN ASTORIA, OREGON

THE COMMUNITY STORE

ASTORIA, OREGON

POLK RILEY'S PRINTING • ASTORIA 503.325.7775 1.800.732.7775

One day while we were all having
out someone asked me what I
thought...
Hey! What'd I say