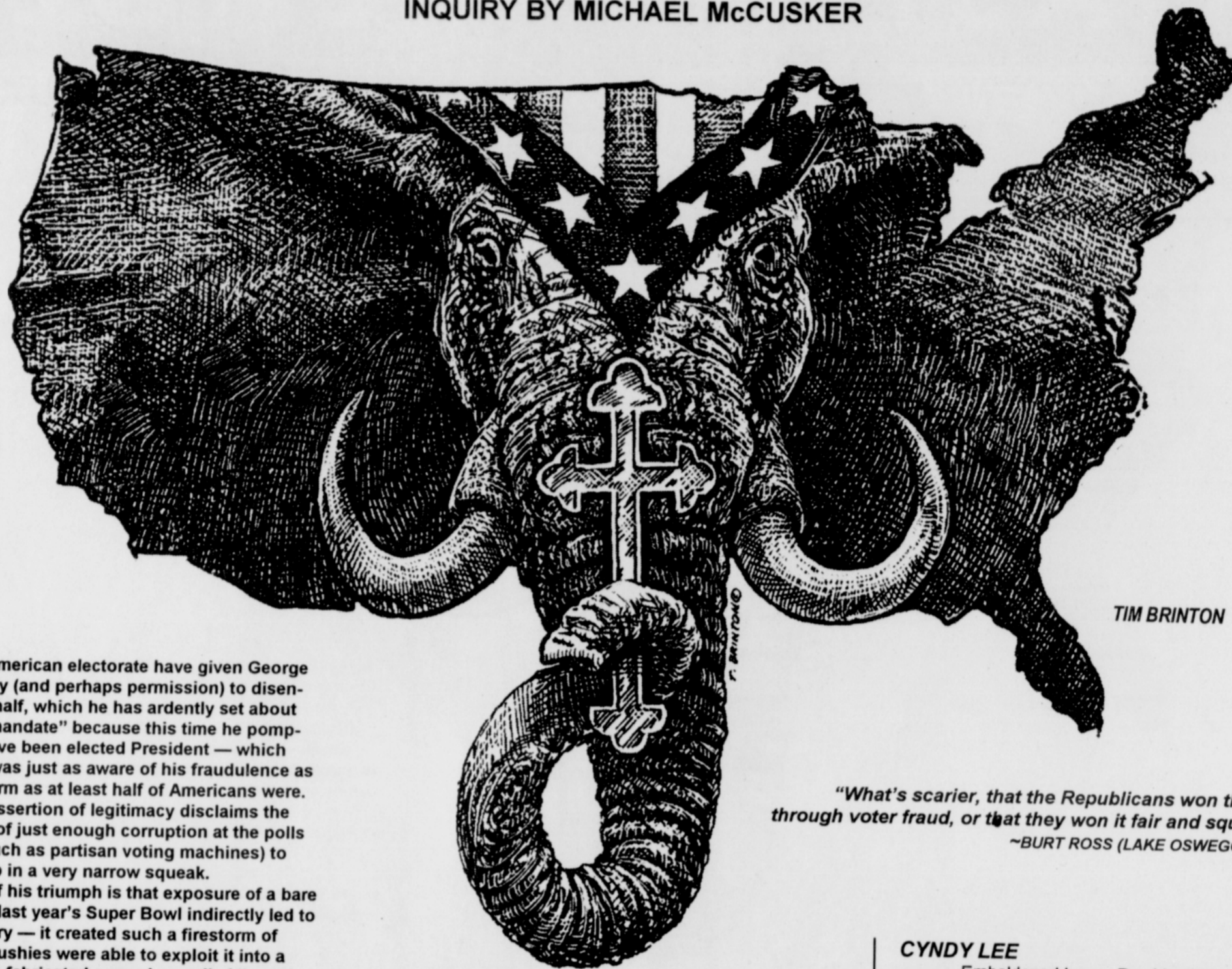


4 MORE YEARS OF W!

INQUIRY BY MICHAEL McCUSKER



"What's scarier, that the Republicans won the election through voter fraud, or that they won it fair and square?"
~BURT ROSS (LAKE OSWEGO, OREGON)

Half of the American electorate have given George Bush the opportunity (and perhaps permission) to disenfranchise the other half, which he has ardently set about doing, claiming a "mandate" because this time he pompously declares to have been elected President — which gives the sense he was just as aware of his fraudulence as President the first term as at least half of Americans were.

His current assertion of legitimacy disclaims the very real possibility of just enough corruption at the polls this past election (such as partisan voting machines) to take him over the top in a very narrow squeak.

One theory of his triumph is that exposure of a bare breast on TV during last year's Super Bowl indirectly led to the Republican victory — it created such a firestorm of virtuous fervor the Bushies were able to exploit it into a successful campaign fabricated around so-called "moral values" — so one might say, given this spin, that a boob elected a boob.

Disappointment that Bush stays in place four more years has cut deeply into the psyche and souls of the disaffected (as well as disenfranchised) Blue-state half of Americans who are truly singing the blues.

As an attempt to explore this angst, a few coastal folk were asked two questions, which were in essence the same question:

What do you think of the results of the 2004 election? And what do you believe will be its consequences?

MARYANNE MYERS

I have two reactions. The knee-jerk reaction is that I am so embarrassed we have elected an imbecilic corporate toady with imperialistic tendencies. That's my knee-jerk reaction, but I think it's counterproductive and also divisive.

I think what distresses me most, my opinion about the President aside, is that corporations rule the planet. By electing whom we have elected we have given world corporate powers the enhancement to proceed.

What I think that means is that decisions are made according to the bottom-line and the perpetuation of business. I think our ecology, our security and our privacy are at great risk — and the New Age of violent revolution is the take down and rebuilding of international corporate law.

I don't want to make a meaningless rant and veer off, but passions are very high.

JIM HANSEN

I think it's a tragedy of the first magnitude. I agree that there is great evidence the election was stolen.

The priorities are all wrong. The problems are national and individual debt, the health system, and education. This clown is trying to destroy Social Security.

The whole ethic of the country is destroyed. We argue about torture — my god, torture in my country?

One of the great problems I feel is that everyone goes around with an egalitarian attitude and thinks every opinion is equal. But they usually talk off the top of their head and their opinion is generally the last one they heard.

(He reads a quote from H. L. Mencken: "As democracy is perfected, the office of the President represents more and more closely the inner soul of the people. On some great and glorious day the plain folks of the land will reach their heart's desire at last and the White House will be adorned by a downright moron." *Baltimore Sun*, 1920)

SUE SKINNER

This "election" demonstrates that the system is rotten to the core, and we all need to tell a new story, and start telling it now. No more Republicanrats!

VALERIE LINDHOUT

What's all the fuss about? We got ourselves the best possible government our superpower country could produce, given the hallowed competitive prize-fight rules of our political system: winner-take-all, anything you can get away with goes, money-money-money talks loudest. What are we bitching about?

The Presidency of the United States is an ultimate world-prize reality show and *only* individuals whose nature best suits them for political prize-fighting can win.

Cooperation, honor, integrity are not included in *our* rules, there is no provision for oversight of these qualities. The needs of the people are not included, least of all the needs of *babies*.

See the winners strutting their stuff. See them collect the winnings, and collecting, and collecting. See the machinery in motion, gearing for the next prize-fight. See the gladiators maneuvering and prepping...

Thumbs up for our system. Thumbs up. Thumbs up.

KENNY DEMPS

When I was young, I always had pride in my country, "Land of the free, home of the brave." I felt this pride during my years with the Navy, even during the period of my life when I actively protested the Vietnam War. I guess I've always had that pride.

But after the 2000 and 2004 elections, combined with Bush's decision-making, I'm beginning to lose that pride.

My post-election stress level was very high. I had problems with everything. I took a short but sweet month-long road trip to hopefully relieve this stress.

As always after having refreshed from a road trip, I returned to Astoria, "the Paris of Oregon."

So I've decided to be "cool." It's only four years, right always wins, live good be good, and have pride in your country, *Land of the free, home of the brave*.

TRUTH IN LABELING

From the clothing label of a small American company that sells their product in France — this is the translation of the French part of the label:

Wash with warm water.
Use mild soap.
Dry flat.
Do not use bleach.
Do not dry in the dryer.
Do not iron.
We are sorry that our President is an idiot.
We did not vote for him.

CYNDY LEE

Emboldened by our President's inappropriate behavior, Christian evangelists are now harassing female shoppers inside our Fred Meyer's. This is a consequence of blurring the boundaries between church and state.

The marauding teenage boys target only women. They demand to know "What church do you attend?" They pronounce "God loves you!" in a tone suggesting we need to be told for our own good.

Like so many self-righteous judgmental and often ignorant evangelista men, those boys single out women to intrude upon and intimidate. They avoid approaching adult males and lurk in the aisles.

Soon these gullible, crusading children will enlist in Bush's war. They will meet face-to-face the darkest side of religious fundamentalism as infidels.

I know quite a few non-evangelista Christians. Not one of them voted for Bush. Nor did they let it be know in church. Silence is fear's constant companion.

PATRICIA LONGNECKER

As long as the Republican Party with its current tenet prevails with half the voting public, all of the public — voters or not — will be subject to repression.

Unless strong opposition leadership appeals to and informs the "red folks", the Republicans win and will continue to win.

I think Americans will continue to ignore and allow all of this as long as they have church, sports and the WalMart glut as available diversions.

Thus we have entered the dawning of the nouveau dark age. I say bring it on. Get it over with.

Remember the "Hoop of the Earth." Let the circle swing down. Let total repression, depression and lack of knowledge take the helm for awhile. It's time the fat cat covetous power-mongers get a taste of what they dish out.

Michael Erickson reminds us that, for those who believe, the Bible clearly states that God has given humanity the power of free will. God will never violate free will. That means we all have the power to choose — life, death, stewardship, neglect, good or bad. Politicians cannot dictate free will. It's against God's edict.

Arthur Smith points out that if we spent the matching funds of our military budget, which is comparable to all of Europe and China's, we could solve all of our national problems.

As nonleadership citizens, the least we can do is send fish to the Midwest and South. Fish is brainfood, so send fish. We/they need all the help they/we can get.

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