

# MY ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT



DAVID HORSEY

BY MICHAEL ALDERMAN

On November 2nd, 2004 I learned my lesson. Fact of the matter is I'm tired. I'm tired of caring, tired of giving a shit. And when it comes right down to it, why should I care? I'm an American, God Damn it! A U.S. citizen from way back, many generations. It's high time I started to think like one. I've seen the error of my ways. The conservative majority made itself known on November 2nd. They'll be pleased to know I've officially adjusted my attitude on their behalf. Someone once said if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. Well, Mr. Bush, here I am, such as I am, to officially apologize for my naïveté — oh, pardon my French! I'll use another word; I'd like to officially apologize for my ignorance of your subtle genius, for overlooking the true scope of your appeal. And I'd like to apologize to my rightwing brethren for my just not getting it! I get it now. I've been hearing a lot of whining lately from candyass, bleeding-heart liberal supporters of John Kerry's failed candidacy, largely bemoaning the expected tide of reforms planned for President Bush's second term and their associated repercussions. To these sore losers I say, Wake Up! When in Rome, do as the Romans. It's time to Get With The Program! And if they can't get with the program, then fuck 'em! Hey, I like that. Fuck 'em! I think I'll make that my new slogan. I now support the troops, by the way. I foolishly assumed I was supporting the troops before, when I marched through the streets in a plea to stop them from being sent to fight and die in an unnecessary war for rich men's oil, and again in a plea to bring them back home to their families. I blush from shame at the thought of my stupidity. Now that the fog has been lifted, I recognize that such wars are not only necessary but are a source of nationalistic pride. God is on the side of the oil billionaires! To not act would be an affront to God, which could lead to a sound smiting! (I'm not sure what that might entail, but it can't be good.) Regarding the thousands of Americans who've already died and will die in Iraq, hey, they knew what they were getting into when they enlisted. And if they didn't, fuck 'em for not being smart enough to figure it out. Hello! Arlington Cemetery teems

with casualties from military actions that had little or nothing to do with defending the homeland. Today 12 more Americans perished in Iraq defending my God-given right to indiscriminately consume fossil fuels. And those yellow ribbon decals on the backs of our gas-guzzling automobiles so eloquently underscore the poignancy of the soldiers' sacrifice — I'm getting all misty-eyed just thinking about it.

Besides, most of our fighting force is composed of white trash and minorities. Fuck 'em! There's always more where they came from. All we have to do is keep them procreating by undermining sex education and family planning programs. I've never truly grasped the practicality of such policies until now. And just think how many more young men and women we will have available to fight when we stamp out abortion once and for all. Praise Jesus!

## HERE WAS A LIBERAL WHEN COMES SUCH ANOTHER?

Friends, Americans, countrymen (and women), lend me your ears. I come to bury the liberals, not to praise them. The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft forgotten by their political rivals. So let it be with the liberals.

The noble George Bush hath told you the liberals are ambitious. If it were so, it was a grievous fault, and grievously hath the Democrats answered it.

Here, under leave of Bush and the rest — for Bush is an honorable man; so are they all, Reagan, Quayle, Sununu, all honorable men — come I to speak against the liberals. They cared about the poor and working class, like myself. But Bush says they are ambitious, and Bush is an honorable man. They have taxed more heavily those who could better afford it, whose ransoms paid for education and health care. Did this in the liberals seem ambitious?

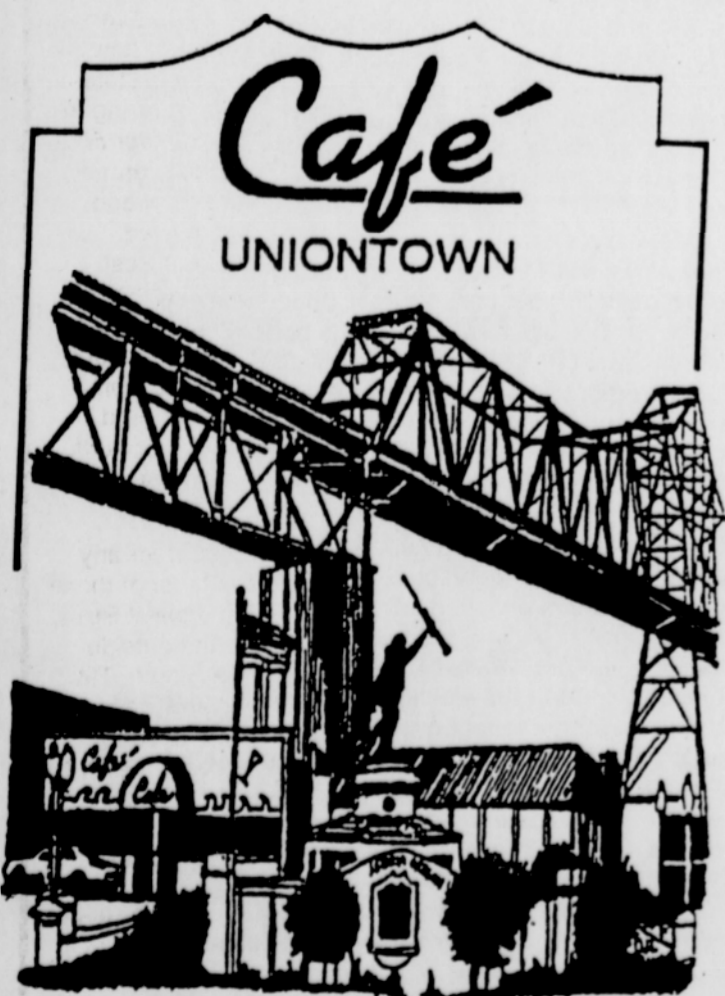
When that women and minorities have cried for equality the liberals hath listened. Ambition should be made of sterner stuff. Yet Bush says they are ambitious, and Bush is an honorable man.

You did all see in Washington, D.C., they thrice were presented with the opportunity to lie to the voters, which they did thrice refuse. Was this ambition? Yet Bush says they are ambitious, and, read my lips, Bush is an honorable man.

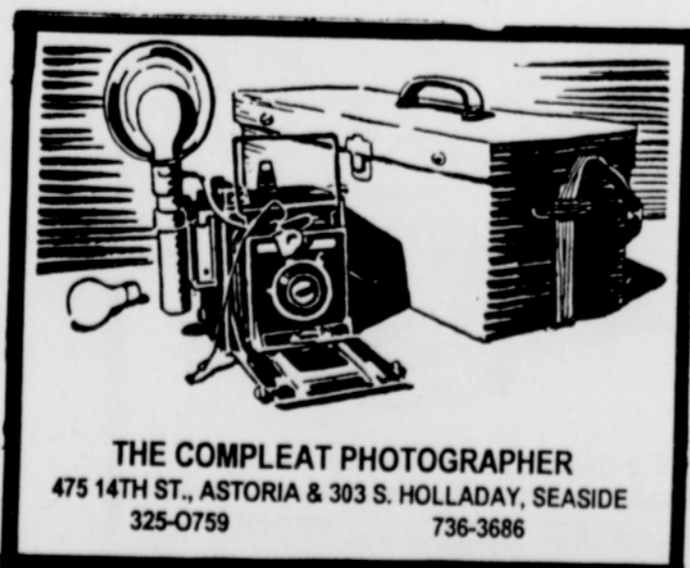
I speak not to disprove what Bush spoke, but here I am to speak what I do know. You all did trust them once, not without cause. What cause withholds you, then, to vote for them? Oh, judgment, thou art fled to TV sound bites, and men have lost their reason.

~MICHAEL ALDERMAN

He wrote this for the NCTE in 1992, with apologies to 'Bill Shakespeare'.



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I used to worry too about the thousands of injured soldiers coming home to find their veteran's benefits slashed by the very Commander-in-Chief who'd placed them in harm's way. But, you know, they're just a drain on the system anyway. If they'd been alert enough to dodge that RPG or step around that land mine they wouldn't be missing an arm or leg or eye, now would they? Is it our fault they let their guard down during such a crucial operation? Sounds like dereliction of duty to me. Why on earth should we reward such incompetency? Hell, most of those same soldiers voted to return President Bush to the White House, which amounts to tacit approval of the cuts, does it not? So, fuck 'em!

I now understand that the longer the war goes on the more money will flow into corporate coffers, and, as those wiser than me already know, what's good for Halliburton is good for America. Is there anything more fundamentally American than the diversion of tax dollars from social programs to special interests? This used to bother me, but in my newfound lucidity I've come to understand that the individuals and organizations pocketing my tax money have earned it. It takes serious guts and wiles to hoodwink your own constituency so blatantly, yet still have them come back and say, "Thank you, sir, may I have another?" That's American neo-capitalism at its finest! Besides, sustaining the underprivileged only deprives them of the motivation to rise above their poverty, right? If people won't tread on their fellows in order to elevate themselves, they have no business living in the USA. Fuck 'em!

And speaking of the underprivileged, we've been placing way too much emphasis on respecting the elderly in this country. Social Security? Why not just call it Socialist Security? The shoe fits. The money's already been spent, so why are we clinging to this outmoded program? It's time to privatize it so it can turn a little profit before filing for bankruptcy. As for the retirees who depend on it: fuck 'em, they're old. They had their whole lives to get their act together.

I'm ashamed to admit that, yes, I was an environmentalist. I know, I know, clean air, potable water, and sustainable agriculture are Pollyannaish pursuits. If the Earth doesn't care what we do to it, why should we? So what if we leave a poisonous trash dump for our kids and grandkids to deal with. Fuck 'em! They'll figure something out. So what if babies are born with brain damage from the mercury in their mother's bodies. Fuck 'em! As long as they're born, that's all that matters. Even a brain-damaged teenager can wield a rifle.

And is there anything more overrated than education? Please. How much education is required for someone to ask, "Want me to top it off for you?" Jobs that require education are all being shipped overseas anyway, so can somebody please tell me why we should waste perfectly good tax dollars on frivolous programs like public education? Plus, the better educated a person is, the more liberal he or she tends to be, which runs contrary to the New World Order and should therefore be avoided.

I could never have imagined the freedom that accompanies my new attitude! I have learned to embrace the true American Values of Ignorance and Avarice — and let me be the first to acknowledge they are much easier to implement than tolerance and compassion; much easier.

It's scandalous to admit how long it's taken me to learn this lesson. There's no excuse for my delayed assimilation, except to confess that I had been brainwashed into hoping the lessons of the past would somehow dissuade us from repeating previous mistakes. As evidenced throughout human history, there is a fundamental progression each civilization must undergo, culminating in its own self-destruction. My belief that, in America's case, such inevitability might be forestalled was utter hubris.

Now I know better. Now I can hold my head up proudly as I wave the flag and consume and pollute and hate. And if anybody has a problem with that, fuck 'em!

Michael Alderman writes, produces, directs and films movies, among other pursuits. He and his wife Rhonda live in Astoria.



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