

RACE ASSUMES GUILT

The color of prison would not change simply if more Caucasians were stopped. As traffic stops in and of themselves do not indicate criminality, the only cause and effect relationship between prison and traffic stops is if you're a felon with a warrant out for your arrest. Disproportionality is used as evidence for all kinds of discrimination, whether profiling or drug related prison sentencing.

When Nancy Reagan suggested for American children to "Just Say No," 80 percent of illegal drug users were white men who made in excess of \$50,000 (7 percent were white women, 13 percent minorities), a demographic tradition documented as fact since 1886, the days of over-the-counter heroin in cough syrup. These are not the people going to prison, even though their drug use is illegal.

Using Portland as an example: In a private conversation with then Lt. Charles Moose, I asked about the typical drug buyer in northeast Portland: "White guy in a Lexus, from Beaverton. Comes to the 'hood, buys crack." He acknowledged they had numerous transactions on videotape. Who gets arrested? The black drug dealers, even though the police have probable cause to stop and arrest both the black drug dealer and the white crack buyer in the Lexus.

Rush Limbaugh had illegal and saleable quantities of prescription opiates. Will he do time? No. Is his experience typical for the majority of illegal drug users, white men? Yes. They do the crime, they won't do the time, and not because they have good lawyers. They're deemed innocent even when guilty.

Mark Harris
Eugene

PROFILING ARABS

Thanks for your article regarding racial

profiling (cover story, 10/16). According to the Amnesty International newsletter, "Since the Sept. 11 attacks, whole new categories of Americans are experiencing similar treatment. And PATRIOT Act provisions permitting enhanced surveillance, tighter immigration controls, reporting of suspicious activities, and sometimes-secret detention have given such run-ins with the police decidedly ominous implications."

It's so sad that no one is daring to mention racial profiling of the Arab/Muslim community. I've been harassed, followed and stopped by the EPD. On Oct. 4, I was followed and stopped by the police. The reason for stopping me was: He thought I was drunk! Then on Nov. 2, I was followed by the police in my way home. The police followed me with no headlights on but only dim lights. The third time was on Nov. 9, when the sheriff was following me so closely.

"These kinds of intimidation, harassment and profiling must stop. Young people are both impacted by racial profiling and called to act to stop it," says the newsletter.

Read about it at <http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/>

Nadia Sindi
Eugene

LOCAL DEAN TEAM

I appreciated your 12/11 front cover article on the Corvallis Dean supporters. However, I wondered why your reporter did not cover the Eugene Dean campaign. A contingency of local Dean supporters was present at the Harlow Road overpass the morning of the Civil War football game, waving placards and signs, with a favorable response from motorists.

The local Lane County for Dean group, of which I am a member, has been active since early spring, and has its monthly meeting (Meetup) on the first Wednesday of each

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



month. In November, Oregon Secretary of State Bill Bradbury was our speaker, and in December, ex-Governor Barbara Roberts, both are supporters of Dean. Our attendance varies from 130 to 140 people. Our Jan. 7 Meetup is at Monroe Middle School, off Coburg Road, at 7 pm, to which all are welcome.

I believe that Gov. Dean is our best hope for a regime change. In addition to his consistent opposition to the Iraq War from the start and through the Bush "victory" days of last April, he has demonstrated the organizational and finance-raising skills needed to beat the Bush money machine in 2004. He has attracted large numbers of voters who have not

voted or not been involved in campaigns previously. Other candidates, such as Dennis Kucinich, may have the more idealistic goals that many of us aspire to, but Kucinich has not been able to register over 3 percent in any state or national poll. I want a candidate who has demonstrated the ability to defeat Bush.

Among his many proposals to take back our country from the extreme religious right, Dean has a universal health plan, has the support of the largest two national labor unions, would fire John Ashcroft, and would appoint competent and balanced Supreme Court justices. If we really want to get rid of the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld-Ashcroft coterie, I believe that Dean provides our only chance to ac-

KUMBAYA DAMMIT BY DAN CAROL

One Less Dictator

A little spin on the big catch.

As I write this, I am still a few hours away from seeing saturation Saddam coverage on TV. That's because (grrr ...) I am stuck on an airplane - so all I know is what I just heard from the folks talking in the row in front of me.

My independent reaction is simple: Woo-hoo! Saddam's arrest means a little less evil in the world, and in this 400th generation of "civilized humanity" any trend that ends a little evil and pain for average people is a pretty decent baby step.

What ripples will this latest global media pulse create? Who knows. I am just glad that this sad chapter is over and something new can be written.

As a calming device, if what I am saying (that I am *happy* we snagged Saddam) angers you, I would offer this Christmas reading list. First, check out Stewart Brand's *The Clock of the Long Now*, which takes a wonderfully long view of humans past and future in the world. With that 10,000-year view in hand, you can then read, in doses, *The Idiot's Guide to the Crusades*. Because it is *good* that we just ended another idiotic reign over there. And that's good even if it makes the Bush people and Fox News gloat for a while.

Politically, my take on this event is simple. The chances of an October surprise scenario (where Bush captures Saddam Hussein or Osama bin Laden in mid-October 2004 and wins in a landslide) just dropped by 50 percent. Let me tell you this: All the people walking around the L.A. airport, with eyes down and averted, still look afraid when I get off the plane. Suicide terrorism has reached the streets of Moscow too. We know the election will be close and ugly - no matter what happens in the news.

Back here in Oregon, another divisive topic seems to be looming on the political horizon with talk of Ralph Nader forming an exploratory committee to run for president for the third time. Speaking from my "anyone but Lieberman" political position, I do not think the third time will be the charm for Ralph Nader.



He will certainly not beat George Bush in a general election; however, I don't think people should beat up on Nader or Greens. We're advising Democrats and progressives to approach the Nader presidential run in the following fashion: Show respect for Greens and the principled positions they have on issues like clean elections reform that drive their activities, and frustration with the system. They deserve the respect. The fact is there's a fairly big gulf between a lot of Green state parties and

Ralph Nader on how to build the Green Party, whether it's via another presidential run by Nader, or with a more focused ground-up, state level, win-local-election strategy following the success of New York's Working Families Party (www.workingfamiliesparty.org).

There's a ton of ways for Greens, progressives, and Democrats to work together on important state and local issues, and that's where people should focus their mutual respect. (Personally, in a state like Oregon, I think the passage of a fusion initiative to allow cross-endorsements by multiple political parties of the same candidate is still a great idea for growing Green/environmental voter power in the long run without acting as a "spoiler." Unlike instant runoff voting, this issue would get a little of Ron Wyden's attention.)

As for the Nader run itself, I think most people get that this is not a swell idea, but the negative attention we focus in his direction will, I think, have an opposite "jujitsu" effect and actually strengthen him.

Rather than talking about Nader though, which seems like negative déjà vu, what's more exciting is talking about some new, youthful energy coming into the political system. The Oregon Bus Project (www.secretplan.org) is organizing in Lane County, more meetings are planned in January, and I'm hoping they shoot for the moon. I'm sure *EW* will have more information about their activities in future issues. These folks have fun and do the work. So don't forget to get on the bus.

Lastly, I guess I'll be back at this next year. Until then, I wish all a peaceful holiday season.

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