

David and Goliath

How to block Bush's final moves.

There's a lot to be said for parliamentary democracy. Under this system, we could call for a vote of no-confidence today and have the election right now. The polls suggest we'd win.

Unfortunately, this isn't Sweden and George Bush and his crew have a Goliath-sized, \$170 million war chest to spend defining John Kerry. They are already tossing more mud than you'll find in a Crawford, Texas pigsty. More is coming. So how do we stop this juggernaut of shameless campaigning?

For sure, we organize. As promised a column or two back, good systems to connect volunteers to activist opportunities are coming online. Here are two to check out: National Voice (www.nation-alvoice.org) and The League of Conservation Voters (www.envirovictory.org) are live with great volunteer match systems – so you and your friends can get busy. Friends telling friends the facts – and telling them to vote – is the critical counterweight to the Bush misleader machine.

While people-power is great, we also need to anticipate and block Bush's final moves if we can. Frankly, given the hemorrhaging of three million jobs, the quagmire in Iraq, and the number of times Bush has used Laura already on TV, the guy is fast running out of ammo. So Goliath is beatable – if we know when to duck, when to confront and when to let it all fly.

Here then are the final plays in Bush's book, and some suggestions for how to handle them.

The Play: Bush will tout his compassionate conservative credentials, claiming the new Medicare bill is just what the doctor ordered.

The Block: Bruce Springsteen burns his AARP card and wakes up independent, baby boomer voters. The Boss was featured on the cover of AARP's Modern Maturity magazine years ago, and now AARP has sold seniors down the river – and is expected to carry Bush's water this election. We need a new ride down Thunder Road.

The Play: Bush hands out lots of goodies and grants to mayors and governors feeling the brunt of the economic squeeze, just like Daddy did in 1992.

The Block: John Kerry trumps Bush and introduces an innovative, regional, state and local block grants program to support the proven work of groups like Sustainable Portland (www.sustainableportland.org)

The Play: Bush delivers Osama's head on a stick in an amazing September/October surprise.

The Block: No block here, folks. Just be happy for America! Because Osama is evil. The more we speak about this, the more political we will look. The less we say – other than a heartfelt yay – the better, and the more political they might look.

The Play: Dick Cheney gets dumped to the tune of Bonnie Raitt's "Let's Give 'Em Something To Talk About." To soften his image, Bush chooses a new running mate like Rudy Giuliani or Elizabeth Dole on the eve of the Republican Convention.

The Block: John McCain, Vietnam veteran and unsuccessful challenger to Bush in the 2000 Republican primary, breaks ranks. He's already defended Kerry's patriotism once. It won't be the last time.

The Play: Bush and his surrogates bait the hot button issues like gay marriage and partial birth abortion, so they don't have to explain where Americans can get jobs and health care.

The Block: Don't take the bait by confusing our core beliefs and our platform of equal rights – with smart campaign messaging that can make that platform a reality. It might help if Rosie O'Donnell goes on vacation to the Seychelles Islands near the election.

The Play: Republicans try to steal the election, this time with touch screen computer voting machines manufactured by companies closely tied to Bush.

The Block: Hey, you have to admire the chutzpah here. Look for groups like TrueMajority.org to lead the charge by deploying a network of poll and ballot watchers to count down until the election – and make sure every vote gets counted.

The Play: Be positive about the future. Bush will portray himself as the candidate who is winning the war on terror and focused on a better future.

The Block: Kerry can't just grouse about the off-shoring of our jobs, but offer a plan to connect the dots between our oil dependence and restoring U.S. technology leadership by investing in emerging areas like "green manufacturing." Can you say New Apollo Project?



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PROFITS ARE CULPRIT

Today people are gathering to show opposition to the rolling back of restrictions that protect threatened species like the marbled murrelet, red tree voles and other animals protected by the Northwest Forest Plan. This doesn't even make the news but this is huge.

For we are supposed to believe that for our economy to work, it means we are not allowed to believe that owls should exist, or bears or frogs. I guess I'm supposed to accept that public health is not as important as stock figures, that the disfigured hills in my backyard that are repeatedly planted, clear-cut and poisoned are facts of life, and that I will have to accept that dead landscapes are the norm.

No, you will not see on the front page that red-legged frogs are already extinct and that Ph.D. geologists say that Row River Valley is being seriously over-harvested. Thirty-year rotations of trees simply do not match 100 year ones. President Bush will not call on timber companies to bring home well-paying lumber-finishing jobs that went to Latin America, to cut sustainably, or to leave the big trees alone. No, instead he will decide for us that we don't need the spotted owl or the marbled murrelet.

Funny, but he is also deciding that we don't need an atmosphere, decent water, or to feel any connection to anything on the land at all because it may just have to be sacrificed for economic gain. Huge profits, not a bird, are the culprit behind the boom and bust economy that has been unfair to so many families and workers. Yet the animals are the one what are going to take the first hit. Will we normal folks be next?

Kerstin Britz
Cottage Grove

NO ON TAX

April 15th is quickly approaching and this year feels very different from any other year. This year, I am a war tax resister. This year, I will send in my tax return with a note saying that I cannot and will not pay for the war mongering of this administration — for this illegal and greedy war.

I am not the typical tax resister. I believe in our government. I believe that the political swings from left to right are a way of moving our country forward. I am a patriot who cries at the singing of our National Anthem at Ems games. And because I am a patriot, I cannot sit idly by and watch our country be taken over by a group of oil men who have had their eye on the prize for decades.

In the documentary, *An Act of Conscience* (Thursday, March 25 7:30 pm, Grower's Market), a couple publicly refuses to pay federal taxes as protest against war and military spending. This film chronicles the couple's five year struggle to nonviolently resist the seizure of their home, and how they were joined by hundreds of supporters from across the country.

If you have the courage and you owe this year, consider withholding even the token amount of \$9.11. In this day of hanging chads, our most powerful votes are the ones we cast with our money.

Carol Horne
Eugene

THREE-WAY VOTE

A message to independent and third party voters: The John Kerry campaign, in league with the Democrat National Committee and

their friends in the media, has fooled you into believing that what matters most in the upcoming presidential election is that independents and Democrats unify to remove (what is essentially) a moderate Republican from office.

On the contrary, the true imperative for independent voters in this election is the same as it has always been: to eliminate the strangle-hold grip that the two parties have had on the throat of American politics since 1856; not to replace one member of the ruling class with a virtually indistinguishable member from the other party.

While it may be true that a third party challenge would most likely split the Democrat vote in favor of the incumbent, a long-shot Democrat victory assures the monopoly of the two-party system for at least another decade.

You see, the fact of the matter is that the Democrat Party of today is on life support, flailing about for independent voters in a desperate attempt to stay relevant and retain its diminishing share of the power, influence and money in Washington, D.C. I am not alone in my belief that a defeat for Democrats in November will be a decisive blow for a party that has abandoned its progressive principles (to appeal to moderates and centrists) to the extent that it has lost the presidency, Congress, the Senate and most of the governorships in the U.S.

The power vacuum created from the collapse of just one party will greatly accelerate the emergence of an independent movement that advances the cause of peace, justice, civil liberties and the fulfillment of human potential within a sustainable environment.

Susan Dwightman
Eugene

FALSE ASSUMPTION

As a candidate for the District 8 House seat, I had intended to resign as Democratic vice chair of HD8, to avoid any appearance of "insider trading."

In fact, the whole reason that I am in this race is to publicize the "insider trading" that has tainted the selection of the last two lower House members representing Lane County during the last two Democratic PCP nominating conventions.

I had told several persons that I would do so at the March 18 Central Committee Meeting, so I was very surprised to learn that, at the March 11 Executive Committee meeting I had not attended but had asked to be excused from, I had tendered my resignation as vice chair. Had I known that I was going to resign, I should have made a point of being there. However, the DPLC Chair, who, not coincidentally was deeply involved in both disputed nominating conventions, has assured me that I resigned, even though no letter of resignation was ever delivered from myself to the chair.

So it seems that the Executive Committee is in unanimous agreement that I have resigned, even though I don't recall resigning — mostly because I learned that it was traditional to take a leave of absence. Still, the psychologists and telepaths of the DPLC Executive Committee have absolute conviction that I meant to resign.

Still, although their opinions are influential, I must insist that I did not resign. But it is their word against mine and I am only one.

Hart Williams
HD8 Candidate