

Democratic Diva

Amy Goodman lands in Eugene.

“People are hungry for alternative media,” says “Democracy Now!” host Amy Goodman, speaking on a cell phone as she whips through the streets of Boulder, Colo.

On a zig-zag, chaotic coast-to-coast tour to celebrate the release of her new book, *The Exception to the Rulers: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media That Love Them*, as well as the 55th anniversary of Pacifica, the nation’s first listener-sponsored radio network, Goodman is astounded by not only the success of her book, but also of her radio show.

A few years ago, only a handful of radio stations across the country were broadcasting her show. Today, “Democracy Now!” is the largest public media collaboration in North America and a quickly growing grassroots movement.

“Now, we have more than 200 stations, radio and public television, and we’re adding two to three every week,” she says.

In Eugene, “Democracy Now!” is broadcast on CTV Ch. 29 from 5 to 6 pm, Monday through Friday and on KWVA 88.1 FM radio from 7 to 8 am, Monday through Friday.

Goodman, who will be in Eugene this Saturday, is astounded by the numbers showing up for her appearances. “In New York, more than 1000 people came; in Fresno, we had the same thing. At the Pacifica anniversary celebration in Berkeley, we had more than 1,100 and in L.A., 2,000 came out.”

The book is cranking, as well. Although the Eugene appearance is sponsored by KWVA and Borders Books, other stops have been sponsored by independent bookstores, who’ve called *Exception to the Rulers*, “hotter than Potter.”



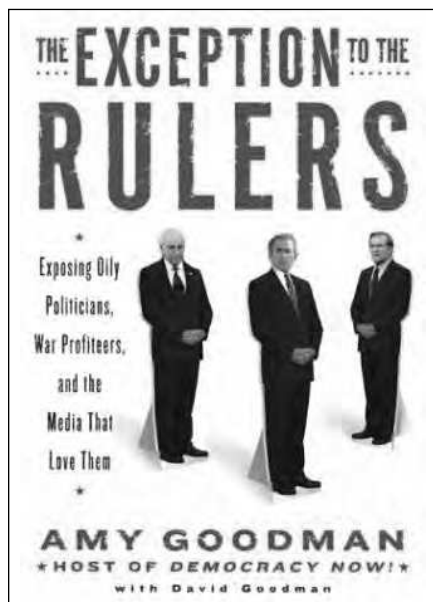
Amy Goodman

Goodman’s book, written with her brother and writer, David Goodman, outlines her experiences in “going where the silence is.” *The Exception to the Rulers* chronicles the tireless efforts of an unembedded journalist and her colleagues to get to the truth and expose the lies, corruption and crimes of the power elite — an elite that is bolstered by large media conglomerates. From hanging out with Arab immigrants in L.A. post 9/11 to reporting on the atrocities in East Timor, Goodman digs deep into the crevices to find injustices.

Rather than embedding reporters in the frontline, she asks, why not embed them in “the trigger end — in Iraqi hospitals and in peace movements around the world?”

It’s the people who have the power of voice. And she gives it to them, passionately. “There are so many important stories to tell, so many voices that have never been heard, it’s about giving the microphone to them, recording the voices of those who’ve been silenced.”

From Iraqi civilians wounded by U.S.



troops to prisoners on death row in America, Goodman says that’s where reporters need to be.

That silencing may not go away if Bush gets re-elected, and with Bush leading in the polls, that seems something to be figured out.

“If you look at John Kerry a year ago, he was for the invasion of Iraq,” points out Goodman. “Then Dean comes into the picture, takes the lead, is anti-war. Kerry is the quintessential politician; he gets the message that in order to win this Democratic primary — to compete — he needs to adopt that view, which he does, better than Dean.”

Now, says Goodman, instead of pointing out his differences with Bush and using the opportunity to teach a lesson about the ills of war, as he did when he returned from Vietnam as a decorated war hero and spoke out against it, Kerry has backed off even his own previous positions. He’s agreed with Bush on sending more troops to Iraq. He also agrees it’s OK to assassinate foreign leaders.

“If he’s going to not oppose but run with Bush and the people want to choose between two candidates,” says Goodman, “they’ll choose the real Bush.”

On May 18, Oregonians will make their voice heard when they vote in the primaries, and we’ll know if Goodman’s point is accurate. But it’s the local races that can also make an enormous difference, and Goodman agrees.

“I think local politics are absolutely critical,” says Goodman. “This is a critical year for the world, not just for the presidential election. It starts at home. Cleaning up the environment starts at home and goes abroad.”

For those who slam the age group of 18 to 24 as being “apathetic,” Goodman says local politics is “extremely empowering for young people,” who are naturally involved when it comes to issues such as local environmental concerns, schools and public education, but they may “wonder where they fit in when they look at Bush and Kerry,” she says.

But Goodman enjoys high ratings among young listeners, as well as other age groups on her radio show. With more and more stations broadcasting her show, she says, “Democracy Now!” is more than a program, it’s a movement for independent media.” **CW**

Amy Goodman speaks in Eugene at 7 pm Saturday, May 8 in Rm. 150 Columbia, UO, a benefit for KWVA 88.1 FM and Community Cable Access of Lane County (CTV). Ticket prices are: Students \$6/Regular \$10; overflow seating will be in UO’s Lillis Business Bldg. \$3/\$5 day of event). Tickets are available at the UO ticket office.

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