

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Somewhat less than the "Supreme" Court

The real time lesson in civics that resulted from the "Too close to call" presidential election ended in a disappointing, self-inflicted diminution of stature for the U.S. Supreme Court.

Because human nature is diverse, it has often been easy to disagree with the court's rulings in particular cases while, at the same time, understanding the constitutional basis of those rulings and appreciating constitutionally imposed judicial restraint.

Unfortunately, the court's decision against counting legally cast ballots is neither understandable nor easy.

For instance:

What was the *constitutional* basis for deciding there wasn't enough time for a recount, particularly since the court was responsible for several days of delay? Unlike the lower courts, the Supremes didn't feel obligated to work on a weekend, after all, it was only a presidential election.

Another for instance:

What was the *constitutional* basis for stopping the recount of less than 50,000 ballots. Not only was that count underway, but it would have been finished before the court reconvened (Remember, they didn't work on the weekend.). The reason given for stopping the count was that Gov. Bush would have been harmed. That reason only raises more questions – How do they know he would have been harmed? Did they know he would have lost if the recount continued? Weren't voters whose legal ballots weren't counted harmed more than any candidate? Aren't there *constitutional* arguments in favor of counting legal votes? Aren't there *constitutional* arguments against disenfranchising legal voters?

Another for instance:

The court's final argument seemed to be that lack of uniformity in vote counting should be corrected by not counting legal ballots. Does this mean there is now a *constitutional* argument for disenfranchising voters if the country lacks a single standard for counting ballots?

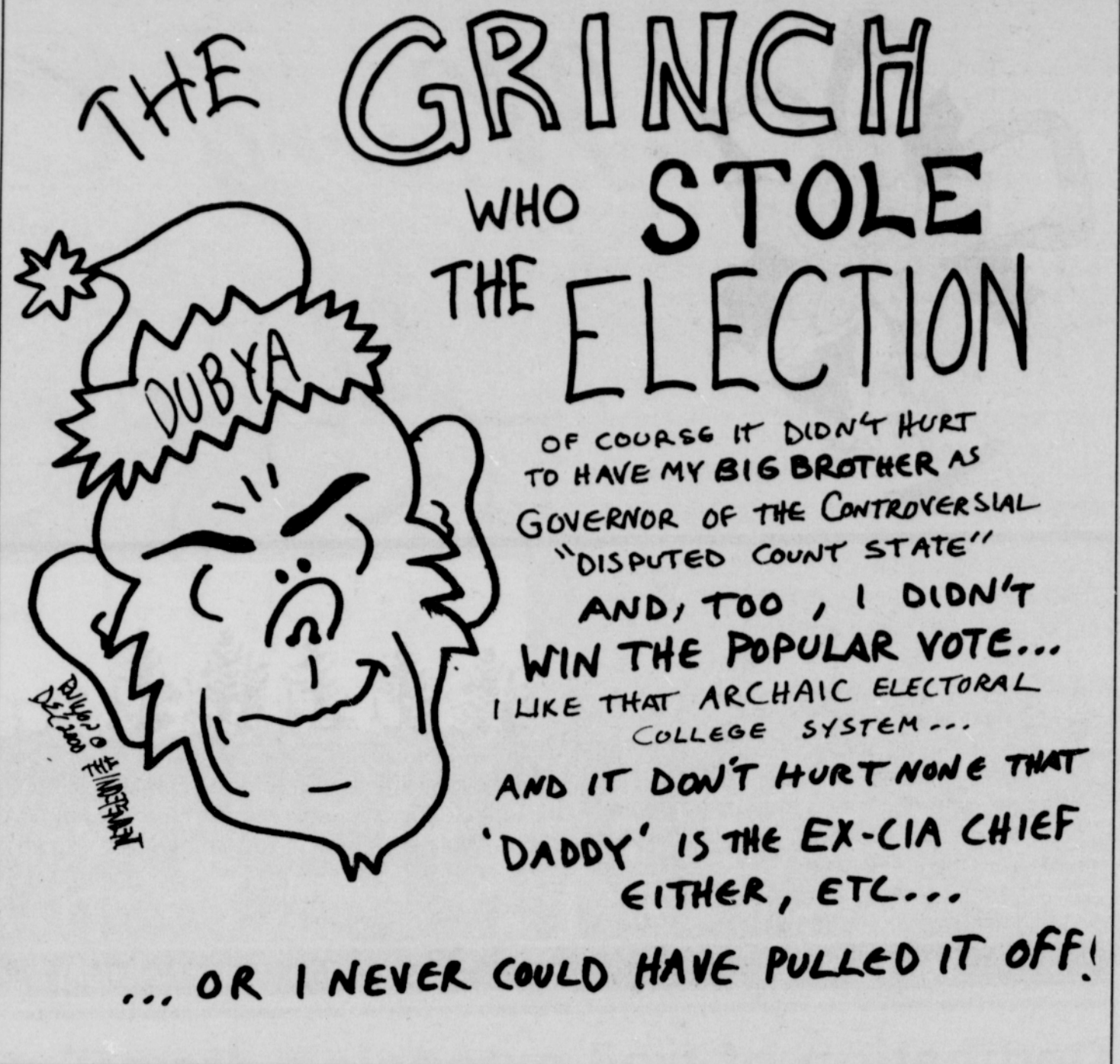
Another for instance:

Justice Scalia's son is a partner in the law firm that represented Gov. Bush before the Supreme Court (Another of his sons is a lawyer with the firm that represented Bush in Florida.). Could that be construed as a bit of personal conflict?

Another for instance:

Justice Thomas' wife works for the Bush team. Could that be construed as a bit of personal conflict?

Thank goodness the whole thing is done, no matter who "won." Unfortunately, it will take some years for our country's highest court to recover from the tawdry partisanship displayed by a 5-4 majority decision.



Comparison of local, county, state election results

There are three precincts in the City of Vernonia (Vernonia 1,2 and 3) and two rural precincts (Vernonia 4 and 5), as well as two precincts for the Mist, Birkenfeld and Fishhawk Lake areas (Mist 1 and 2). Following are the results of the November General Election compared to results for Columbia County and for the state.

President	Bush	Gore	
Vernonia	X		
Mist	X		
County		X	
State		X	
Congress	Wu	Starr	
Vernonia		X	
Mist		X	
County	X		
1st District	X		
Commissioner #1	Burge	Corsiglia	Pulliam
Vernonia	X		
Mist	X		
County		X	
Commissioner #3	Mayo	Hyde	Sykes
Vernonia		X	
Mist		X	
County		X	
Measures			
No. 83 Veteran Loans	Yes	No	
All	X		
No. 84 State Mandates	Yes	No	
All	X		
No. 85 New Counties	Yes	No	
All		X	
No. 86 Tax Kicker	Yes	No	
All	X		
No. 87 Zonie Sex Shops	Yes	No	
Vernonia	X		
Mist		X	
County/State		X	
No. 88 Inc. Tax Limit	Yes	No	
All	X		
No. 89 Tobacco \$	Yes	No	
Vna/Mist	X		
County/State		X	
No. 90 Utility Profits	Yes	No	
Vna/Mist	X		
County	X		
State		X	
No. 91 Tax Limit		Yes	
No			
Vna/Mist	X		
County	X		
State		X	

No. 92 Payroll Ded.	Yes	No
Vna/Mist	X	
County/State		X
No. 93 Fee Increases	Yes	No
Vna/Mist	X	
County/State		X
No. 94 Repeal Msr. 11	Yes	No
All		X
No. 95 Teacher Pay	Yes	No
All		X
No. 96 Initiative Limit	Yes	No
Vernonia		X
Mist	50%	50%
County/State		X
No. 97 Ban Traps	Yes	No
Vna/Mist		X
County		X
State	X	
No. 98 Limit Public \$	Yes	No
Vna/Mist	X	
County	X (barely)	
State		X
No. 99 Home Care	Yes	No
All	X	
No. 1 School Funding	Yes	No
All	X	
No. 2 Admin. Rules	Yes	No
Vna/Mist	X	
County		X (barely)
State		X
No. 3 Prop. Seizure	Yes	No
All	X	
No. 4 Tobacco \$\$	Yes	No
All		X
No. 5 Gun Check	Yes	No
Vna/Mist	X	
County		X
State	X	
No. 6 Campaign \$\$	Yes	No
All		X
No. 7 Takings	Yes	No
All	X	
No. 8 Limit State Spend.	Yes	No
Vna/Mist	X	
County	X	
State		X
No. 9 Homosexuality	Yes	No
Vna/Mist/County	X	
State		X

We can't vouch for this, but supposedly Nostrodamus wrote in 1555:

"Come the millenium, month 12
In the home of the greatest power,
The village idiot will come forth
To be acclaimed the leader."