

# THE INDYPENDENT

THE NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

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NIK MOORE

**“YOU ANIMALS  
DON’T HAVE ANY CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS”**

Richard Nixon learned a lesson from the televised beatings of protesters at the 1968 Democratic Convention: police tactics at his renomination four years later were slicker and smoother. Instead of clubbing heads indiscriminately, cops kept demonstrators in cattle pens far from the convention hall, pushed them away using a forceful phalanx if they tried to get closer, and made mass arrests after the press had filed final stories. *Independent* writer Steven Wishnia, then 17, was one of the more than 1,000 people jailed.

BY STEVEN WISHNIA

**L**ike today’s Bush Bashers, I hated everything Richard Nixon stood for in 1972, both as vicious murderer and ultimate stiff. No-Dick Nixon, Black militants called him, the perfect stereotype of the authoritarian pig who probably hadn’t gotten laid since 1949 and was taking his frustrations out by dumping napalm on Vietnamese peasants and celebrating the shootings of student demonstrators. All with a smug puritanism, going on about how “Eisenhower restored good language to the presidency.” The tape transcripts of “the [expletive deleted] Jews control the [expletive deleted] media” were still two years away.

I was 17 that year. With six months of washing dishes at minimum wage adding an economic dimension to my teenage rebellion and antiwar outrage, I was ripe for action. So in August, four of us – me, Elliot, Rhonda and Nick [names have been changed], comrades from Stony Brook University’s radical movement – loaded into Elliot’s sky-blue car and drove the 1,400 miles from Brooklyn to the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach.

It was my first time down South. Steak sandwiches at a Muslim fast-food joint in the D.C. ghetto; in North Carolina, a spectacular thunderstorm that split the predawn sky, up the road from a “Help Fight Integration and Communism” Ku Klux Klan billboard; past the Spanish moss in South Carolina and down the long Florida coast with Alice Cooper’s “School’s Out” and the

Raspberries’ “Go All the Way” blasting on the radio.

The Brooklyn-Queens-Long Island belt was turning out thousands of us, second-generation immigrants, first-generation middle-class kids, freaky rebels loving sex, pot, rock ‘n’ roll, and the overthrow of the U.S. government by any means necessary. Nick had long corkscrew dark hair, a bristly beard and mustache and angry black eyes. “We should have POUNDED those NAZIS into the SIDE-WALK!” he raged after some counterdemonstrators waved swastikas at us. Straights could be forgiven for thinking he resembled Charlie Manson, but he actually was a sweet, gentle guy, one of the first serious vegetarians I knew. Elliot and Rhonda were the oldest, Elliot clean-shaven, long-nosed like a Jewish Jean-Paul Belmondo with glasses, acting like everything he did was a big revolutionary deal. He bossed Rhonda around a lot. She was thin and quiet with long straight dark hair. I was the baby of the bunch, with armpit-length black hair and a scraggly beard, gold-rimmed glasses, and an army jacket and cut-up black T-shirt. Some cops had stopped us and given me shit about the insignia on the jacket.

“You know that’s a paratrooper jacket?”  
“I don’t know, I got it in a thrift shop for two bucks.”  
“You’re lucky it’s not a Marines jacket. I was in the Marines. I’d kick your ass if it was.”

We camped out in Flamingo Park with a mix of antiwar Vietnam veterans – one, Ron “Born on the Fourth of July” Kovic, would get dragged out of his wheelchair and beaten when he got into the convention hall and heckled



Nixon – and Quaalude freaks so wasted they probably wouldn’t have noticed a cop bashing them on the head. A band called the Gooks played a free show, some kind of rock opera about Vietnam. They did a song called “The Calley Stomp” – a caveman blues riff with the lead singer screaming, “Calley, you shithead,” while choking and dismembering an effigy of the U.S. Army lieutenant who’d shot a two-year-old in the head at My Lai – and two a cappella singalongs: “Eat the Rich,” an ode to revolutionary cannibalism, and “Free Artie Bremer,” hailing the gunman who’d made sure that Alabama Governor George Wallace would never again be able to stand in any schoolhouse door to defend segregation. Nick was freaked about potential appeals to the crowd’s latent sadism. Occasionally Young Republicans would wander by and we’d sit up in the subtropical night getting high and arguing with them.

The Republicans wanted to avoid another Chicago ‘68. Nixon didn’t want televised images of cops battering protesters marring his coronation. The cops locked arms and

continued on p.10



**NEW YORK CITY  
INDEPENDENT  
MEDIA CENTER**

Phone:  
212.684.8112

Email:  
imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org

Web:  
NYC: www.nyc.indymedia.org  
GLOBAL: www.indymedia.org

Office and Mail:  
NYC Independent Media Center  
34 E. 29th St. 2nd Floor  
NY, NY 10016

**WHAT IS INDYMEDIA?**

With autonomous chapters in more than 100 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to illuminate and analyze issues affecting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

*The Independent* is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

**WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?**

The IMC has an open door. You can write for *The Independent*, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

**VOLUNTEER STAFF:**

Chris Anderson, Silvia Arana, Bennett Baumer, Jed Brandt, Mike Burke, Sina Choi, Ellen Davidson, Ryan Dunsmuir, Miguel Erb, Alley Ernst, Chris Fleisher, Mike Flugelnoek, Katalan V. Foisy, Alfredo Garzon, Neela Ghoshal, Lauren Giambrone, A.K. Gupta, Andy Harris, Vanessa Hradsky, Ashley Kidd, Janelle Lewis, F. Timothy Martin, Yoni Mishal, Nik Moore, Lenina Nadal, Lydia Neri, Ana Nogueira, Jennifer Nordstrom, Tracy Norton, Lina Pallotta, James Powell, Donald Paneth, Mark Pickens, Derq Quiggle, Sam Rasiotis, Frank Reynoso, Ann Schneider, Catriona Stuart, Sarah Stuteville, Suzy Subways, John Tarleton, Rhianna Tyson, Michael Ulrich

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR



## may-june

**CRITICAL MASS**

*Bicyclists and skaters retake the streets.*  
Friday, May 28 7 pm: Part of bike month NYC:  
Union Square North, [www.bikemonthnyc.com](http://www.bikemonthnyc.com)

**AT THE IMC**

34 E. 29th St.  
(betw. Park & Madison)  
2nd Floor  
NY, NY

**MON JUNE 7**

7pm • \$5 suggested  
*Premiere screening of new documentary by Committee In Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) about historic elections earlier this year in El Salvador*

**SAT JUNE 12**

9pm • \$10 suggested  
*Rock all night with DJ Mike Smirk and Co. as The Indy celebrates its 50th issue*

*For location call: 212-684-8112 or email: imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org*

**JUNE 19 & 26**

2:5pm • \$30  
*The Independent will host a special 2-part summer community reporting workshop series.*

*For more information call: 212-684-8112 or email: imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org*

**THE INDEPENDENT**  
has open meetings every Tuesday, 7pm at 34 E. 29 St., 2nd floor.

**FRI MAY 28**

7 pm • Donation  
*The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*: documentary screening and discussion with speakers Omar Sierra, Venezuelan sociologist, and Lourdes Vela, International Relations student, and members of the Bolivarian Circle. Bluestockings Bookstore & Café, 172 Allen Street, [www.bluestockings.com](http://www.bluestockings.com)

7 pm • Free  
*Critical Mass*: bicyclists and skaters retake the streets. Part of bike month NYC. Union Square North, [www.bikemonthnyc.com](http://www.bikemonthnyc.com)

**SAT MAY 29**

12 pm • 3 pm Free  
*Re-bicycling*: series of ten workshops by The 62 in collaboration with students from Highbridge Community Life Center and the Bronx International High School, reassembling new bicycles from discarded pieces and exploring issues of importance to the Bronx community. Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse, Bronx; [www.bxma.org](http://www.bxma.org)

7 pm • \$15/\$10 student  
*New Jersey Turkish Music Chorus present an evening*

*of Turkish classical and folk music.*  
St. Peter's Church, 619 Lexington Ave., [www.moonandstarsproject.org/may2004\\_newjersey.htm](http://www.moonandstarsproject.org/may2004_newjersey.htm)

**SUN MAY 30**

1 pm • \$10  
*Radical walking tour of Harlem* that will include the takeover of Sydenham Hospital, Black Panther Headquarters, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, A. Philip Randolph, former Communist Party Headquarters (now Starbucks) and more. Meet in front of Starbucks at 306 Malcolm X Ave, (718) 492-0069

1:15 pm • Free  
*Resistance Cinema presents Winter Soldier*, a feature-length documentary of the historic Detroit Winter Soldier Investigation capturing the terrifying testimonies of more than 200 ex-GIs concerning American atrocities in Vietnam. Sponsored by Not in Our Name. Community Church of NYC, 28 East 35th St. @ Park Ave. 212-969-8058

**TUE JUNE 1**

7:30 pm • Free  
*Park Slope Food Coop's reading series*: How writers can help defeat a U.S. president, featuring David Shenk and Gersh Kuntzman. Park Slope Food Co-op, 782 Union St., Bklyn. [www.foodcoop.com](http://www.foodcoop.com)

8 pm  
*Screening of Bob Roberts* starring Tim Robbins as a radical folk singer turned sensational candidate; a hilarious satire on American politics. All Saints Episcopal Church, 43-12 46th St., Queens [www.sunnysidewoodsidepeace.org](http://www.sunnysidewoodsidepeace.org)

**FRI JUNE 4**

4 pm • Free  
*Demonstration in front of NY Newsday*: Queens residents call upon this influential newspaper to change its editorial policy to support our troops by ending the occupation. Bring them home now! 80-02 Kew Gardens Road, (@ 80th St., Queens), Contact: G. Kaplan, [gittellen1@juno.com](mailto:gittellen1@juno.com)

8 pm • \$5/\$3 w/ paperback dictionary  
Kevin Baker, master historian and author of *Sometimes You See it Coming, Dreamland, and Paradise Alley* is coming to ABC No Rio to entertain and educate on the seamy side of New York City's history. ABC No Rio, 156 Rivington St., [www.abcnorio.org](http://www.abcnorio.org)

**SAT JUNE 5**

12 pm • Free  
*Brooklyn Best 2004*: baby parade, battle of the bands, bike to the boardwalk, fashion show, movies on the

beach, fireworks and more, also June 6th: Coney Island Boardwalk, Bklyn. 1 pm • 8 pm • Free  
*3 Farms*: music on the Lower East Side in support of the local community and the indie music scene. Featured artists include David Johansen of New York Dolls, Martha Wainwright, Maria Ventura, and more; East River Amphitheater.

6:30 pm • Free  
*Concert to honor the Pax Christi Peacemakers*: Fr. Roy Bourgeois, founder of School of the Americas Watch; Frida Berrigan of the World Policy Institute; Fr. Coman Brady, Pastor of St. Vincent Ferrer Church; and George Horton, Director of Community and Social Development at the Archdiocese of New York. Holy Family Parish Hall, 315 East 47th St., [nypaxchristi@igc.org](mailto:nypaxchristi@igc.org)

**SUN JUNE 6**

12 - 6 pm • Free  
*3rd Annual Brooklyn Alternative Small Press Fair*: local small publishers exhibit their publications and information about their organizations, and authors perform live readings throughout the day. 336 3rd St., Bklyn, [smallpressfair@juno.com](http://smallpressfair@juno.com)

**MON JUNE 7**

7:30 pm • Free  
*Two writers at the heart of*

*the arts and activist movement read from their work.* Jason Flores-Williams, author of *The Last Stand of Mr. America* and political writer for *High Times* magazine and *Jonny America*, author, political reveler, and founder of Greene Dragon. Junno's Lounge, 64 Downing St. [www.greendragon.org](http://www.greendragon.org)

**WED JUNE 9**

7:30 pm • \$6/\$8/\$10  
*Reclaiming Development: a Manual for Alternative Economic Policy* book party and discussion with Ha-Joon Chang and Ilene Grabel. Brecht Forum, 122 West 27th St., [www.brechtforum.org](http://www.brechtforum.org)

**FRI JUNE 11**

8:30 am • Free  
*Picket outside the Bronx Criminal Court building for Juanita Young's court hearing.* 198 East 161st St., Bronx, <http://www.october22ny.org>

**TUE JUNE 15**

\$80 / \$150 suggested  
Deadline to register for the 3rd Annual Spanish for Activists Camp held July 3-5 in Truxton, NY. Contact NY CISPES, 212-760-0333

*If you would like to submit an event please send details to imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org*

# FREDDY'S FIGHTS BACK

POPULAR PROSPECT HEIGHTS WATERING HOLE  
COULD BE REPLACED BY ONE OF RATNER'S ESCALATORS



**YUPPIE-FREE ZONE:**  
Patrons of Freddy's Bar discuss the future of their neighborhood over a beer.

YONI MISHAL

BY TRACY NORTON

Residents from across Brooklyn pour into Freddy's Bar and Backroom – a laid-back watering hole on 6th Avenue and Dean Street – to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the release of *Blood on the Tracks*. People are standing on chairs, sitting on the cooler in the unused kitchen and peering out though the order drop. The mood is light and Dylan is in the air, but no one forgets the reason they are really here: to protest Bruce Ratner's plan to level the neighborhood for a basketball arena, high-rises and retail chain stores.

Freddy's is just one of the many neighborhood buildings on Ratner's "to be demolished" list. According to Freddy's manager Donald O'Finn, the bar stands in the way of an escalator Ratner hopes to have in one of his skyscrapers.

Do the patrons want that escalator, or anything else Ratner is offering?

"No, but thanks for asking Mr. Ratner," a voice shouts from the front row, mocking the lack of involvement Ratner and his supporters have sought from the community.

It turns out that Ratner may not have to ask.

With Brooklyn Borough President Markowitz and Gov. George Pataki in his corner, Ratner hopes to use "eminent domain laws," meant for the development of infrastructure like roads and schools, to toss hundreds of residents and business

owners out of Prospect Heights and claim the land for private development. But residents say rallies, protests and concerts like this one show the neighborhood will not go down without a fight.

While Ratner may have hoped that his plan to designate the thriving area as "blighted" would discourage faith in the local businesses, he may have inadvertently caused the opposite reaction.

Prospect Heights has known about Freddy's for years, but when members of surrounding Fort Greene and Park Slope communities got involved with the fight to stop the developer, they brought a new surge of business to the area.

The communities surrounding the development site are spreading the word. Just a few drunken steps from the bar, a 6' x 9' hand-painted sign reads, "Develop. Don't Destroy Our Homes." Many of the signs posted in the area were painted in Freddy's. The bar is also a center for fundraising and recruiting, with members of both the Prospect Heights Action Coalition and Develop Don't Destroy present at the show.

So why has a bar become a center for the fight? To O'Finn, it seems completely natural. "Bars have a history since the Old West of being a community meeting place," he says. "I think that continues [at Freddy's], which is rumored to have been a speakeasy during the Prohibition era, and has seen three different owners since that time.

Six years ago, the current owners bought the property and the name. By the time they had considered other options, the bar had already developed an underground following seeking its free music and welcoming attitude.

"We wanted to do something different," says O'Finn on the gradual development of a new center for local art and music, with a preference for the attitude of a dive bar over that of a trendy hipster spot.

"Pretentiousness gets hung at the door," said Dana, a lifelong resident of Fort Greene who recently discovered Freddy's.

"The Ratner-Markowitz Corruption Art Show," currently on display is just one of the many quirky exhibits the bar has featured. The series of photographic prints includes an homage to the clock tower (which Ratner will dwarf with his high-rises), depictions of a rat wearing a swastika, and small children with protest signs.

News clippings, announcements about community board meetings and flyers from groups also adorn the walls of the bar.

Like many bars, there is a lot of graffiti in the bathrooms, but one scrawl seemed particular to this place, "Wow... so sorry you're afraid... some of us aren't."

It remains to be seen whether Freddy's will become a memory or a landmark of perseverance, but it's sure to remain a stronghold for now of the opposition to Ratner's plan.



**-BLACKED-OUT MEDIA IS A PROJECT OF THE NYC INDYMEDIA VIDEO COLLECTIVE.**

This provocative half-hour weekly news series appears on the Manhattan Neighborhood Network ([www.mnn.org](http://www.mnn.org)) Saturdays at 9:30 PM on channel 34, basic cable. The show is expanding to Brooklyn Community Access (BCAT), and will make its national premiere on Free Speech TV on May 31, 6pm EST ([www.freespeech.org](http://www.freespeech.org)).



TO FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BLACKED-OUT MEDIA OR NYC INDYMEDIA VIDEO, CALL 212-684-8112 OR E-MAIL [mediablitz@riseup.net](mailto:mediablitz@riseup.net).



BY CHRIS ANDERSON

Earlier this spring, the *Daily News* reported that Bruce Springsteen is considering a free concert "somewhere" on Sept. 2 to encourage his fans to vote and to provide "counter-programming to the message the Republicans will be broadcasting," according to an unnamed source. Now, somewhere might not be New York City, but a kid can dream.

A recent issue of *New York Magazine* had a front-page article on the RNC protests. There's a lot wrong with the article, but, this story contains the most comprehensive coverage of the RNC thus far. There's the requisite second story about how the police are preparing. "The demonstrators are kind of self-deluded, thinking that they're the primary focus of our concern and planning," says one NYPD officer. Although I imagine the NYPD means that in an insulting way, it's good to know that New York's finest don't see a group of non-violent protesters who have almost never injured a single person as big a threat as homicidal terrorists.

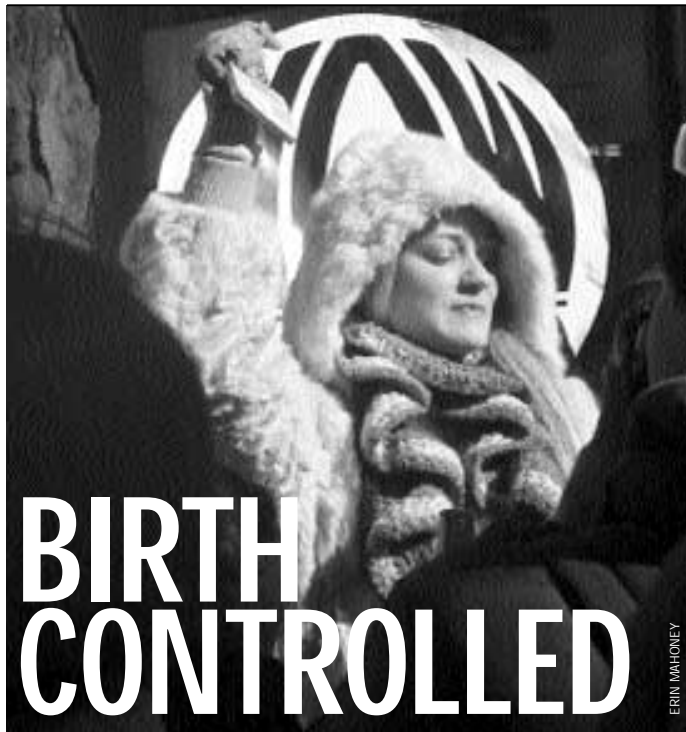
The *New York Times* is reporting that Wall Street is rolling out the red carpet for the Republican Convention. The article by Michael Slackman describes the financial connections between big business and the Republicans. And, of course, the festivities. "There are so many parties going on you have to pick and choose the location and date rather early to try to lessen the competition," said Richard Hunt, a spokesman for the Securities Industry Association, a 600-member trade group. "Competition will be great every hour of every day."

Also, the *Times* itself has got a few events planned for the Republicans. According to the official Republican Convention website, "the New York City Host Committee 2004 and CEO Harris, along with *The New York Times*, announced in Times Square a program to provide theater tickets and shopping discounts to Convention visitors." A rather shameless promotion, as the *Times* was hyping an RNC trip to Broadway as a news story a few weeks ago.

Here's a brief list of why New Yorkers should protest the Republican National Convention:

- Bush has shortchanged New York City on homeland security funding and endangered our neighbors.
- Bush has cut funding for our schools, hospitals and homes.
- One-third of EPA air samples around Ground Zero showed asbestos levels higher than the agency's own 1 percent danger threshold while the Bush administration was saying it was safe to return downtown after September 11. (source: *The Daily News* 8/26/03 and 10/28/03)
- Amount of funding to New York City schools Bush has cut over the last two years: \$1.2 billion (source: *An "F" For Education: A Two-Year Review Of The No Child Left Behind Act*, Congressman Anthony D. Weiner, September 7, 2003)
- Amount the Republican Medicare bill is depriving New York City hospitals in federal funding: \$400 million (source: *Jack Newfield, "Bush To City: Drop Dead" in The Nation*, April 1, 2004)
- Number of jobs lost in the United States since Bush took office: 3 million (source: *The Daily News* 2/23/04)
- Number of jobs lost in New York City since Bush took office: 232,400 (source: *The Daily News* 2/23/04)
- Amount Bush has raised for his campaign: a record \$182 million (source: *The Daily News* 4/3/04).
- Number of New Yorkers the RNC wants to work for them for free: 8,000

# ad free zone



**THIS IS THE PLAN:** Hillary Blowers of the NOW New York State Reproductive Rights Task Force holds up a pack of Plan B. Blowers spoke out about the difficulties in getting the "morning after" pill.

By CATRIONA STUART

An army of volunteers filled NARAL Pro-Choice America's small but airy Soho space. They formed an assembly line, stuffing, sealing and stamping envelopes across a long conference table, bantering about the news as they worked. Just days before, the FDA had handed down its decision not to allow the emergency contraceptive, Plan B, to be sold over the counter.

Women's groups are taking the offensive against the rollback of their rights under the Bush administration.

"This is just one of the many attacks we have seen on women's reproductive health and rights, and we're beginning to see a growing outrage at these attacks," says Lorraine Cole, President and CEO of Black Women's Health Imperative.

Against the recommendation of the FDA's own advisory committee, the director of the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Dr. Steven Galston, announced May 7 that he would not approve Plan B for sale without a prescription. He cited concerns about use by young women.

According to the FDA's "not approvable" letter to Barr Laboratories, Plan B's manufacturer, the company must either conduct further studies to show that girls under 16 can safely use the drug without a prescription or develop an unprecedented marketing approach that would still require prescriptions for young women. Unlike RU-486, the so-called "abortion pill," Plan B is an emergency contraceptive pill (ECP), which suppresses ovulation and prevents implantation in the same way and using the same hormones as regular birth control pills. Requiring a prescription could prevent many women from getting access to the drug in the timely way required for effective use.

"We were shocked at their reasoning," says Destiny Lopez, director of NARAL's ECP access campaign. "The advisory committee even talked about this and decided it was safe. NARAL was hearing up until the week before that it would pass with [age] restrictions."

While, according to Lopez, the average age of women who use ECPs is 21, conservative groups, including some lawmakers led by Rep. Dave Weldon (R-Fl.), aggressively lobbied both the White House and the FDA to

reject Plan B on the grounds that widespread availability of emergency contraception would promote teenage promiscuity and trigger a rise in sexually transmitted diseases among young people.

"When women are sectioned off and denied their rights, it weakens the movement as a whole; we have seen this over and over again. This is just a convenient excuse to deny all women access to emergency contraceptives," says Erin Mahoney, Chair of the National Organization for Women's New York State Reproductive Rights Taskforce. Mahoney is a point person for the Morning-After Pill (MAP) Conspiracy, a coalition of feminist groups that has been conducting civil disobedience since last July by dispensing the morning-after pill to women without a prescription.

In the tradition of radical feminist Margaret Sanger, who distributed information about birth control when it was illegal to do so, the MAP Conspiracy has attracted notoriety with its "Give your friend the morning-after pill" campaign. Thus far, more than 1,500 women across the country have signed a pledge to give the morning-after pill to a friend in need. Plans are in the works to bring their protest directly to the steps of the FDA on July 2, handing out emergency contraceptives in direct defiance of the ruling.

"The FDA's decision proves only one thing," insisted Planned Parenthood Los Angeles' President and CEO Mary-Jane Wagle in a scathing statement. "Dangerous anti-choice ideology is trumping scientific fact... They are willingly sacrificing the health and lives of women and teens to promote a narrow ideological agenda."

With indignation in her voice, NOW's Mahoney echoed Wagle's sentiments, pointing out that while most Americans know that the Bush administration is anti-abortion, most are unaware that it is also anti-birth control.

For some of Bush's far-right constituency, however, the impact of his conservative agenda has not reached far enough. While American Life League President Judie Brown was happy with the FDA's decision, she said in a press release, "the action is far from being totally satisfactory... The best thing the FDA can do now for American women and their progeny is to take the next logical step and remove these pills from the market altogether."

# HARD TIMES IN LITTLE PAKISTAN

BY SARAH STUTEVILLE

Visit Coney Island Avenue in Midwood on a Friday afternoon and you'd hardly know this is a community recovering from crisis. A stream of Pakistani immigrants file past Punjab Sweets Restaurant and into the gleaming white-and-green-tiled Makki Mosque. Men in loose-fitting, light-colored traditional dress joking with teenage boys in sports jerseys and flip-flops and women adjusting headscarves jostle each other as they duck out of the midday sun and through separate entrances for afternoon prayers.

Despite the seeming normalcy in Brooklyn's "Little Pakistan," signs of trouble lie just below the surface. Two blown-up photographs adorn the doorway of Punjab Sweets: one portrays the Islamic holy city of Medina, the other the World Trade Center. An NYPD patrol car is parked outside Makki Mosque surveying the services, and a building with mirrored windows labeled "Immigration Services" in large block letters is across the street.

"This place, Coney Island Avenue, after 10 o'clock now it looks dead. It looked like Manhattan before, 24 hours a day there were people here, people now they are scared," says Jhaved Chaudry. He owns Lazzat restaurant across the street from Makki Mosque, where you can order a slice of pizza or a huge plate of spicy curry. "Before," as for so many Americans, means prior to September 11, but along Coney Island Avenue it also refers to a time when this community was just another bustling and expanding immigrant neighborhood in New York City.

## A TIME BEFORE DEPORTATIONS

The numbers are hard to pin down. The U.S. government offers some numbers on how many people have been registered under the National Security Entry and Exit Registration System (NSEERS), which required immigrants from 25 countries (almost all predominantly Muslim) to register. NSEERS has led to many deportations, but there is little information on how many Pakistanis have been deported and even less on residents of Midwood specifically.

As of May 2003, the U.S. government reported that it had collected information on 82,581 people, at least 13,153 of whom faced deportation hearings. According to the New York Civil Liberties Union, the Pakistani government estimates that 15,000 Pakistanis have left Midwood since September 2001, either due to deportation or fear of it. The community was once estimated at 120,000.

Jagjit Singh, programs director at the Council of Pakistan Organization, which was founded in the wake of September 11, estimates that Brooklyn's Pakistani community may have lost as many as 25,000 people during the past two-and-a-half years. "They panicked and they fled," he says. "They fled the land of freedom to seek asylum in Canada."

"The Pakistani community was caught by surprise. They heard from the president of the United States that Pakistan was the first ally of America in the war on terror, and then the Pakistanis were told to register, singled out as though they were the terrorists," Singh says.

Though the NSEERS program ended in April of 2003, many still fear the "Notice To Appear" from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The deportations have abated, but the impact on Midwood continues to be felt. Horrific stories of midnight raids and

government-chartered jumbo jets full of deportees headed back to Karachi or Lahore are still fresh in the minds of many here, and everyone knows someone who was sent back.

"One of the chefs here, he was deported," says Chaudry. "We expected him to come back around 9:00 a.m. for work one day and then he didn't come, he called me around 10:30 [and] he told me... that six or seven people had come to his house, broke the door and took him away."

While fear is still palpable, perhaps the impact of these deportations is best expressed in the nostalgia already present here, a desire to reminisce about a time when Little Pakistan was not a casualty of the "war on terror," but a symbol of hope for many new immigrants.

If anyone can speak to the history of Little Pakistan it is Asghar Chaudry. Up two flights of stairs in a hallway heavy with the smell of curry, "Mayor Chaudry" divides his time between accounting and community work, as he's done for most of the three decades he has been in Midwood.

Chaudry is eager to describe a different time and a different neighborhood. "I said to a friend yesterday that once this area was full of people walking, people came to this free country, they cut their hairs and they were walking around like Americans free... all of these women and people came from small villages

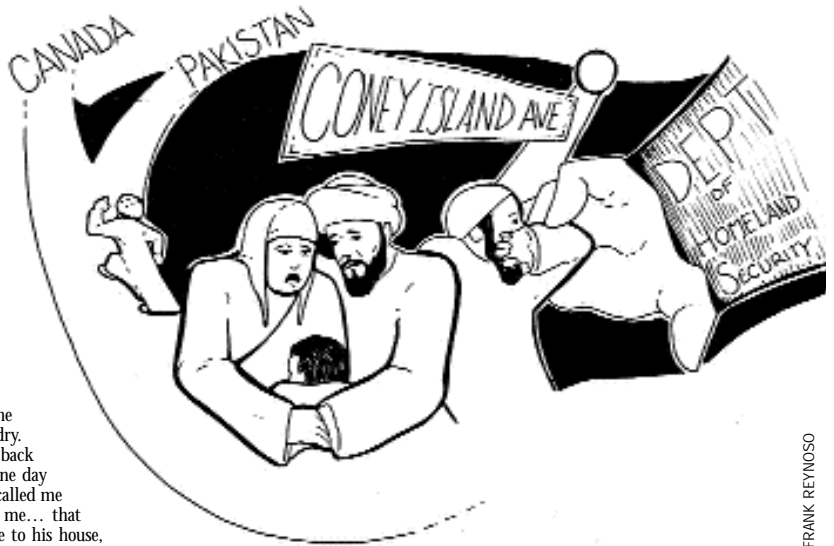
and these stores they opened were brilliant, you know? The streets were full of people like a European city, walking arm in arm, shopping and now it is all gone." Chaudry gestures past his office, adorned with U.S. and Pakistani flags and photos of him shaking hands with local politicians, and down to the street just beyond his shaded window.

Chaudry is quick to acknowledge that every country has a right to defend itself and even to deport illegal immigrants as it sees fit. However, like many others in Midwood, he feels betrayed that Pakistanis were so directly targeted. "There is every ethnic group here in the U.S., they have Russians, they have Chinese, they have Spanish, why should these people not be deported too? They are not all legally here, but they deported Pakistanis because they are Muslims, because, for shame,

they think they are part of this terrorism."

Many businesses report a slight upturn in activity in the past few months. At Lazzat business has increased 5 percent following a 70 percent decline after September 11. But the trauma of the past three years still lingers, and Chaudry worries that Midwood's Pakistani residents might never entirely recover their enthusiasm for a country they were once clamoring to enter.

"These people, they told their children when they were back in Pakistan, 'we are going to take you to a country where there is justice, where no one will touch you, where you will have freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of everything,' and then at two in the morning the FBI and the INS is breaking down their door and arresting their father and they cry and say, 'Is this the country, father?'"



FRANK REYNOSO



## rites of spring

Community Gardens supporters paraded through the streets of the Lower East Side Sat., May 22 in the 14th annual Rites of Spring Procession. Presented by Earth Celebrations, the events is a day-long theatrical pageant that visits more than 50 gardens on the Lower East Side and tells the story of the struggle of community gardens. The procession includes oral histories, poetry, music, dance and performances.

PHOTOS: FRITZ ASKEW



# UP AGAINST WAL-MART

By F. Timothy Martin

Anti-Wal-Mart activists in Fayetteville, Arkansas, are organizing a June 4-6 gathering to protest the company's annual shareholders' meeting. Composed of students, labor unions and local progressive groups, the Against the Wal Coalition hopes to increase awareness of the retail giant's unsavory business practices.

"For nearly a decade, unions, small towns and environmentalists have fought Wal-Mart with mixed success," says Joe Diffie of the Against the Wal Coalition. "Our goal is to get all these movements together and bring them here to the belly of the beast."

The three-day event comes at a time of renewed criticism of the company. A scathing report issued on May 24 blasts Wal-Mart for receiving \$1 billion in subsidies from U.S. state and local governments.

These subsidies include free and reduced-price land grants, infrastructure assistance, tax credits and job training funds, according to Good Jobs First, a Washington, D.C.-based research group. The study found that Wal-Mart received subsidies for the construction of 160 retail outlets as well as for 90 percent of its distribution centers.

"That a company with \$9 billion in profits can wrest job subsidies from state and local governments shows that the candy store game has gotten out of control," says Greg LeRow, executive director of Good Jobs First. "The subsidies to Wal-Mart are particularly troubling, given that the company uses taxpayer dollars to create jobs that tend to be poverty-wage, part-time and lacking in adequate healthcare benefits."

The Arkansas-based company and world's largest retailer, with more than \$250 billion in annual sales, is often at the center of controversy. Organized labor deplors Wal-Mart's fierce opposition to unions, international observers cite the company's reliance on sweatshop labor, environmentalists warn about its contribution to urban sprawl, community advocates lament the erosion of downtown communities, and civil rights activists point to numerous examples of discriminatory practices.

Both major presidential campaigns are focusing on contrasting images of the company.

John Kerry recently walked the picket line with striking members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, who have been unsuccessful in their attempts to organize Wal-Mart grocery workers (Wal-Mart opted to sell pre-packaged meat rather than allow its butchers to unionize). In contrast, Dick Cheney used a recent visit to Wal-Mart to stomp for the president, saying, "This is one of our country's greatest companies."

The dichotomy of Wal-Mart's image is also evident in local communities like Fayetteville.

"A lot of people here really like Wal-Mart. Many are former or current employees with one or two shares of stock in the company," says Diffie. "But the average person here hasn't increased their wealth – only the managerial class has benefited."

Day one of the convergence will feature an Alternatives to Wal-Mart Village, where organizers plan to offer teach-ins, workshops, art and gardening projects and a collective kitchen.

"One thing about the Ozarks is that we have a sustainable environment and a lot of hard-working people," says Natalie McMahon, an organizer for the anti-Wal-Mart coalition. "We're trying to promote our culture and to let people know that an alternative to Wal-Mart still exists."

Coalition organizers estimate 1,000 people will join their march on June 5.

The group has also launched a traveling roadshow to "spread the word around the mid-South about the downside of Wal-Mart's low prices and rapid expansion around the world."



**G-8 OPPONENTS** (above) gather in Calgary in June 2002. Citing the danger posed by protesters, Georgia governor Sonny Purdue has declared a "state of emergency" in advance of this year's annual meeting of leaders of the world's wealthiest nations.

ATLANTA INDIANEDIA

## G8 MARCHES ON GEORGIA

### WORLD LEADERS GATHER ON RESORT ISLE, LOCALS SURROUNDED BY TOXIC WASTE SITES

By NEELA GHOSHAL

State and local authorities are facing a court battle in their efforts to prevent peaceful protests by global justice organizations at the annual G8 Summit to be held June 8-10 on Sea Island off the coast of Georgia. A lawsuit challenging a set of newly enacted repressive ordinances in the neighboring coastal town of Brunswick was filed May 3 by Zach Lyde along with the Georgia chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

"The restrictions are an attempt to further erode our civil liberties," says Lyde, a minister and member of Brunswick's Gullah Geechee community. The Gullah Geechee are descendants of former slaves who maintained a distinctive African culture on several islands, including Sea Island, before it was bought up by wealthy resort owners. "There is a history in this community of ensuring that we as African people should not have the power to voice our opinions."

Sea Island will be off-limits to protesters and it will also be a no-free-speech-zone for residents throughout the summit. The island can only be reached by a narrow bridge from an adjacent island off the coast of Brunswick, a community of 15,000 where activists are fighting the restrictive measures while also scrambling for venues.

The G8 (or Group of 8) is composed of the world's seven wealthiest nations – the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Germany, Canada – plus Russia. Since mass protests at the 2001 G8 meeting in Genoa, Italy, that ended in the death of one demonstrator and the beatings of dozens of others, the annual summit has been held in isolated sites where the presidents, prime ministers and chancellors can keep protesters out of sight, if not out of mind.

#### CURBING DISSSENT

While some of the newly imposed measures deal with protest signs – forbidding signs larger than 2 by 3 feet, signs made out

of cloth, and signs held on wooden sticks – others raise serious concerns about government liability for injuries to protesters caused by police actions.

These ordinances "require that demonstrators release the government from any potential lawsuit or claim, even if government officials are found directly responsible for injuring a protester," the ACLU reports, adding that it is also fighting a requirement "that protest organizers cover all costs the government claims are associated with a demonstration."

Protest organizers say the reaction of police and politicians closely mirrors what occurred in Miami last fall in advance of a meeting of hemispheric leaders that was marked by extreme repression.

"They've thrown up every roadblock conceivable to keep this from happening," said Beth Lavoie of the Atlanta Independent Media Center, noting that Brunswick has refused to grant any protest permits to date. "What they don't realize is that people are going to come – and it will be a much bigger mess for them if people don't have a legal, constructive way to protest."

Those seeking permits include a People's Summit composed of local grassroots organizations; a carnival-esque "Fair World Fair: A Greedy 8 Alternative," which would include cultural events and presentations on alternatives to the corporate globalization models promoted by the G8; and The Other Economic Summit (TOES-USA), a conference for academics who advocate alternative economic policies.

The city of Brunswick, Glynn County, and the local school board have refused to provide space to the three groups. Meanwhile, the National Guard, Secret Service, FBI, and other state and federal security agencies are setting up shop all over town.

On May 21, Georgia Gov. Sonny Purdue declared a "state of emergency" in six coastal counties citing the "potential danger to the persons and the property of this state from unlawful assemblages, threats of violence and otherwise." The Georgia Army

National Guard and state law enforcement will be folded into a unified command under the direction of William Hitchens Jr., head of Georgia's homeland security office, according to *The Atlanta Constitution Journal*. The paper also reports that the federal government has already allocated \$25 million to the state of Georgia for security expenses and millions more could be tapped for National Guard costs.

#### TWO TOWNS

This year's protests and alternative summits will raise a wide array of issues. Local activists are focusing on the environment – Glynn County is home to 20 toxic waste sites – and on the economic marginalization of the Gullah Geechee.

Brunswick resident Robert Randall is the Fair World Fair organizer. Another local, Harry Lyde, plans to lead a tour of Brunswick's "Two Towns," emphasizing Gullah Geechee people's experiences with the underside of the area's "development." The Glynn Environmental Coalition plans a tour of the toxic sites, including four federal Superfund sites.

"We want our community to become aware of global economic structures that benefit the few at the expense of everybody else," says Randall. "[The G8] places free trade at the pinnacle of values, while relegating issues like human rights and the environment to the bottom of the heap."

Randall has paid a price for his outspokenness. He was recently fired from his job, as a therapist at a non-profit that relies on grants. His boss explicitly stated that his firing was due to the fact that "members of the community" – presumably funders – were unhappy with his organizing against G8.

"The real issue is not my job," says Randall, noting that Georgia's inadequate labor laws make it impossible for him to challenge the firing, "but the literally millions of jobs that are being lost because of the current form of globalization."

For more G8 coverage, see [atlanta.indymedia.org](http://atlanta.indymedia.org).

## 'SAILOR MONGERING' CHARGE DISMISSED

## GREENPEACE SLIPS OFF THE HOOK

By F. TIMOTHY MARTIN

On May 21 in Miami, Federal Judge Adalberto Jordan dismissed a Justice Department attempt to press criminal charges against Greenpeace. While the outcome is welcome news during an otherwise dismal era of government repression of people's right to dissent, Jordan's decision was made for the wrong reason.

The incident in question occurred in April 2002. Two activists left the Port of Miami in a rubber dinghy and boarded a ship carrying mahogany wood from the Brazilian rainforest. Greenpeace has exposed murder, corruption and slavery within the mahogany trade and was instrumental in launching a series of raids against illegal mahogany loggers. The activists' intention was to hang signs that read "Stop Illegal Logging" and "Save the Amazon." Instead

they and four accomplices were charged with misdemeanor violations.

But the Justice Department decided to take things a step further and prosecute Greenpeace. Attorney General John Ashcroft chose to invoke an obscure 19th-century statute intended to prevent brothel and tavern owners from boarding ships illegally to lure sailors ashore. The "sailor mongering" statute had been used only twice before the Greenpeace incident.

Ridiculous as it sounds, if convicted of sailor mongering Greenpeace would have faced five years' probation and up to \$10,000 in fines. Those fines would increase any time anyone from the organization engaged in acts of civil disobedience.

Instead of throwing out the case because of its obvious infringement on First Amendment rights, Judge Jordan said the government's case did not literally follow the word of the

law, but warned it might be valid in other future incidents. Since the Greenpeace action took place six miles offshore, the ship in question could not be said to be "about to arrive" as stipulated in the sailor mongering statute.

That means Greenpeace is off the hook for now, but Feds have a green light to dig up whatever outdated, unrelated law their lawyers can find and apply it to their crack-down on voices they want silenced.

Given the large amount of street protesting planned for the 2004 election year, activists have waited for the outcome of this case with keen interest. As far as anyone can tell, the government has never attempted to press charges against a parent organization for the actions of affiliated activists. If the government continues to fight political criticism with criminal prosecution, organizations will have less room to maneuver and people will think twice before voicing dissent.

Indymedia is a collective of independent media organizations with hundreds of journalists offering news coverage from the grassroots. The following reports are a sample of recent stories posted to local Indymedia websites around the nation. To see a complete listing of Indymedia sites worldwide visit [www.indymedia.org](http://www.indymedia.org).

San Francisco

PALESTINIAN SUPPORTERS  
PRESSURE CONGRESSWOMAN

Twenty people staged a sit-in in Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi's office on May 21, as supporters rallied outside the San Francisco federal building.

Two days earlier at least 10 Palestinians were killed and dozens were wounded when the Israel Defense Forces fired missiles and shells at peaceful protesters in a Rafah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. The IDF said in a statement that it had not targeted the crowd; military sources said one of the shells either passed through a nearby abandoned building or went off course and hit the demonstrators. Most of those killed were school children. Witnesses said that four missiles were fired from the air. The Israeli army has destroyed thousands of homes in violation of international law, with hundreds more slated for demolition.

Nashville

IRAQI DEMONSTRATES  
AGAINST PRISONER ABUSE

Ahmed Al' Uquaily, a Tennessee resident and Iraqi citizen, staged a re-enactment of one of the Abu Ghraib torture photos on May 18 in downtown Nashville. Al' Uquaily stood with wires around his hands and a black hood over his face. Placards at his feet showed an enlargement of the original photograph and a statement reading, "I want the US to leave my country. I want all soldiers to go home safely to their family."

Two other Nashville residents posed as U.S. Army captors, asking their prisoner, "Don't you love freedom?"

"Thank you for the freedom," he replied meekly.

Pittsburgh

ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS  
PROTEST FOIE GRAS

The Campaign for A Foie Gras-Free Pittsburgh has convinced two area restaurants to remove the item from their menus. Baum Vivant and the Carlton have both pledged to stop selling foie gras, which is inflamed goose and duck liver and that many argue is produced under inhumane conditions.

The protesters picket and hand out leaflets at least twice weekly. They also encourage people to contact area restaurants and express their concerns about foie gras.

Milwaukee

MAN ARRESTED FOR  
ANTI-BUSH SIGN, FINED \$243

A southwestern Wisconsin man is fighting a civil citation for holding a sign that read "F U G W" as he watched President Bush's motorcade pass through Platteville on May 7.

According to motions filed by his attorney, Frank Van den Bosch, 53, was told by a police officer that he could not display the sign. Van den Bosch then changed the sign to read "Free Us G W," adding "End the Occupation" on the back. When the motorcade passed and Van den Bosch displayed the sign, police promptly arrested him. He was charged with disorderly conduct and fined \$243.

"It's just a creeping theocratic fascism that's moving into the land here, where dissent is unpatriotic," said Van den Bosch, who is challenging the citation on First Amendment grounds.



## AIDS PROTESTERS WAKE UP WASHINGTON

By SUZY SUBWAYS

The largest AIDS civil disobedience action in a decade took place on May 20 in Washington, D.C. Exactly 100 activists – mostly people living with HIV – including 10 executive directors of major HIV service providers around the country – lay down in front of the Capitol and were arrested.

For those who thought AIDS activism was a thing of the past, and for the Democrats, whose headquarters demonstrators noisily blocked after first hitting the Republican National Committee, the wake-up call came right on time.

Within the past few weeks, the World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that AIDS is now the leading killer of people ages 15 to 59 worldwide, and the National Institute of Medicine announced that at least 59,000 Americans are not getting consistent, lifesaving HIV treatment. Meanwhile, the Bush administration wants to spend another \$270 million on discredited abstinence-only programs that tell teenagers condoms don't work, increasing their risk of HIV.

Bush appointees with Christian-right con-

nections have repeatedly audited effective gay and people of color community-led HIV prevention programs. "Our elected officials and presidential contenders need to get serious about battling AIDS," said Terje Anderson, executive director of the National Association of People with AIDS.

Anderson told the crowd that he was participating in the civil disobedience not only as a community leader but as a gay man living with AIDS, a former junkie and former sex worker.

Jose de Marco of ACT UP Philadelphia, also a member of Anarchist People of Color, said after his release from the Capitol police station that the demonstration's fiery tone gave voice to a powerful feeling within the HIV community. "People were very angry," he said. "A lot of people are pissed off that activists died fighting for these drugs, and now they're out of reach if you're poor."

New York City, which sent half of the day's 1,000-plus protesters, was represented by hundreds from Housing Works and NYC AIDS Housing Network. Most wore pins with photos of Keith Cylar, the founder of Housing Works who died April 5, and chanted his name as the civil disobedience began.

The protest came on the heels of a Bush administration statement that it plans to get cheap generic HIV drugs to poor countries. While the press has praised this plan, activists say it is a fraud. "The devil is authoring the details," says Paul Davis of Health GAP, explaining that it sets up a series of needless and burdensome steps for generics to get U.S. approval – when they have already been approved by WHO and are saving lives worldwide.

In reality, Davis said, the plan locks poor countries in to buying pricey, patented "Big Pharma" drugs indefinitely.

Julie Davids, a lead protest organizer and director of the Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project, reflected on the need for more activists to get involved in direct actions to fight HIV. "If you're not concerned about the neglect of people dying of AIDS in the U.S. and around the world," she says, "then you're not attuned to the most successful face of racism, homophobia and sexism coming from the U.S. government."

Suzy Subways was a member of the press team for the May 20 action in Washington, D.C.







By CHRIS ANDERSON

Critics of the inaugural edition of the New York City Independent Media Center paper, the 4-page, black-and-white *Unst8ed*, didn't pull many punches. "The masthead needs work," read notes from a staff review meeting in September 2000. "In general, layout is confusing," writes another volunteer. "Articles were crammed together," the notes continue, "and we had issues with 'news reporting' versus propaganda. For the future, we should figure out how to manage information better."

Fifty issues and almost four years later, *Unst8ed* is now *The Independent*, a sixteen-page, full-color biweekly. The critical feedback hasn't diminished much, though. "I know all the stories on page three are related," says Catriona Stuart at a recent review meeting for the 49th issue. "But do we really

very definite purpose, and that was to serve the movement. In the 1980s, we were the only non-party paper around."

**BETWEEN "VOICE" AND "VANGUARD"?**

Radical New York newspapers have tended to fall into one of two categories. The first is the class of sectarian broadsheets designed to promote a specific political belief. Rather than primarily reporting news, many of these papers attempt to keep national organizations on the same page politically and work to interpret world events in ways that conform to an already existing ideological analysis.

A second class of city papers includes alternative tabloids like the *Village Voice*, which focus primarily on counter-cultural lifestyle issues. Surprisingly, the *Voice's* early production processes may have even been more ragged than *The Independent's*. *Voice* historian Kevin McAuliffe writes that,

criticism, both from within the paper itself and the wider Independent Media Center network it is a part of. But there is little doubt that that it has helped *The Independent* to survive its fair share of internal and external crises.

**FROM 9/11 TO THE RNC**

It was an external crisis, in the form of two hijacked jetliners slamming into the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, that gave *The Independent* its biggest push forward. "In the early days," says Tarleton, "things were very casual all around. Production would take two, sometimes three weeks. Stories floated in whenever. Editing was chaotic... Original uncorrected text would often appear in the page proofs. We didn't know any better so we were happy. September 11 was the turning point. We realized we had to respond right away even though we had come out with a new issue only a few days

# THE INDEPENDENT THE INDY HITS 50



Aspiring reporters discuss how to cover the news during a May 2002 community reporting workshop. Nearly 200 people have participated in *The Independent's* reporting workshops since they began in the fall of 2001.

need to have multiple articles by the same author on the same page?" Donald Paneth asks, "What's the big picture in this issue? Why do we have so much trouble managing our information?"

Though the comments haven't changed a lot over 50 issues, much else has. While still relying almost entirely on volunteer labor, *The Independent* has two (under)paid staff members. After a great deal of controversy and discussion, the paper now conditionally accepts advertising, and has also broadened its international coverage considerably since the fall of 2001. Four years isn't all that much time. *The New York Times*, for example, has published continuously since 1851. On the more "alternative" end of the publishing spectrum, the *Village Voice* began weekly production in 1955. However, for a group with little experience and even less money who started a "participatory newspaper" in the age of the Internet, 50 issues (and still going strong) isn't a bad show.

**RADICAL PUBLISHING IN NEW YORK**

New York has a long and venerable history of radical publishing. The "penny press" newspapers of the 1830s, considered by media historians to mark the birth of the modern news media, grew out of the Working Men's movement, a short-lived populist struggle. In 1940, New York City publisher Ralph Ingersoll founded one of the last left-wing daily papers, the advertising-free *PM*. New York also served as the home base for *The Guardian*, a radical weekly that drew much of its early staff from *PM*, which collapsed in 1947.

A popular front newspaper writing from a left-wing perspective at the height of the Cold War, *The Guardian* managed to survive the McCarthy era, the turmoil of the 1960s, and the Reagan era. Years after finally folding in 1992, several of its ex-staff found themselves at *The Independent*.

Ellen Davidson worked at *The Guardian* from 1979-1990. She now helps *The Independent* manage its subscription lists and reader outreach programs. "When I came to *The Independent*," she says, "the enthusiasm and energy were just amazing to me, considering that it was an all-volunteer operation. But it also seemed that a lot of things that could have been done weren't."

Davidson argues that the similarities between *The Guardian* and *The Independent* lie less in structure than in both papers' ecumenical attitude towards the left. "The *Guardian* had a very clear hierarchy and elected leadership, there were editors. Department heads actually made decisions." Nevertheless, Davidson continues, both papers are unique insofar as "they're both independent, radical newspapers. *The Guardian* had a

in its early days, "the typical *Village Voice* piece started on page one, jumped to page 7, to page 57, to page 73, back to page 19, and finished on page 33." The *Voice* played an important role in overturning traditional notions of how the journalist was supposed to write, think and act; nevertheless, the glory days of the "alt-weekly" universe are little more than a distant memory. Last year, Village Voice Media produced six largely homogenized alternative newspapers in five states with a combined circulation of approximately 900,000.

Inspired by the anti-corporate globalization movement that burst into the public imagination during the Seattle WTO protests in November 1999, *The Independent* has attempted to forge a new alternative media paradigm over the course of its short history. "We needed something new," says Ana Nogueira, one of the paper's co-founders. "Something non-partisan, something that encouraged participation from unaffiliated individuals and diverse organizations. There was no newspaper in New York City that was not rabidly partisan, overly rhetorical or inundated with advertising. A few people were determined to create a publication that could get into the hands of ordinary, even apolitical people and still make sense to them."

"Our non-sectarianism is important," agrees Jed Brandt, a writer and designer for *The Independent*. "Our task in the larger array [of alternative media] is to create something politically diverse and contentious, not something that holds a particular, unified 'line' and tries to convince others to adopt it. On the down side," Brandt goes on, "we often have a bland, generic feel. We do need... a spiky diversity, not a smooth lowest common denominator."

One thread running through *The Independent's* 50-issue history has been its willingness to subordinate internal conflicts to more practical goals. "We've insisted that the paper exists for its readers, not its writers," says John Tarleton, a long-time *Independent* volunteer, "and our goal is simple: produce the best possible paper we can." Josh Breitbart, an early writer for the paper, says, "We used to have vision discussions where we would realize that we had wildly contrasting ideas of what the paper should be, then we would go right back to working on the paper."

"We wanted well-researched, factual news pieces written for and by the people of New York City about the myriad issues that affected them," Nogueira says. "We wanted to make clear the connections between very local struggles in New York City with the broad and complex struggles facing communities all over the world."

This pragmatic streak has attracted its fair share of

earlier. We worked non-stop through the next two nights."

"Being able to respond so clearly and quickly at such an important moment," Breitbart continues, "showed a lot of people, us included, what the paper could be. It also brought a lot of new people in the door to work on it. The next time I was in town, meetings that had had seven or eight people now had 15-20. And we never really looked back on print runs of 5-6000; pretty soon it was 10-15,000 every issue, which brought new kinds of financial pressure."

In the three years since September 11, *The Independent* has provided coverage of the emerging global peace movement and ongoing campaigns against corporate power. At the same time, it has launched *El Independiente*, a 4-page Spanish-language monthly and improved its design and layout as well as the quality of its coverage. "We're doing much more of what I would call 'real journalism' now," says AK Gupta, an *Independent* volunteer. "People are getting out there, into the neighborhoods, talking to people, and finding out what their concerns are."

Davidson agrees that *The Independent* has come a long way, but argues that there's still much work that needs to be done. "I think that the steps we've taken, in terms of getting full-time staff and getting a lot more advertising revenue have been really critical," she says. "If we want to publish on a regular basis, we can't depend on house parties to always publish our paper. At the same time, I would really like to see us build up more of a subscription base, because that's really the way to build up supporters and create a steady stream of income."

With the Republican National Convention preparing to descend on New York this August, the crisis brought about by September 11 has, in some ways, come full circle. Will the turmoil and energy of convention week move *The Independent* forward yet again? "Sure this paper could continue to grow and flourish," Tarleton says. "But not if it doesn't make itself into a truly sustainable project. Volunteerist projects are inherently unstable. We're still dependent on a very small number of people dedicating much or all of their lives to this project. What happens when their intensity wanes?"

Nogueira remains optimistic. "*The Independent's* audience is getting wider, and its participants are willing to do the hard, ungratifying work that it takes to make a real community newspaper. This paper is a testament to the grassroots media philosophy of the Indymedia movement."

*Chris Anderson is a doctoral student at the Columbia University School of Journalism. He has been a volunteer with The Independent since October 2001.*



PHOTOS BY JOHN TARLETON





Vietnam Veterans Against the War, including Ron Kovic (in wheelchair far right), make a showing at the Republican National Convention of 1972.

## RNC '72

continued from p.1

clubs and kept us blocks away from the hall, except for a penned-off section in back that they pushed us out of when we got too loud. We escaped into the streets, shouting "Nixon's a murderer" and "fuck you, pig" at stray delegates and occasionally smashing the windshields of Cadillacs with "President Nixon. Now more than ever" stickers. One guy I suspected as a potential agent - he'd propositioned me about blowing up an ITT facility on Long Island - jumped on the back of a delegate bus and pulled out the spark-plug wires.

The morning after the convention we picked up a guy named Dave who needed a ride to Philadelphia and had eggs and grits at a coffeshop. On the way back to the car, he saw a toy store and wanted to get something for his little sister. Nick and I went in with him.

The owner freaked at the sight of us, like the Weather Underground and the Manson Family had just walked into his store. He screamed for us to get out. We did, but not before Nick said something like "You got a lot of war toys in here, Mister." We walked the half-block to the car. As we got in, about 11 cop cars pulled up. One of them blocked

off our parking space.

"All right, it's the end of the road for you!" shouted the lead cop, leaping out to the driver's side of our car. Elliot didn't know what was going on and picked the moment for a display of idealistic bravado. He wouldn't roll his window down until the cop told him what we were being arrested for. When he finally did, the cop punched him in the face. The cop was wearing a "Nixon Now" button.

We got lined up against a cop car, cuffed, Maced and frisked. A crowd of old people gathered; South Miami Beach's elderly, mostly retired New York Jews who weren't particularly affluent, had been pretty sympathetic to the demonstrators, who often resembled their grandchildren. I had assumed that Nick was Jewish until one old woman said "sheyne Yiddishe kopf" to us and he asked me what it meant.

"They weren't doing anything," said one protester.

"Neither were you, buddy," said a cop. "Get over here."

Elliot and Rhonda had bail money. Nick, Dave, the bystander and I got put in a holding cell with about 20 people. Most of them seemed to be in for thoughtcrime. Their arrest warrants said things like: "On August 24, 1972 at 11 A.M., at 17th Street and Washington Avenue, said defendant did commit the crime of disorderly conduct, to wit: did raise his middle finger in an obscene ges-

ture and shout 'fucking pig' at an officer of the Miami Beach Police Department." More than 1,000 people got rounded up that day.

Periodically the cops came by to spray Mace into the cell. "I always cry at weddings," snickered one. They dragged in a longhair from Atlanta, his face bloody, his glasses smashed.

"What about my constitutional rights?" he screamed.

"You fucking animals don't have any constitutional rights," said the cop shoving him in the cell. He too was wearing a "Nixon Now" button.

Across the hall was a small, swarthy man with a cell to himself. "Hey, man, what are you in for?" I asked.

"Public display of the swastika," he said.

"Fuck you," I replied.

A few cops sauntered over. "It's a pity a good American like you has to be in jail with these bums," one cop said. Another one with a "Nixon Now" button.

We got moved to the overnight cell, with dirty bare mattresses on battleship-gray bunks. The only reading material consisted of old Playboys with the centerfolds torn out. Nick, a vegetarian, wouldn't eat the slightly rancid beef-and-carrot stew. I was hungry. I paid with diarrhea.

We went on trial the next morning. The cop who testified against us was wearing a "Nixon Now" button. The toy-store owner

said all five of us had been in the store, but that there were no women. The judge tossed out the charges against Rhonda. The hundred-odd political detainees in the courtroom applauded. The owner said we had been "manhandling the customers" and shouting obscenities.

"What obscenities?" the judge asked. "I can't repeat them," he said. "There are ladies present."

We told our stories straightforwardly. The only other customers had been leaving when we came in. "Case dismissed" said the judge. The courtroom rocked. Nick shot a raised-fist salute as we walked out. A fat blonde woman from Indiana smiled at me. We'd have a fling a couple years later.

When we got the car back there was \$20 missing from my backpack, along with my army jacket and ripped black T-shirt. They were probably adorning some undercover who needed authentic gear. We didn't stop to eat until we were out of Florida.

Nixon was re-elected overwhelmingly in November. All around radical groups were splitting up and activists cracking up. I spent the spring semester staying as high as I could and dropped out of school in May.

*A slightly fictionalized version of this appears in Steven Wishnia's book Exit 25 Utopia (The Imaginary Press).*

## WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDEPENDENT?

A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

### BELOW 14TH ST.

- ABC No Rio  
156 Rivington
- Bluestockings Books & Café  
172 Allen
- Lotus Café  
Clinton & Stanton
- Alt.Coffee  
139 Ave. A (btw. 8th & 9th)
- May Day Books at  
Theater for the New City  
155 First Ave. (btw 9th & 10th)
- Kim's Video  
3rd Ave. & St. Marks
- Housing Works  
126 Crosby St.
- LGBT Center  
213 W. 13th St.
- TLA Video  
8th St. btw 6th Ave. & Broadway

### 14TH TO 96TH ST.

- Revolution Books  
9 W. 19th St.
- Chelsea Sq. Diner  
23rd & 9th St.
- Brecht Forum  
122 W. 27th, Fl. 10
- Second Wave Laundrocenter  
55th & 9th Ave.
- Hunter College (USG Office)  
68th & Lex. (Room N 141)
- ABOVE 96th ST.
- Labyrinth Books  
536 W. 112th St.
- Kim's Books  
113th & Broadway
- Strictly Roots Restaurant  
123rd & Adam Clayton Powell
- Green Chimneys  
450 W. 145th St.

### Fort Washington Bakery & Deli

- 808 W. 181 St.
- Junpin' Jalapeños  
W. 207th St  
(btw Broadway & Vermillia)
- Cafe Seven  
7 Henshaw St.
- BROOKLYN
- Tillie's of Brooklyn  
248 Dekalb Ave.
- Green Apple Café  
110 Dekalb Ave.
- Marquet Patisserie  
680 Fulton St.
- Freddy's Bar and Backroom  
Dean & 6th Ave.
- BAM  
30 Lafayette Ave.
- Community Book Store  
7th & Carroll Sts.

### Park Slope Food Co-op

- 782 Union St.
- Tea Lounge  
Union St. at 7th Ave.  
7th Ave. at 9th St.
- Atlantis Super Laundry Center  
472 Atlantic Ave.
- Photoplay Video  
933 Manhattan Ave
- Jane Doe Books  
93 Montrose Ave.
- Make the Road by Walking  
301 Grove St.
- QUEENS
- Sunnyside Library  
43-06 Greenpoint Ave.
- East Elmhurst Library  
95-06 Astoria Blvd.
- Jackson Heights Library  
35-51 81 St.

### Friends' Tavern

- 78-11 Roosevelt Ave.
- Langston Hughes Library  
100-01 Northern Blvd.
- Cafe Aubergine  
49-22 Skillman Ave.
- Sunnyside Library  
43-06 Greenpoint Ave.
- BRONX
- South Bronx Clean Air  
Coalition  
541-549 E. 138th St.
- The Point  
940 Garrison Ave.
- Jersey City
- Five Corners Public Library  
678 Newark Ave.
- Downtown Public Library  
472 Jersey Ave.
- Ground Coffee Shop  
530 Jersey Ave.

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HARSH MEASURES AIMED AT NONVIOLENT PROTESTERS

RNC SKIRMISHES BEGIN

BY JACKSON ALLERS

A New York County Supreme Court Judge ruled on May 20 that the District Attorney's office may use previously sealed court records in sentencing four activists convicted of "obstructing government administration" during a protest in the Diamond District last year.

The decision has legal experts worried that the District Attorney will use that information to demand that the activists should be dealt with severely, thus undermining long-standing legal safeguards that protect political protest in New York City.

"The DA's use of secret hearings and the dredging-up of dismissed cases as a basis to impose jail sentences are designed to deter activists from demonstrating at the Republican National Convention this summer," said civil liberties attorney Ron Kuby.

The misdemeanor charge of "obstruction of governmental administration" carries with it a maximum of one year jail time, Kuby pointed out. Judge Robert M. Stolz will now consider the unsealed records in sentencing Katherine Barnhart, Herbert Quester, Eustacia Smith and Lisa Puccio on May 26.

Although New York County District Attorney Robert Morgenthau denies the harsh sentencing trend is linked to protests planned around the Republican National Convention from Aug. 30 to Sep. 2, he is on the record as urging jail time for activists who have been arrested repeatedly for nonviolent direct action. Morgenthau has also stated publicly that the city may arrest 1,000 people a day during the convention.

The assistant district attorneys who are prosecuting the four activists wrote a seven-page recommendation that called for additional jail time for participants with a history of civil disobedience.

The activists were part of a larger group of 16 New Yorkers arrested March 26, 2003, during a



SLEEPING DRAGONS AWAKE: In the aftermath of Rachel Corrie's killing by the Israeli military in March 2003, protesters "locked down" in the Diamond District. PHOTO: Fritz Askew

nonviolent protest against the invasion of Iraq and U.S. support for Israel. The action took place 10 days after U.S. peace activist Rachel Corrie was killed by an Israeli military bulldozer.

On the steps of the Criminal Courthouse following the May 12 sentencing of 12 of the activists, known as the "Diamond District 16," defense lawyer Steven Edwards said, "Protesters must be assured that their past criminal records cannot be used against them if arrested during protest actions."

Edwards asserted that the May 20 ruling indicates that harsher measures will be used against activists arrested during future protests, adding, "The DA's office took a uniquely rigid approach with my clients, breaking from a long judicial history of treating such cases with leniency and refusing to allow a resolution to a less serious charge."

Civil libertarians admit that there is legal

precedent for unsealing legal records, but only "in the interest of justice." Historically, the city has not used this precedent.

"To abandon the tradition of allowing past deeds to be left closed to the courts, especially in cases of classic civil disobedience, as is the case here, is ironic. Especially if the DA's office is citing this case as one of 'extraordinary circumstance' that would prompt setting such a dangerous legal precedent," said Donna Lieberman, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union.

A group of six nonviolent protesters who blocked the Holland Tunnel last year to protest the war against Iraq, faced similar obstruction of governmental administration charges in addition to the usual disorderly conduct charges. The obstruction charges were ultimately dropped and the protesters pled guilty to disorderly conduct.

FLAG-FLYING  
FIASCO

Haitian-American students at a Long Island high school were punished for trying to celebrate Haiti's annual Flag Day on May 18. School authorities stopped students as they entered Elmont Memorial High School and confiscated the Haitian flags that many carried or wrapped around their head or neck. Students who wore clothing emblazoned with the Haitian bicolor were forced to either change their clothes or wear a jacket to cover the flag. Those who did not or could not comply were placed in a room under "In School Suspension." Despite the testimony of many students about the confiscation of flags, the school's principal and superintendent deny that flags were systematically seized.

QUEENS RESIDENTS SAY NO  
TO PATHMARK

On May 22, nearly 200 residents of Fresh Meadows, Queens protested the proposed construction of a 55,000-square-foot Pathmark food store in their neighborhood. Citing concern for the viability of local businesses, protesters marched and carried signs that read, "No Pathmark." The proposed store would encompass space that three smaller stores currently occupy. Congressman Anthony Weiner told the cable news channel NY1, "It's going to take more than double coupons to make us say yes to it." Pathmark is now in the process of revamping its design and says it will submit a new proposal this summer.

WATER, WATER,  
EVERYWHERE

Plans by the New York City Water Board to raise water rates by 5.5 percent is being criticized by community advocates who say the increases will disproportionately harm tenants and low-income families. Carolyn Zolas, chairperson of Clean Water for the Bronx, told the *Norwood News* that "lower income families tend to have more children and use more water. Yet they can least afford high water rates." Landlords are expected to raise rents to pay for rising rates. The Department of Environmental Protection claims the hike is necessary to fund post-September 11 measures to protect water supplies.

NY CIVIL RIGHTS ATTORNEY  
DEFENDS HERSELF

On May 19 the U.S. Department of Justice began its case against Lynne Stewart, a high-profile civil rights lawyer. Stewart stands accused of passing messages between her imprisoned client, Egyptian cleric Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, and an Egyptian organization that the United States has designated as a terrorist outfit. Defense attorneys are concerned that the prosecution of Stewart is a government effort to silence legal defenders of unpopular clients.

THIRD WORLD ACTIVISTS CHALLENGE POLICE RESTRICTIONS

BREAKAWAY TO TIMES SQUARE

It seems as if it's getting harder and harder to protest. First the government stopped listening and now they're trying to make sure no one else gets to hear - through tightly controlling and denying permits to assemble. But some community organizations aren't taking police threats and government obstruction as the end of the story.

BY JED BRANDT

In the first major test of police tactics before the Republican National Convention, protesters from "Still We Rise: People's Assembly" defied the New York Police Department's denial of their permit to march on the Times Square military recruiting station. The march came on May 22, at the end of a day of discussion against the "racist U.S. war against Third World nations and communities of color at home."

After hours of discussions on organizing a "community response" to the RNC, the energized crowd of 175 of people marched from the Church Center of the United Nations to the Israeli consulate, in solidarity with Palestinians, and then to Gov. George Pataki's office where Domestic Workers' United protested the connections between militarism abroad and the right-wing's disastrous domestic policies.

Except for the presence of high-ranking deputies from the Chief of the Department's office and members of the Disorder Control Unit keeping tabs, the protest was orderly. The police were polite, despite refusing the full permit, and escorted the crowd from one holding pen to another along a sidewalk route.

It was after the crowd had been at the Governor's office for about 40 minutes when the march broke from the routine.

With many immigrants and members of communities with extensive experience of police violence present in the crowd, concerns about arrest were higher than in the predominantly white direct action movement. The protest split into two sections: one that would risk arrest by marching to Times Square and another that would continue to rally at Pataki's office. Participating organizations in Still We Rise have often been resistant to direct action and tend to alternate between mass assemblies and traditional civil disobedience. It seems the

winds are changing.

A dozen protesters assembled in single file across the street from the penned-in rally and chanted and clapped in unison. This was done in full view of the police, who ignored the breakaway protesters.

The group took the sidewalk down 42nd Street, and on cue unfolded umbrellas painted with anti-war slogans.

In the midtown rush hour, thousands stopped to observe the noisy and colorful line. Hecklers and applause competed. By the time the demonstrators had reached Bryant Park, the group was triple in size after picking up passers-by along with smaller groups who had left the rally.

"It had its own spirit and life," said Monami Maulik, a spokesperson for Still We Rise. "We needed to be energized for the coming months. Confusion about who's doing what, particularly among young activists of color, has been widespread. But the energy is there."

As the crowd dispersed, some wondered what the effect would be if instead of large mass rallies, activists broke up into small groups throughout the city, in a coordinated way, to spread the word about opposition to the RNC.

Still We Rise plans a June 10 meeting "for allies and all sectors" to dialogue and strategize plans for the convention.

More info at [www.racialjustice911.org](http://www.racialjustice911.org)

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THE INDEPENDENT  
MAY 26 - JUNE 15, 2004  
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## CALIFORNIA SCAMMING

It's no coincidence that today's gas crisis seems similar to the California electricity scam of 2000-01. Tyson Slocum of Public Citizen says now, as then, "The ability of individual companies to manipulate supplies for their own profits is widespread."

He notes that some of the same culprits are involved, such as BP, which "has a subsidiary called BP Energy that was fined \$3 million for intentional manipulation of the California energy market."

The tactics are also similar: Consolidate control over a market, tighten supplies and then wait for a small disruption. In California, electricity companies deliberately idled plants while supplies were tight and then waited for prices to skyrocket on the spot market. In transcripts of telephone conversations, energy traders called their successful attempts at manipulation "exciting," "cool" and "fu-un!"

In the gasoline market, refinery capacity has declined by 20 percent since the 1980s. The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that refining capacity will continue to decline by 50,000 barrels per year until 2007. The result is high rates of refinery utilization - 96 percent by early May - leaving them susceptible to accidents.

This may be part of the oil industry's strategy because, "Every accident or blip in the market triggers a price shock and profits mount," observes the Consumer Federation of America. Thus, "A pipeline breaks here, a refinery goes out there, or a blackout shuts down production for a day someplace else. Because stocks are so tight, prices shoot up, and stay up for an extended period of time."

Californians are feeling the brunt of this energy crisis with the nation's highest gas prices, nearly \$2.50 per gallon in southern California. And analysts predict the price may hit \$3 this summer. Only 13 refineries controlled by a handful of oil companies feed the state's supply. That's down from 37 refineries in 1983. And now Shell is planning to demolish a refinery in Bakersfield, California, that supplies 2 percent of the state's gasoline and 6 percent of its diesel, despite the fact that it has the highest profit margin of any of Shell's U.S. refineries.

The oil companies can manipulate the markets because, says Slocum, "political contributions buy you a certain amount of immunity from prosecution and investigation."

The Bush administration is also using the same political strategy it developed during the California electricity crisis. It argued that environmental regulations caused the tight supplies. Its solution was to gut clean air laws to allow more power plants, a position quietly abandoned once Enron went belly up.

Now, the Bush administration is saying the only thing that can alleviate high gas prices is to drill for oil - in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the Gulf of Mexico, and national parks and monuments across the country. Bush also wants his energy bill passed, which doles out more than \$7 billion to Big Oil.

Yet, prices are likely to drop on their own by the fall. Key to the oil industry strategy is price volatility. If prices stayed high, consumers would demand the development of cheaper sources of energy. Additionally, the oil industry knows that with a presidential election looming, cheaper gas prices beforehand will help propel the Bush administration to another oil-friendly term.



# GASSED-UP PRICES

### BIG OIL GAMES THE MARKET TO PUMP CONSUMERS DRY

such methods as "curtailing production [and] keeping available supply off the market."

Even more damning, the FTC report stated that one unnamed oil company executive "made clear that he would rather sell less gasoline and earn a higher margin on each gallon sold than sell more gasoline and earn a lower margin."

The federal government could force prices down, but with a White House soaked with more oil than Prince William Sound, it's taken to blaming "environmental extremists" for the crisis. Since 2000, the oil industry has pumped out more than \$68 million to politicians with 80 percent of that going to Republicans.

Every penny increase in gas prices costs Americans more than \$1 billion. Since January of 2000, consumer groups estimate that increasing prices for gasoline and natural gas have cost consumers \$250 billion. Even before the latest price surge, household energy expenditures increased by an average of 35 percent, or \$500, from 1999 to 2003.

If the oil industry "were simply passing on higher costs their profit margin wouldn't change," Slocum says. In 2003, the five largest oil companies operating within the United States - ExxonMobil, ChevronTexaco, ConocoPhillips, BP and Royal Dutch Shell - raked in more than \$60 billion in after-tax profits. And 2004 is shaping up to be Big Oil's best year ever. For the first three months:

- ChevronTexaco's profit jumped 33 percent to \$2.56 billion and profits for its U.S. division for oil refining quadrupled from the same period last year to \$276 million this year;
- ConocoPhillips, the biggest refiner and fuel marketer in the United States, also had a profit increase of 33 percent to \$1.62 billion;
- ExxonMobil, the world's largest corporation, raked in profits of \$5.44 billion from January to March of 2004, more than its entire 2002 total.

A study by the Consumer Federation from October 2003 notes that in the last 15 years about 75 refineries have closed. So in 1985, whereas refinery capacity was equal to the daily consumption of petroleum products, by 2000, "daily consumption exceeded refinery capacity by almost 20 percent." (Not only are U.S. oil imports increasing, so are imports of refined fuel products.)

Gasoline stocks have also declined precipitously since the early 1980s from 10 days above minimum operating needs to just two days by 2003.

A *New York Times* article from June 15, 2001, quotes a document from Chevron written in November 1995 that spelled out the strategy: "If the U.S. petroleum industry doesn't reduce its refining capacity, it will never see any substantial increase in refinery profits."

The result, according to the Consumer Federation, is that operating income in the refining and marketing sectors has gone from about \$1 billion in 1995 to \$19 billion in 2003.

By A.K. GUPTA

If you think surging gas prices is another case of OPEC sticking it to the Great Satan, think again. While prices of crude oil hover around \$40 a barrel and gasoline above \$2 a gallon, it's the oil companies who are literally making out like bandits.

The oil industry and its supporters point to the summer driving season, environmental regulations for reformulated gasoline, surging demand in China and the United States, and a shortfall of crude oil production as the factors underlying ballooning gas prices.

But consumer groups, government agencies and internal documents from the oil industry reveal that the gasoline market is being deliberately manipulated to boost profits.

Tyson Slocum, research director of Public Citizen's Energy Program says, "The scarcity is manufactured. These companies act as if the summer driving season snuck up on them." Slocum points to consolidation within the oil industry during the last decade as the underlying reason for repeated spikes in gas prices. As a result, "America no longer has access to adequately competitive gas markets."

Slocum states the problem is not so much with crude oil supply but with the "downstream component" of refining and marketing. Public Citizen released a report in March authored by Slocum that noted the five largest oil companies now control 50 percent of U.S. refinery capacity (versus 34 percent in 1993) and 62 percent of the retail gasoline market (versus 27 percent a decade ago).

This gives the oil industry unprecedented ability to manipulate the market. After a spike in gasoline prices in the Midwest in the summer of 2000, the Federal Trade Commission launched an investigation. It released a report in March 2001 that concluded the price increases were due in part to "decisions by firms to maximize their profits" by

## IT'S THE CAR, STUPID

To bring down gas prices, Democrats say President Bush should release crude from the strategic petroleum reserve, which holds 660 million barrels. Few analysts expect that doing so would reduce gas prices by more than a few pennies and say the Democrats are just proposing the easiest thing to do because, "it's not going to ruffle the feathers of any powerful interests."

Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf countries supply about 2 million of the 10 million barrels of oil the U.S. imports daily. As the strategic petroleum reserve has enough oil to make up a disruption from the Middle East for more than 300 days, observers say the Bush administration could stop adding to the reserve - which it is doing at the rate of 100,000 barrels a day - if it were serious about increasing supplies of crude oil.

A far more effective solution is for the federal government to mandate that refiners increase their supplies of gasoline and order them to release gasoline into the market when prices increase, thereby lim-

iting price-gouging.

Longer-term suggestions include increasing fuel-efficiency standards, which dropped during the Clinton administration and are lower now than in the 1980s. Oil consumption would drop by one-third, almost 7 million barrels per day, if passenger vehicles had to average 40 miles per gallon.

There is general agreement that alternative energy sources need to be developed, but there is no easy solution. Hydrogen-based fuel cells are no panacea. Sources for the hydrogen include natural gas, an already over-tapped energy source; coal, the dirtiest of fossil fuels; or radiation-spewing nuclear power plants to generate hydrogen.

Wind, tidal and geothermal energy are cleaner sources of electricity, but battery-powered vehicles generate just as much pollution as gas-powered ones. The difference is, the pollution is in the form of solid waste from the batteries rather than air pollution from hydrocarbons.

Oil junkies want to develop marginal sources, such as Canada's vast fields of tar

sands that may hold more than 1 trillion barrels of oil - more than all known reserves in the Persian Gulf. But tar sands require tremendous amounts of water to process and natural gas to heat and extract the oil, and leave behind enormous environmental damage from the waste.

Ultimately, the problem is not so much fossil-fueled powered vehicles as the single-passenger vehicle. It's inherently wasteful to have two-ton machines carrying a single person to the store for a quart of milk.

A real solution would involve robust networks of bus and rail with suburbs, towns and cities redesigned for walking and biking. An impressive model is the Brazilian city of Curitiba, which uses extensive bus networks, pedestrian walkways, bike paths and planned growth to limit car usage, with the result that its residents use 30 percent less gasoline on average than eight other Brazilian cities. But such planning would strike at the heart of the over-consumptive U.S. way of life, and our car- and oil-driven economy.



# TORTURE & US

## NEWS IN BRIEF

Finger-pointing is Washington's favorite sport these days. The Bush administration wants to pin the Iraq torture scandal on "a few bad apples," but evidence is overwhelming that Pentagon officials all the way up to Donald Rumsfeld approved and knew of the post-September 11 global network of torture shops.

By A.K. GUPTA

While the mainstream media has focused on the notorious Abu Ghraib prison, others are asking about similar facilities elsewhere in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo and even in the United States. There is also renewed interest in the history of torture in U.S. foreign policy, our own prison system and the nature of imprisonment and authority as underlying factors in systematic brutality.

The following excerpts provide context to issues relating to the scandal.

Comparisons are being made to a torture manual written by the CIA for use by Latin American security forces in the 1980s. Entitled, "Human Resource Exploitation Training Manual - 1983," it outlines torture techniques strikingly similar to those being used in the "war on terror."

### THEORY OF COERCION

The purpose of all coercive techniques is to induce psychological regression in the subject by bringing a superior outside force to bear on his will to resist. Regression is basically a loss of autonomy, a reversion to an earlier behavioral level....

### COERCIVE TECHNIQUES

#### ARREST

The manner and timing of the subjects arrest should be planned to achieve surprise and the maximum amount of mental discomfort....

#### DETENTION

A person's sense of identity depends upon the continuity in his surroundings, habits, appearance, relations with others, etc.... Detention should be planned to enhance the subject's feelings of being cut off from anything known and reassuring.

#### DEPRIVATION OF SENSORY STIMULI

Solitary confinement acts on most persons as a powerful stress. The symptoms most commonly produced by solitary confinement are superstition, intense love of any other living thing, perceiving inanimate objects as alive, hallucinations and delusions.

#### PAIN

The torture situation is a contest between the subject and his tormentor. Pain that is being inflicted upon the subject from outside himself may actually intensify his will to resist. On the other hand, pain that he feels he is inflicting upon himself is more likely to sap his resistance. For example, if he is required to maintain a rigid position such as standing at attention or sitting on a stool for long periods of time, the immediate source of discomfort is not the questioner but the subject himself. [www.radio4all.org/crackcia/torture.htm](http://www.radio4all.org/crackcia/torture.htm)

Many people are re-examining the Stanford Prison Experiment conducted in 1971. A group of 24 college students were randomly divided into two groups of guards and prisoners, and then placed in a simulated prison to study the psychological effects of becoming a prisoner or a prison guard. The "prisoners" were subjected to disorienting and humiliating techniques, such as stripping and blind-



iRaQ: Culture Jammers spoof iPod ad in a New York subway station.

folding. Within one day of their "imprisonment," the student prisoners rebelled.

What followed was an unscripted and disturbingly real recreation of actual prison life with guards using physical force and psychological manipulation to subdue the prisoners. The experimenters noted their astonishment at how quickly everyone fell into their assigned roles - even themselves as the prison administrators and parents allowed in as visitors - with little prompting. The experiment suggests that the nature of the prison system itself produces the abuses carried out by individual guards. [www.prisonexp.org](http://www.prisonexp.org)

Another relevant psychological experiment is Stanley Milgram's study in obedience to authority conducted in the early sixties at Yale University. Subjects were ordered by a "stern looking experimenter in a white coat" to administer electric shocks to an unseen third party. Predictions prior to the experiment determined that only "only a pathological fringe of about one in a thousand" would administer the highest shock level of 450 volts - a level the participants were lead to believe could result in death.

Milgram found that across income, educational and gender lines more than 60 percent of subjects proceeded to the highest level. Relating the experiment directly to the Nazi holocaust, Milgram observed, "The essence of obedience is that a person comes to view himself as the instrument for carrying out another person's wishes, and he therefore no longer regards himself as responsible for his actions." Or in an all-too common phrase uttered from World War II to Gulf War II: "I was just following orders." <http://home.swbell.net/revscat/perilsOfObedience.html>

Questions are also being raised about those caught up in the September 11 roundups. An

investigation by *Salon* notes that prisoners held in Brooklyn's Metropolitan Detention Center "were regularly stripped and sexually humiliated. Prolonged sleep deprivation was common. Guards regularly slammed inmates against walls. Several detainees claimed they were also punched and kicked. In Passaic County Jail, prisoners were menaced with dogs. At several prisons, people were put in solitary confinement for weeks or even months. They were denied access to visitors. Many were never charged with any crime." [www.salon.com/news/feature/2004/05/19/maddy/index.html](http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2004/05/19/maddy/index.html)

Seymour Hersh, who broke the story about torture in Abu Ghraib, writes in the May 24 edition of the *New Yorker* that "The notion that Arabs are particularly vulnerable to sexual humiliation became a talking point among pro-war Washington conservatives in the months before the March, 2003, invasion of Iraq." Hersh writes that the neocon "bible" was a 1973 book entitled *The Arab Mind*, which includes a chapter "on Arabs and sex, depicting sex as a taboo vested with shame and repression." One academic quoted said two themes emerged in discussions among neocons "one, that Arabs only understand force and, two, that the biggest weakness of Arabs is shame and humiliation." [www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040524fa\\_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040524fa_fact)

The idea that sexual humiliation is unique among Arabs is undermined by a Human Rights Watch report from 2001 entitled *No Escape: Male Rape in U.S. Prisons*. It sheds light on this taboo subject, revealing that of the 2 million men in U.S. prisons up to one-third of them may be sexually assaulted or subject to brutal gang rapes with little protection from prison authorities. [www.hrw.org/reports/2001/prison/](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/prison/)

### HALLIBURTON RUNS EMPTY SUPPLY TRUCKS TO INFLATE PROFITS

U.S. supply convoys have become prime targets for Iraqi insurgents, and the soldiers guarding them have some of the most dangerous duty in Iraq. That hasn't stopped Texas-based Halliburton from running empty supply trucks across Iraq in order to inflate its profits.

Defense Department records show that Kellogg Brown and Root, a Halliburton subsidiary, has been paid \$327 million for "theater transportation" of war materiel and supplies for U.S. forces in Iraq and is earmarked to be paid \$230 million more. KBR's contract with the Pentagon allows the company to pass on the cost of the transportation and add 1 to 3 percent for profit, but neither KBR nor the U.S. Army Field Support Command in Rock Island, Ill., which oversees the contract, was able to provide cost estimates for the empty trucks. Trucking experts estimate that each round trip costs taxpayers thousands of dollars.

### IRANIAN STUDENTS ATTACK EMBASSY

For the fourth time in a week, Iranian theological students attacked the U.K. Embassy in Tehran to protest the U.S. occupation of the Shi'ite holy cities of Kerbala and Najaf. Some 400 students hurled stones at the embassy, demanding the withdrawal of British forces from Iraq and the expulsion of the British ambassador. The protesters who gathered after a call by Islamic militias at universities tried to force their way past the cordon around the embassy in the center of the capital.

### ZINNI RIPS BUSH IRAQ PLAN

Former CENTCOM Commander Gen. Anthony Zinni is just the latest ex-military official to rip the Bush plan for Iraq. On CBS's "60 Minutes," Zinni told Steve Croft "There has been poor strategic thinking in this... there has been poor operational planning and execution on the ground. And to think that we are going to 'stay the course,' the course is headed over Niagara Falls. I think it's time to change course a little bit, or at least hold somebody responsible for putting you on this course. Because it's been a failure." Zinni argued that the Iraq War was driven by civilian leaders at the Pentagon, and widely opposed by U.S. military commanders.

### WITH LIBERTY AND IMMUNITY FOR ALL

Under a deal currently under discussion at the United Nations, British and American troops serving in Iraq after the country is transferred to civilian rule will be immune from prosecution by Iraqi authorities. The U.S. rushed to obtain similar "status of forces" agreements in countries where it maintains a military presence after the creation of the International Criminal Court. Under the agreement, United States soldiers in Iraq would be subject to American law. Soldiers found guilty of abusing prisoners in Abu Ghraib jail have so far been given sentences of as little as 12 months.

### INVASIVE SPECIES TAKE OVER MALAWI

While some 500,000 water-hyacinth-eating bugs were released into the Malawi ecosystem to eradicate the fast-spreading and troublesome plants, decaying matter has spawned new breeds of invasive hippo grass and papyrus, once again clogging rivers and lakes. Tons of the gnarled weeds are hauled from the nation's hydroelectric plants each day, but the masses of vegetation are still the cause of frequent power outages, which is disrupting local industry. Disruptions of hydroelectric power cost one-third of the country's GDP says the energy ministry.

Sonia Gandhi declined the chance to become India's next Prime Minister on May 18 two days after leading the Congress Party to an upset victory in parliamentary elections. The election results were widely seen as a repudiation of seven years of rule by the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), the Hindu nationalist party which had aggressively pushed the privatization of state assets and other neo-liberal economic reforms.

Favored by India's poor majority, Gandhi, the Italian-born widow of a former Indian president and daughter-in-law of another, promised in her campaign to spread the benefits of economic growth. Upon Congress's win, India's stock market experienced its largest one-day plunge ever. Under attack from both religious and market fundamentalists, Gandhi tapped her colleague Manmohan Singh for the Prime Minister's post. *Democracy Now's* Amy Goodman spoke with noted Indian author and activist Arundhati Roy the day after Gandhi's surprise announcement.

## ARUNDHATI ROY INTERVIEWED BY AMY GOODMAN ON THE INDIAN ELECTIONS

**AMY GOODMAN:** Can you explain what is happening right now in India?

**ARUNDHATI ROY:** Many people were surprised by the victory of the Congress, because it was really hard to see beyond the sort of haze of hatred that the Hindu nationalists had been spreading. One wasn't sure whether the people would be blinded by that or whether the real issues of absolute poverty and absolute [separation] from the land and water resources would be the big issues. A lot of us, when the results came out, thought it couldn't have been a better result. The Congress party sort of shackled to the left parties in a coalition which would make them a pretty formidable opposition to the BJP. But subsequently, what has happened has been fascinating because you can just see the forces at play, both internationally and nationally, so blatantly that just in order to understand what's going on, it's been a fascinating few days.

**Can you talk about the differences between the BJP and the Congress party?**

**AR:** The fundamental difference between the Congress and the BJP is that one is an overtly fascist party, proudly fascist. It doesn't feel bad if you call it that. The culture to which the BJP's big leaders subscribe to openly admires Hitler.

The Congress really was the party that opened India up to the whole neo-liberal regime. But the BJP has come in and taken it much further, to absurd levels. Today, we have a situation in which 40 percent of rural India has food absorption levels lower than sub-Saharan Africa. You have the biggest rural income divide ever seen in history. You have millions of tons of food grain rotting while starvation deaths are announced all over. The government imports food grain and milk and sugar and all of these things while Indian farmers are committing suicide not in the hundreds now, but the figures have moved into the thousands. And you have a

middle class which is glittering, which is happy. The people of India made it clear that their mandate was against neo-liberal economic reforms. Even in state governments where the Congress Party had instituted these reforms, the Congress was also overthrown. It wasn't a vote for Sonia Gandhi or a vote for the Congress, it was a vote against very serious issues.

**On the issue of Sonia Gandhi and why she is stepping down, do you think it is significant at all?**

**AR:** I think there was a real dilemma there. She was faced with a party and with a climate and people at the helm of the BJP, who we know now are capable of going to any extreme – as we saw what happened in Gujarat two years ago when they openly supported a pogrom in which 2,000 Muslims were massacred on the streets, and not a single person has been brought to book or punished. I think she was aware of the fact that



this kind of vilification and this kind of chauvinism is in the air.

It could have resulted in a situation where a new government comes in and all it's doing is firefighting on a non-issue, on whether Sonia Gandhi is a foreigner or whether she should be there or not there. Whereas, in fact, there are so many really pressing issues that need to be looked at. So, I think that there was a real dilemma there, and perhaps strategically it has taken the wind out of the BJP's sails and has exposed them for being absolutely uncaring for a massive mandate. If you look at all of the secular and left parties together, it's 320 seats, which is a huge majority.

*Democracy Now (www.democracynow.org) can be heard in New York Monday to Friday from 9-10 a.m. on WBAI-99.5 FM.*

# CRISIS IN SUDAN

## ARAB MILITIAMEN DRIVE 1 MILLION BLACK FARMERS OFF LAND

BY DONALD PANETH

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. – Horse-riding Arab militiamen have displaced more than 1 million black African farmers from their homes and land in the Darfur district of Sudan.

Some 110,000 refugees have fled across the western border of Darfur into Chad.

"What we witnessed throughout Darfur and in neighboring Chad is one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world today," James Morris, executive director of the United Nations World Food Program, said. "It is a crisis of massive displacement, critical needs, and extreme levels of violence and fear."

Dozens of villages in Darfur have been pillaged and burnt.

Mornei is in West Darfur. It used to be a town of 3,000 inhabitants. Today, it has a population of 60,000 internally displaced persons who began fleeing from surrounding villages to Mornei in October 2003.

A single non-governmental organization (NGO) – Doctors Without Borders – is trying to provide health care and nutritional support to displaced persons in Mornei. Malnutrition rates are high. There is also a serious shortage of water, with the average person receiving 6-8 liters a day, less than half of the required 20 liter minimum.

Access for aid workers is inadequate, said Stephanie Bunker of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. They can't move because of insecurity and landmines, and because the government is refusing travel permits.

The Arab militiamen are herdsmen who compete with black farmers for water, forage, and the land itself.

The militiamen are backed by the Sudanese government, which is reported to be supplementing them with troops, helicopter gunships and other aircraft.

Both U.N. agencies and NGOs have to "increase the size and tempo of their relief operations as quickly as possible," Morris told the U.N.



Security Council on May 7.

The U.N. is appealing for a total of \$141 million in assistance for Darfur and \$30 million for Chad.

Another major concern is the onset of the rainy season in June, which will make many areas very difficult or impossible to reach by road, Morris said.

Sudan has been embroiled in a civil war for four decades. The cause was largely religious – the Muslim north against the animist and Christian south. In Darfur, however, it is Muslim against Muslim.

Peace talks began in 2002 between the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, and reached agreements to cease hostilities. The talks are continuing.

Sudan is Africa's largest country. It consists mostly of a vast plain that forms part of the Nile Basin and slopes northward to Egypt from the highlands of eastern and central Africa. Its estimated population is 29 million.

There are two economies – the money sector, based primarily on the production and export of cotton, and the subsistence sector, in which 70 percent of the Sudanese live.

Sudan has reserves of petroleum, chromite, gold, marble, mica and gypsum, but mining contributes little to the economy.

## VIOLENCE HITS 5 OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Five other African countries, in addition to the Sudan, continue to boil over.

**Burundi:** The United Nations Security Council authorized on May 21 the deployment of 5,650 peacekeeping troops to monitor the illegal flow of arms across its borders; to supervise recent cease-fire agreements; and to protect civilians "under imminent threat of physical violence."

**Uganda:** Forty-one persons were killed and roughly 7,000 displaced in a May 20 attack on the Kakedi refugee camp, 12 kilometres from Gulu. The majority of victims were women and children, who had been clubbed to death.

**Somalia:** Fighting continues in the capital of Mogadishu, where clashes between rival clans began on May 9, killing at least 60. Thousands more have been displaced.

**Democratic Republic of the Congo:** The Security Council on May 14 condemned incursions by the Rwandan army into the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as rebel attacks launched from Congolese territory itself.

**Ivory Coast:** In a disturbing turn of events, President Laurent Gbagbo suspended support of opposition ministers, and the opposition Forces Nouvelles said they would move their staff from the capital of Abidjan to their stronghold in Bouake. — DP



# REVIEWS

CULTURE, POLITICS & CRITICISM

## TUNING IN TO DEMOCRACY

### THE AGRONOMIST

90 min (2003)

Directed by Jonathan Demme

By ELLA TURENNE

I have no weapon other than my journalist's profession, my microphone, and my unshakable faith as a militant for change," said famed Haitian radio personality and human rights advocate Jean Dominique, who was assassinated four years ago.

That faith in change would cost Dominique his life, but not his legacy, asserts *The Agronomist*, a documentary about the scientist-turned-journalist, which opened to packed houses in New York last month.

In a series of intimate interviews with Dominique before his death and with the activist's wife, Michelle Montas, director Jonathan Demme paints a picture of a man driven by his need to give the Haitian people a voice – and the opportunity to decide their own affairs.

Born in 1931 to a well-to-do family in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, Dominique grew up with a father who instilled in him extreme pride and nationalism. He studied agronomy in France and practiced his trade for six years after returning to his homeland.

As time went on, Dominique began to question some practices of the governing Duvalier regime as he worked to improve the condition of the land. As a result, he was jailed for six months.

After his stretch in prison, Dominique went looking for other opportunities. In 1968, while working in radio, the chance came for him to purchase the country's oldest station, Radio Haiti Inter, and he seized it.

Dominique had a vision. He planned to change Haitian radio, which at that time, still under the Duvalier regime, was used solely for entertainment. Dominique wanted to introduce Creole to the French-speaking medium and, most importantly, to provide information about his native land. This he described as "risky business."

Risky it was. Over the course of Dominique's time at Radio Haiti Inter, the station was shot at on numerous occasions, lives were threatened, staff arrested, and Dominique and his wife forced into exile on two occasions. What was extraordinary about the personality, the man, the human being behind the fight, was the unshakable, almost fearless, nature of his belief in the Haitian people.

Dominique told his listeners about struggles for human rights in other countries, knowing that Haitians would make the connection between their own plights and those



of others around the world. And when Haitians did take up their own struggle, Dominique was there, broadcasting it all live and direct.

He survived the regime of Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier (1956-71) and that of the ruler's son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier (1971-86). After the latter was overthrown, Dominique returned to Haiti from his exile in New York and rebuilt Radio Haiti Inter. Those were optimistic times, when it seemed the rise of Jean-Bertrand Aristide would finally return some semblance of democracy to Haiti.

But those times did not last. Dominique began to smell danger in the air before he was killed in April 2000. His murderers have yet to be brought to justice.

What would drive a man like Jonathan Demme to make such a film? As director of big-budget Hollywood movies like *Silence of the Lambs* and *Philadelphia*, he could easily spend his time on mainstream topics. But Demme says his relationship with Haiti is personal.

"I'm a filmmaker who loves Haiti," says the director. "The press has been so negative. I need to be making films that show the positive side."

Demme met Dominique in 1987 while working on *Haiti: Dreams of Democracy*, a 1988 documentary on celebrations as the country marked a year of freedom from the Duvaliers. He became interested in telling the story of the man who had started his career as an agronomist and became a human rights activist via radio.

Demme told the audience at the premiere he hopes the new film will educate people not only about Dominique, but about Haiti and Haitians' struggle as well.

Audience members at the premiere asked what they could do to improve the situation in Haiti, where a U.S.-led multinational force has patrolled since Aristide was ousted Feb. 29. Demme said they could express outrage to their elected officials about Washington's manipulation of the Caribbean nation.

Jocelyn McCalla, executive

director of the National Coalition for Haitian Rights was also at the event, a benefit for the coalition and Radio Haiti Inter.

"It is time for Haiti to live in democracy not dream about it," he said. "I hope that people will continue to tune into this issue."

## JACKHAMMERS AND SPECULATORS

### BOOM: THE SOUND OF EVICTION

96 minutes (2002)

Directed by Francine Cavanaugh, A. Mark Liiv and Adams Wood

By ALLIE MORRIS

The pattern of gentrification is often more familiar than the word itself: cheap real estate (inhabited or otherwise) is bought, scrubbed and sold at a much higher rate. In the glossy language of politicians, the process is cheerfully described as "revitalization." To the police, it is "neighborhood clean-up." To the suddenly displaced working class families, small businesses and non-profit organizations in areas being cleansed, it is destruction. Communities are pulled apart, homelessness surges and the gap between rich and poor grows ever wider.

Such is the message of the documentary *BOOM: The Sound of Eviction*. The movie chronicles the effects of the dot-com boom on people living and working in San Francisco's Mission District. It is at once a somber and inspiring picture of area residents organizing to shield themselves from the shrapnel of the economic explosion.

As investors poured their money into San Francisco's high-tech economy, a wave of gentrification and displacement swept over the city, pushing out long-time residents and cherished institutions. Expensive condos, glitzy new restaurants and new "homes for businesses" were erected to welcome the overnight millionaires following the Internet

gold rush. Meanwhile, Mission residents, 80 percent of whom rent, suffered from evictions in the thousands and rents that doubled and sometimes tripled, all without a proportionate increase in wages.

Filmmakers Francine Cavanaugh, A. Mark Liiv and Adams Wood manage to capture the vibrancy and vitality of a neighborhood that, while being ripped apart at the seams by jackhammers and speculators, still holds together enough to put on incredibly consistent, cohesive and creative protests. As one Mission dweller notes, "this is not the Struggle, the Cause, this is nuestra causa! – Our cause!" Their cause and struggle is nothing less than one against invasion and occupation. The wealthy invaders, who are incidentally a small minority of the population, have every "legitimate" resource at the ready: full support from former Mayor Willie Brown, a seemingly infinite supply of money, and co-operation from the police to "clean up" the newly expanding homeless population.

Folks quickly determined that mercy was unlikely to come from the very city government that sponsored and promoted the development projects. Interspersed throughout the film, Mayor Brown acts as a court jester cum PR officer for the kings of commerce in his abstract ramblings on

city life and economy.

Adams Wood explained, "It was obvious to everybody it was corrupt. [Mission activists] were bringing 500 people to these planning meetings and everyone was speaking against the development and it got passed anyway."

Refusing to be stymied by the moneyed forces, residents moved to further action, including street theater, massive protests, confronting landlords directly and ultimately winning several key battles. Still, thousands were displaced in the "neighborhood improvement" effort.

Wood asks, "Is it an improvement to see upscale chain stores and luxury condos put in your neighborhood? Can we improve it so if there's a park that's getting all smashed up, we improve the park and also bring the people who are screwing it up along with that? We need to see the people as part of the neighborhood."

One of the most striking elements of *BOOM* is just how unexceptional the story is. Though most cities and towns do not see the influx of money and subsequent economic bust to the dot-com extreme, the patterns illustrated are reflected nationwide. *BOOM* could be set almost anywhere.

This review was excerpted from *The Asheville Global Report* ([www.agnews.org](http://www.agnews.org)).

