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Ted Rall

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November 2004

GUILTY, DISGUSTED, AMERICAN

NEW YORK--How interesting, Democrats watching the election results at a high-rise hotel in midtown Manhattan commented, that the rest of America thinks it understands terrorism better than we do. New York bore the brunt of 9/11 yet CNN's exit poll found that New Yorkers considered Iraq a bigger issue than terrorism when casting their votes for president. Midwesterners and southerners felt the opposite, motivated by fear of the unknown--literally, as they are neither likely targets of terrorism, nor did they feel or smell the horrors of that terrible day. Ranking terrorism their number one concern, they nevertheless supported an incumbent for whom the war on terrorism is nothing more than a marketing slogan.

Such astonishing gall! Only women are affected by the abortion debate; only women ought to be allowed to vote on it. The same goes for war--only the young who fight and die in war enjoy the moral right to declare it. Terrorism? Please, if you live in Mississippi or Colorado or Alaska, don't presume to talk about, much less cast your vote based upon, your "views" of Islamist terrorism. New Yorkers don't lecture you about hunting. Butt out of our business. Or at least have the grace to follow the lead of New York City voters if, contrary to history or logic, terrorism is your number one concern.

"Some New Yorkers, reported the *New York Times*, said they didn't even know any people who had voted for President Bush. (In both Manhattan and the Bronx, Mr. Bush received 16.7 percent of the vote.)"

A few minutes before midnight, a young woman took the microphone where Hillary Clinton, who hilariously believes she has a date with presidential destiny, had tried to pump up the crowd. "Of course they send me up here to deliver bad news," she began. Ohio was still in play, but the Democratic Party had rented the ballroom and its big projection televisions for only a few hours. Disenfranchised and disinvited, Kerry Victory Party attendees aimlessly scattered along East 42nd Street in search of alcohol and cable news coverage. Kicked out into the cold. It was a grand night for metaphor.

The morning after, life went on.

It was disgusting.

Guided by a list of chores, I made my way through the subway station at Times Square and came across a man with silver skin, standing perfectly still, who entertained a crowd by doing nothing. People stared at him, fascinated, smiling. A few clapped. How dare they stand there and grin? Days after the British medical journal *The Lancet* had published a study showing that American taxpayers had financed the bombs that murdered more than 100,000 innocent Iraqis in just one year, the morning after a majority of their fellow citizens re-hired the butchers who ordered the genocide, how dare they enjoy their lives? More approving smiles, more applause. The guy still hadn't made a move. Oddly, that was the point. Someday the silver guy will become president.

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I found a quiet spot and fired up my laptop. Many people have wireless connections in Manhattan. Not all of them are password-protected. I skimmed e-mail from gloating scum.

"I drive by the Manzanar Internment Camp Memorial when I go to Mammoth in the Sierras," wrote one person. "I hope to see you behind the gates in shackles when drive up to ski in Mammoth this winter."

In any other country, people would take to the streets.

A dictator had put himself up for "reelection" and declared war on gays and pregnant teenagers. An Administration whose principals built concentration camps, lied us into two wars and fleeced the treasury to further enrich themselves and their campaign contributors is getting four more years rather than the forty to life they deserve. Florida 2000 became Ohio 2004, complete with its own Katherine Harris, discarded voter registrations and Jim Crow-style assaults on blacks. Most of all, the whole thing stunk.

"Successive waves of the national exit poll in the afternoon and evening reported that Kerry had a two- or three-percentage-point lead over Bush nationally and in several key states, including Ohio," wrote the *Washington Post*. On ABC, Charles Gibson said: "The exit polls got it flat wrong."

If so, that would be a first. That's what they said back in 2000, when exit pollsters called Florida for Gore. We later learned that Gore had won Florida, by at least several thousand votes. The exit polls were right last time. This year, I trust them more than Ohio's Secretary of State.

The day after a shady election handed to a maniacal buffoon, New Yorkers whose dead remain scandalously unavenged were in the streets. Civil strife, rage, the fight for decency and democracy--they were nowhere to be found.

People looked up at the sky, taking in the sun on a crisp fall day. They streamed in and out of the Disney store. They lived their lives. I lived mine. Half a world away, meanwhile, AC-130 planes and tanks bought by American citizens and dispatched on the orders of criminal goons busily declaring themselves a mandate dropped bombs and shot shells into a city called Fallujah. "Marine Expeditionary Forces will continue to conduct operations and will not cease until Fallujah is free of foreign terrorists and insurgents," read an official military statement. Issam Mohammad, spokesman for the Fallujah hospital, said that a woman was "badly wounded." A young girl lost her leg.

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RALL 11/2/04



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- Tony Auth
- Stuart Carlson
- Barbara Brandon
- Doonesbury
- Non Sequitur
- Joel Pett
- Pat Oliphant
- Ted Rall
- Ben Sargent
- Tom Toles

On the right:

- Bill Deore
- Glenn McCoy
- Pat Oliphant

