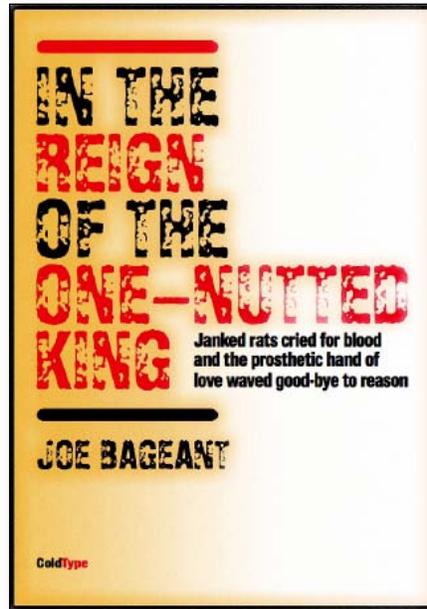

**IN THE
REIGN
OF THE
ONE-NUTTED
KING**

**Janked rats cried for blood
and the prosthetic hand of
love waved good-bye to reason**

JOE BAGEANT



Joe Bageant is the author of the forthcoming book, **Deer Hunting With Jesus: Dispatches from America's Class War** from Random House Crown on working class America, to be released in June, 2007.

A complete archive of his online work, along with the thoughts of many working class Americans on the subject of class may be found at ww.joebageant.com.

Feel free to contact him at joebageant@joebageant.com

© Joe Bageant 2007

ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING FROM AROUND THE WORLD
www.coldtype.net

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

NOT LONG AGO

protesting Danish construction workers won a historic victory against workplace tyranny – they retained their company sponsored on-the-job beer breaks. Heartless employers being what they are, had asked workers to pay half the cost of the beer. Oppression is ever boundless.

About that same time last fall a couple hundred American protesters gathered in a Washington D.C. parking lot. Chronic liberal malcontents, they had the gall to ask why our government was slaughtering hundreds of thousands of abysmally ordinary folks in Iraq, people moreover like themselves who, even under Saddam Hussein, whose reign was so infamously marked by his penchant for black velvet paintings and the most sordid kinds of torture, nevertheless managed to do what most common folks in the world do – send the kids off to school every morning, cursed Baghdad's traffic, and perhaps fudged their taxes. So why are they being wiped out at great public expense, and for no apparent reason?

This being a free republic, the American protesters stood in the parking lot, packed buttock to belly button inside one of our fatherland's designated Free Speech Zones, a bad case of branding if ever there was one, and though they are no longer called that, the function is still the same. Jabbing their signs upward, the protesters tried to wedge their message into the wavering thicket of signage above their heads. Between rather strangely meterless chants, such as "One, two, three, four, end the war!" the evil librul protestors were left to contemplate just what those the Plexiglas faced squadrons of police ninjas might do, should one of the dissidents make a cautious move toward the

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

Porto Johns, which were placed slightly over the yellow painted line that assumedly marked the outer boundary free speech in America. Was it better to ease over into the Porto John, or to hold it until the “designated hour of disassemblage”? However ineffective state supervised dissidence may be here, protesting is hard going in America. No Dane's beer wrecked bladder could survive it.

Pity the poor American left (who would be considered right wing moderates in most of the world but, in America, being against any war makes you a far leftist). Any time American leftists start pointing at the root causes of our national disease, they are neatly handed a fresh bloody war to oppose. Each new generation of the left gets its energies sapped, gets locked into the position of continually opposing one war, then another and another. Ever since World War I they've been standing on the street corners or in the parks – or more recently, inside the Free Speech Zones way the hell out at the edge of town. At any rate, they can never come close to naming the dark and profitable tumor at the heart of America, the economic system under which we all live. To survive and grow, the American system needs war, making war inevitable. To keep up the pretense of freedom it needs harmless dissent.

America has a long record of stifling dissent exactly when dissent is most needed. Democracy American style means we get free speech for trivial matters but not for life-and-death issues. When an election is stolen, the very party from whom it was stolen refuses to protest the theft because well, "Nobody likes sour grapes, do they? Thereby assuring future electoral thefts.

When America supplies Israel with cluster bombs to kill Palestinian children and grandmothers, you don't see rallies against Israel or American arms cartels. You see yet another exercise of free speech on behalf those things the politicians and corporations could care less about, and thus grant us permission to "dissent" upon. Issues such as gender and identity, or just about anything related to sexual freedom: "Go ahead, parade and rant about your own penises and vulvas. Just don't challenge the banks, the war machine or the fraudulent democratic process by which we manage the people. Remember, fucking with these things is called terrorism. So stick to your own narrow "issues" like sexual freedom and nobody will get hurt. Got it punk?"

Good ole sexual freedom, one of the American left's favorite golden oldies. It's not as if sexual freedom has not been a fact of life in this country ever since the puritans lost

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

that fight in the Sixties and Seventies. Sure there is a small but very damned loud contingency of bitter enders making a last stand at imposing restrictions that the public has already rejected. But we did win the sexual revolution, my friends. Look around at the movies, gay and lesbian focused TV shows, pre-marital and extra-marital sex as the main fare in magazines, popular novels and TV shows. Hell, we've even created a couple of new sexes I still haven't figured out, all those "crosses" and "trans" whatever. We may not have become the Amsterdam of the New World (which as near as I can tell, is Rio de Janeiro) but we nevertheless won.

Better yet, people stand up for what they have won too. Bill Clinton is living proof. The fact that Clinton, despite cigars, blowjobs, impeachment, and \$40 million spent by the Republicans to rub his face in a cum stained dress on television for years on end, Clinton remains massively popular.

Every year we find him waving to the world from near the top of the list of the world's most admired men. As a martyr symbol for sexual freedom, all his supposed sins, not to mention his genuine crimes against humanity, were washed away. Much is attributed to his charm, his Oxford encyclopedic mind and fried chicken grin. But he is no more charming than Ronald Reagan was, even if Clinton could spot that senile old saint of the GOP a hundred IQ points and still whip him on Jeopardy. Yet charm and smarts will get you but so far, not to mention into a lot of trouble if you happen to have Clinton's libido. Clinton's charm was only by comparison to the mostly second string power hungry puds who preceded and succeeded him in that bugged Oval Office chair.

The truth is that Clinton, like Reagan, fucked over millions of the poor, sentenced uncounted children to death by embargo, and shipped millions of American jobs wholesale to the slums of Mysore and Mexico City. He was as close to being a Republican as you can be without getting the mandatory GOP lobotomy and a wet kiss from Ted Haggard. Still though, millions of Americans refuse to repudiate him because his right to sexual privacy represented their own, still represents their own, and all the Bible haired gasbags on the Christian Broadcasting Network and all the sexually frustrated Holy Rollers in the country are not going to turn things around. We won that one.

But we have never won against a war until it is too damned late and the Pentagon and the Halliburtons of this country have wrung every blood stained buck from it and moved on toward setting up the next one. Yet the left, perhaps sensing the futility of

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

protesting the latest war from inside their free speech cages – which seem only to be reserved for war dissenters – dissipates its energies further by charging at the sly Republican matador's array of fluttering capes, one of which is labeled sexual privacy. No cage required. You can usually parade that one right down the street, further proof the fatherland is a free land, and that the powers that be could care less about that issue.

Janking the rats

While we are sniping at liberal sacred cows here, I may as well plink briefly at another one – gun control. It's all bullshit. The left plays into the parched red claws of the worst conservative elements when it makes a fool of itself over what it does not understand, when it succumbs to the righteous wailing of the anti-gun intelligentsia in the brownstones of Chelsea. Twice as many people own guns as vote in this country, and half of American households have at least one gun. Get over it. The guns are here to stay. Gun control and sexual privacy are just two of the dozens of political wedges for liberals to drive on behalf of the same elite political and owning class the sends yet another generation off to die in the name of the country.

DIE FOR THEIR COUNTRY? BAGEANT YOU LOATHESOME DOUBLE DEALING GODDAMNED LIZARD! NOT A SINGLE CALLOW CORN FED KANSAS STRIPPLING OR LOS ANGELES MEXICAN SCARFING THEIR MICROWAVED BURRITOS IN IRAQ HAS DIED FOR, OR HAD HIS ARMS BLOWN OFF FOR, HIS COUNTRY. THEY DIED (OR ARE TRYING TO MASTER THE ARTS OF LOVE WITH THAT SEXY NEW PROSTHETIC CLAW) IN SERVICE OF THE SYNDICATE. THEY DIED AT THE ORDERS OF ITS CEO, PRESIDENT SPARKY AND HIS GANG OF ADDLED COLD WAR DROOLERS. AND MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT! THEY WILL SOON GO OFF TO IRAN WHISTLING THE THEME FROM ROCKY AND SLEEP THE SLEEP OF ZOMBIES IN THE 100 DEGREE DESERT NIGHTS BECAUSE, AHA! THE SYNDICATE'S MIND SCRUBBING MACHINERY IS FAULTLESS! FROM THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGANCE IN GRADE SCHOOL, TO THAT LAST SURPRISED LOOK ON THEIR FACES WHEN THE I.E.D. SAYS "HELLO DARLING" IN FARSI, THEY WILL BE DREAMING OF EAGLES, AND FLAGS AND PARIS HILTON'S CROTCH. BIRTH TO DEATH, THE MIND SCURBBER'S PROGRAMMING IS FAULTLESS, I TELL YOU. FAULTLESS!

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

Anyway, the reason liberals are sucker bait for every wedge the Republican think tanks can hand them is because liberals, like every other American, are conditioned to compete against each other – even fellow liberals. In a monetized rat race society (best called The Company) that continually pits its citizens/workers against one another in a toxic winner take all rat race for quality education, health care, employment, crime free neighborhoods, and political attention of any sort, then dubs it mere "competition," as if it were a happy game of badminton, EVERYBODY, rich or poor, feels existentially threatened. Republican capitalists feel threatened that liberal humanism might empower workers, which it would, if anybody bothered to practice it.

The gay man fears the common homophobe, as if that dumb bastard has any more power than he does. So he grabs the bullhorn at the Gay Pride rally and publicly denounces the homophobe – who really couldn't give a shit and won't hear the denunciation anyway – never confronting the real enemy because, like the homophobe, he has been conditioned to combative personal response toward the guy down the street, instead of reason. CBS Sixty Minutes covers his "issue," fifteen minutes a year, thereby validating it in a television managed state. Divisive politics once again beats the snot out of reason.

Reason necessarily sets order and priorities to the world. For instance, reason might dictate that issues such as secret torture sites, military star chambers judging the citizenry, security state data banks on tens of millions of Americans' private lives, or our destinies being bought and sold without our participation (or even knowledge) by corporate campaign contributions just might, mind you, have a higher priority than animal rights or abortion rights, at least for now. The fight for all these must be continual of course, but, noble as these rights are, we have a better chance of achieving them or holding onto them if we are all rowing the societal boat together, away from the waterfall ahead. A gay marriage license hanging in your cubicle in the global labor gulag doesn't mean much.

A forensic search for signs of liberalism in America, true liberal unity in the of the kind that broadly underpins any humane and progressive society, shows it was DOA. Thanks to our birth to death indoctrination regarding "the American spirit of competition," the rats in the race are not inclined to run together or exercise their unified strength toward common purpose, or even consider it. Though the world is by no means a simple

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

either/or proposition governed by the narrowest sort of struggle, we are conditioned to unquestioningly assume so. If we stop to think, or apply reason and then act on it, other rats will eat our lunch. That's what they are trained to do.

Luckily for the rat keepers of global capitalism, they have little to fear when it comes to American moths being attracted to the candle of reason. Reason is boring stuff in a nation – and increasingly, a world – whose cultural glue is television, and whose main diversion is profoundly simplified emotionalism and conflict. In fact, in the American rat race, reason is not only a fatal weakness, but is also generally unavailable to a people who stay janked every waking moment, ready to take on the next rat, then go home and watch more rats do each other in on television, in a steady diet of visible conflict, both overt and implied. Given that the human nervous system is programmed to respond instantly to conflict, there simply is no mental space left for much quiet thought to take root. Not when your nation's cultural values resemble those of Tamerlain or Aleric the Goth – tribal, hierarchical, aggressive and acquisitive.

By contrast, I am sitting in my kitchen in the village of Hopkins, Belize, watching a lone Garifuna carpenter put a zinc roof on a nearby native cabana. Squatting barefooted on the roof joists, he saws and nails and chats all day with passersby on the sandy street below. A couple of times a day one or another of them will voluntarily climb up to lend the carpenter a hand for a half hour or so, then move on. Cooperation is an assumption, not a consideration. In the same loose spirit neighbors often drift from house to house at mealtimes, making easy conversation and gossip, eating a little here, a little there as they go along so as not to burden any particular household's meal.

Next week the family sharing the food may be doing the visiting because their own refrigerator is empty. No stigma attached. In a culture marked by unemployment and food insecurity such sharing of labor or food is a socially beneficial practice. Though no one here thinks about it, such practices represent a very reasonable social support system in a country with almost no social service resources. The elites on the other hand, say the typically relaxed Belizean worker is lazy, and that the country would be more prosperous if people like the Garifuna would sweat harder to join the New World Order rat race, which profits the owning class leaders so handsomely. When the working people call for improvement their demands are deemed unreasonable by the elites (though that doesn't prevent elite in government from promising these things at election time.)

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

Whether in Belize or America, neither the owners of government nor their subset of social and financial managers are going to respond to any well reasoned, socially beneficial cause unless they are forced to do so – with emphasis on the word force. Social progress and a humane environment is antithetical to the success of the owning and governing classes – both being exactly the same thing in a nation whose Constitution is essentially a guarantee of the rights of property.

Things were that way from the beginning, creating dynastic owning class, not just the Rockefellers, Bushes, Kennedys, but thousands of discreet regional and local ones across the country which have been in place for a century or more – longer in places like the South. Regardless of what written law says, they choose which laws will actually be enforced. Or abolished. For them the long term application of reason's kid brother, common sense, spells destruction.

Fuck Iraq, let's bomb Persia

On the other hand it doesn't take much critical thinking to stomp the shit out of weakest guy and grab his lunch money. Or his turf or his oil. If doing so should require some degree of thoughtfulness, then we had best leave reason and thinking to more thoughtful leader rats. And so Condi Rice and George Bush wrinkle their brows and try to look thoughtful, and profile for the cameras or seize them head on with a bright vulpine stare. But not even the Republican leadership has ever believed that logic and reason were driving their game. Down inside the Republican leadership is deeply realistic, even if it is of the tooth and claw reptilian brain sort of realism: Eat, shit, kill, own the top of the rock where the sun is best.

They've had the top of the rock for the two terms usually granted them before the game is up and the public throws them out, not because of any particular public wisdom, but because when theft and high crime become obscenely obvious to even the blindest beer sucking idiot, it is always the Republicans who are in office. And now, even though the game is up, President Sparky and the neocon Nefertiti have no choice but to keep on trying to look wise and leader like, and keep on keeping on in the face of the brewing public backlash, just keep on prevaricating until the neocon junta they rode into town with can get out of Dodge before the indictments come down – at which time Sparky signs the pardons on his way out the door.

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

SCREAMING MAN HERE! GODAMMIT BAGEANT, DON'T MAKE THINGS MORE COMPLICATED THAN THEY ARE! THIS NATION OF FEEBS AND NOSE BORERS CAN'T EVEN SPELL PREVARICATE! THE "PUBLIC BACKLASH" AS YOU CALL IT ... ALL THAT SQUEALING ABOUT THE BLOODY FOLLY IN IRAQ IS JUST SQUEALS FROM INSIDE THE SWINERY. THE UNLETTERED HORDES HAVE FIGURED OUT WE HAVE LOST A WAR. THAT A BUNCH OF GOAT SKINNERS IN FLIP FLOPS IS KICKING OUR ASSES UP AND DOWN THE STREETS OF BAGHDAD LIKE A GODDAMNED SOCCER BALL. AND THEY SEE NOW THAT THEIR BOY, GEORGE ONE-NUTTED KING OF THE HUNS, TURNED OUT TO BE SIMPLE IN THE HEAD. COMPLETELY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE WHO VOTED FOR HIM. A LOSER!

True enough. But no matter. We live in, as Gore Vidal put it, "The United States if Amnesia," and President Sparky will later be canonized into Republican sainthood, alongside Ronald Reagan, and dozens of airports and highways will carry his name, until peak oil renders them dim relics resembling the Mayan ball courts of Tikal. The deal stands unless real catastrophe intervenes, either something natural, like a giant meteor splashing a thousand mile wide hole in the Eastern Seaboard, or an unnatural one inflicted by the money elites themselves, such as a depression so deep that corn mush makes a dramatic comeback among the proles. Or, as the administration would have us believe, maybe an all out nuclear war waged upon us by Kim Il-sung with both of his missiles. In any case, it must be a genuine catastrophe, meaning that it must come between Americans and their shopping malls. Otherwise, so long as voters can manage to hang onto their jobs and be convinced of their safety from people like the Korean Brat Boy, or the hapless dimwitted Shoe Bomber, they will stick with the incumbent rat pack and its leader for at least eight years, even if their leader does stumble over three syllable words and call the Greeks "Grecians." The armature of all politics is fear, whether there be danger or not. Fear, and the mind numbing monotony of the thinnest domestic platitudes.

Well hell. Now that the Bush administration has played all the fear cards available – at least until he can bring a swarm of self-exploding Iranians down upon us – the 2008 Democratic presidential hopefuls are left to hoof the boards peddling the moldiest of

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

platitudes. They don't seem one bit embarrassed. Here you have candidates for leadership of the most powerful – and clearly dangerous – country in the world and they have absolutely nothing of substance to say on real issues domestic or foreign. On domestic issues, they set their jaws for the cameras, and with a steely glint in their eyes hinting of gravitas, deliver meaningless speeches in threadbare language about health care, taxes and Social Security to millions of Europeans and Middle Easterners on CNN and Aljazeera. I say that because absolutely no one in America is listening except the blogosphere and the congenital political junkies television seems to have produced, along with the millions of sports fans and shopping channel addicts. The record shows that neither party has done shit for over forty years about any of those things, and probably never will, especially given that the country is (A) broke (shhhh, the mooks in the voting booths still think we are the richest nation in the world), and (B) so far in the hole we are a net debtor nation to countries such as Mexico; if the Empire manages to survive a bit longer, it may yet grovel before Yemen and Bolivia for a few bucks for a pint of gasoline for the Hummer and a cup of French roast.

Meanwhile, as I write this, John McCain gives out a love call to the Christian Right, promising to take down Roe vs. Wade, and lead America back down the happy road toward coat hanger abortions. Like the one to leading back sexual repression, that road washed out long ago, which doesn't stop McCain and his kind from stoking illiterate white Christian nitwits to a frenzy, thereby sidestepping the issue of whether we are going to devalue the dollar and pay the Mexicans in cash, or simply open the borders and let millions of unemployed gringos go do yard work and send much needed pesos home to their families.

Same goes for foreign policy, another of those creatures the administration has rendered all but extinct, thanks to wardens and stewarts such as John Bolton and the hard-faced Nefertiti in the \$7,000 high heels (though I gotta admit that Condi has the kind of legs that nearly justify them.) Oh, the Republicans have announced whose Persian ass we are going to attempt to kick next, but that is plain old thuggery, not foreign policy. Essentially it's a retread of the WMD ruse, only this time the claim is "Iranian intent," which neatly eliminates the problem of proof. "Hey, they are thinking about it, and thinking leads to doing. So that makes 'em a threat to Americans."

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

As I said earlier, the human nervous system is programmed to respond instantly to danger and violence, so thuggery smells like foreign policy to rats that have been kept on the treadmill of fear by the GOP and in the dark by both parties. And, besides, sending the Empire's legions into Persia will draw attention away from Iraq, just as Iraq draws attention away from the war now being lost in Afghanistan. In the United States of Amnesia, history is only eight and one-half minutes long, about the length of time between television commercials, and far less important than catching the second segment of American Idol. Given that it takes longer than that to even say hello to any foreign policy issue, odds are good we will continue to hear zilch from the presidential candidates on the subject. And besides, there are too many of both party's skeletons doing "La Danse Macabre" in that closet.

Feast of promises

Like those "spider plants," sometimes called air plants, that hang from the trees out my cabana window right now, the ones that sprawl gracefully from little jars of tap water in the apartments of solitary librarians and the elderly, subsisting apparently on nothing but air and some miniscule bit of nutrients to be obtained from water, American liberals seem to exist on bottled water and hope. Legend has it that American liberalism once had deep traceable roots in farm populism, the struggle for dignity of immigrants, fair wages and good working conditions for laborers, and other such noble principles. So noble in fact that even high minded sons of the owning class, people like John Kennedy and Franklin Roosevelt were drawn to them as a way to kill time between games of touch football at Hyannisport, the search for the perfect Cuban cigar and accompanying highball, not to mention the prerequisite sexual dalliances with other birds following the flock of the famous (Judith Campbell Exner once told me JFK always had to be on the bottom due to his bad back, and that he cackled like a frat boy when they screwed on the desk of the oval office, as if thinking, she said, "Oh, if Bobby could see me now!")

At any rate, noble causes and party politics are antithetical these days. Beyond that, you must be the rich, or at least very useful to the rich – like the Bush family was to the oil companies during its rise – to be a player in either party, both of which are faces of

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

the only real party in this country, the party of business. Without a class base made up of real people there can be no genuine political party. Without people from different classes defending their class interests, there can be no politics. Americans have been sold the idea that they are all somehow "middle class," whether they be shoveling chicken shit for Tysons, a seven buck an hour "dietary technician" at the local hospital, or hawking credit card applications out of a telemarketing center in Nebraska, they are all now in the great middle class. Consequently, there are no politics to our political system, just business transactions taking place behind the curtain of a fraudulent democracy.

After forty years of having their natural base absorbed by the amorphous middle class that isn't, and the meat of politics removed from the table, Spider plant liberals are left to find sustenance in the most minuscule nourishment. There are just enough tiny differences in the two parties to sustain ever hopeful liberal voters, who have long accepted thin gruel served by the Democratic political elite as the prelude to a promised feast. Of course the feast never comes because no Democrat is ever going to do more than "address" a problem, rather than solve it. In fact, for one of the Democratic elites to even acknowledge the existence of the most glaring sort of inequity sends good liberals into political insulin shock, so accustomed have their systems become to calorie free ideas and "reality lite." Al Gore makes a film about global warming, but dares not name the corporations that not only refuse to seek remedy, but insist on escalating the problem, and who just happen to fund both parties. Instead he tells the audience that they are personally to blame and must start sacrificing, hanging their clothes on lines and so forth. Movies being reality in this country, liberal America hails it as a turning point in our ravenous energy consumption, drives the six blocks home from the Cineplex wondering where the hell one buys wooden clothespins, having never seen one in their entire suburban lives. Al Gore gets an Academy Award at the annual swarming of very rich swans living in a paradise wherein they never even see their own laundry from the moment it drops from their gilded bodies.

Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton makes familiar noises about reforming health care, but flatly declares that the insurance companies which hold the entire nation to ransom "absolutely must be part of the solution." By that logic, when it comes to stopping the war in Iraq, then Halliburton, Blackwater Security, twenty thousand hired gun merce-

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

naries, and several thousand contractors presently cutting the fattest hog in their history must be involved in ending the war. Even SCREAMING MAN has more veracity and substance.

THE SCREAMING MAN HAS NEVER BEEN ACCUSED OF VERACITY! NOR ABSTENTION FROM ANY SUBSTANCE KNOWN TO CIVILIZED OR UNCIVILIZED MAN, NOR AVERSION TO ANY DEVIANT PRACTICE WHATSOEVER. (THEY DO NOT CALL HIM THE POL POT OF THE BOUDOIR FOR NOTHING!) FURTHERMORE, FOR A HEFTY FEE, SCREAMING MAN'S ENDORSEMENT, AND OR PHYSICAL PERSUASIVE EXPERTISE, IS AVAILABLE TO ANY VILE PERSON-AGE OR POLITICAL PARTY, REGARDLESS OF THEIR CRIMES WHATSOEVER. ARE YOU LISTENING HILLARY CLINTON? YOU'RE GONNA NEED HELP IN TAKING OUT THAT GREAT MOCHA HOPE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY BEFORE NEXT NOVEMBER!

Right now, almost seventy percent of Americans finally, mostly for the wrong reasons, reject a senseless war that kills tens of thousands and bankrupts our children's children. In response, it took four years for Democrats to come haltingly to the conclusion that it just might be a good idea to end it. And even now a large number are saying, "Let's test the water a bit more, maybe wait until the polls show ninety nine percent. Can't be too careful. And besides, Iraq would descend into chaos and bloodshed if we pulled out."

Bloodshed and chaos? What do they think the Pentagon is conducting over there right now, a Red Cross community blood drive? And mention cutting the Pentagon back and spending a little of the dough on public education and even the Dems begin to sound like Foghorn Leghorn in high dudgeon: "Whoa there hoss! We gotta have thousands of nuklur waarheads ready to pop at any time. Somebody in the Middle East besides our strategic partner, po' defenseless little Israel, just might build one of their own."

How this "strategy" of reducing Israel's neighbors to rubble and guts serves you and me is a reasonable enough question, one that can never be asked in the United States, although I can assure you that the media and the public here in Latin America openly ponder it. The question of why we continue to hone the teeth of the Middle East's meanest junkyard dog, but refuse to insist on a chain and muzzle is left to the readers'

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

speculation. Israeli belligerence is the third rail of American foreign policy that fries anyone with the balls to bring it up. Look at what recently happened to poor ole Jimmy Carter. Smoke is still curling up from his pasty old carcass. Will we ever see the day when an American politician says out loud what so many of us (and them) say privately?

Then there's the foreign policy issue of the Third World and AIDS ...

AW RIGHT BAGEANT! JUST SHUT UP AND LET SCREAMING MAN DIRECT YOUR BOOGER HOOKS ACROSS THE KEYBOARD. LOOK, WHEN IT COMES TO AIDS, LET'S CALL IT LIKE IT IS: EVERY WHITE MAN IN AMERICA KNOWS THE WORLD IS TOO DAMNED CROWDED, TOO DAMNED BLACK AND FAR TOO FUCKING BROWN. AND AIDS IS THE ONE THING THAT'S WORKING OUT RIGHT FOR THE WHITE MAN. EVERY COUCH BOUND BEER SUCKING CACKER KNOWS THAT IN THE BACK OF WHAT MIND HE HAS. AND EVERY ARUBA TANNED CPA RUNNING THE FAMILY LEXUS THROUGH BUBBLES' CAR WASH IS SECRETLY THINKING THE SAME THING – WHEN HE THINKS ABOUT IT AT ALL. AND EVERY POLITICIAN SECRETLY KNOWS IT TOO, EVEN MOST OF THE BLACK ONES. SO THEY AIN'T GONNA BUST THE BANK TO SAVE THE HOT-TENTOTS IF THERE ARE NO VOTES IN IT.

THE BEAUTY OF IT IS THIS: THE WHITE GUY'S TEAM, AMERICA, WINS BY DOING ABSOLUTELY NOTHING! THE WHOLE IDEA IS SO GODDAMNED SICK NOBODY IN THE WESTERN WORLD WOULD DARE ACCUSE HIM OF IT BECAUSE, HEY! THEY'VE THOUGHT THE SAME THING. YESSIR, WHITEY HAS DRAWN THE "GET ONE GENOCIDE FOR FREE" CARD IN HISTORY'S GREAT BOARD GAME. WHITEY DOESN'T CATCH MANY BREAKS FROM HISTORY THESE DAYS. WHEN HE DOES, HE'S GOTTA RIDE IT AND TRY NOT TO SMIRK. WHO SAYS WHITE MEN DON'T DO SOLIDARITY?

Well, to be honest, those thoughts have crossed my mind too, though not with such glee. Anybody with the intelligence of a flatworm can see AIDS is taking out a lot more black and brown yellow asses than white ones. It comes down to morals and how you really feel about it. If you happen to be among that five percent of the world called

JOE BAGEANT: IN THE REIGN OF THE ONE-NUTTED KING

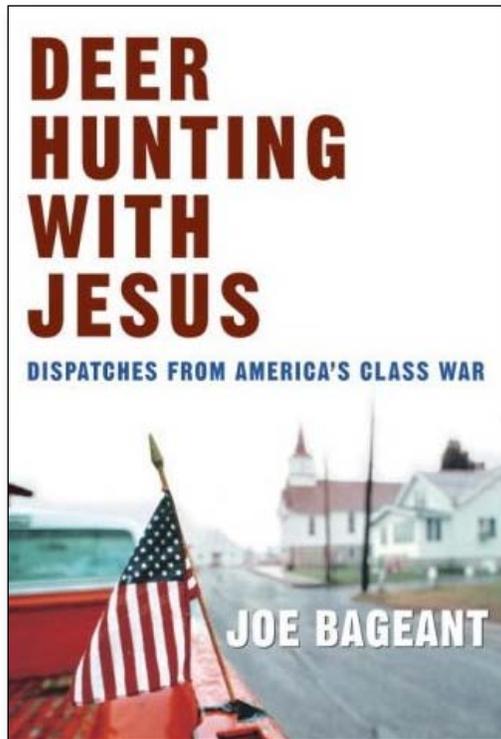
Americans, who are horfing at least a quarter of the world's wealth, and you live in a rigidly managed consumer state that hammers you to buy more of everything, one that depicts the faraway 95 percent as either French queers, terrorists or HIV positive semi-cannibals, well, you are not likely to cultivate your inner Mother Theresa are you?

Though dismal be the heart of man, we spider plants are feeling a bit hardier these days. Supreme manager of the Democratic political smoke and bubble machine that she is, Nancy Pelosi, at least to hear the echoes of the media tell it, is serving up one helluva bunch of appetizers, a cornucopia of proposed legislation. And as of this writing, there is even grappling on the floor of Congress to take away those same imperial powers that Democrats as well as Republicans granted our one nutted cowboy king. But even if he is stripped of his Stetson crown and all the scepters of the empire, meaning that those cattle prods of its "black site" torture chambers around the world are called home and smashed, and even if Guantamo is leveled by the corps of engineers and every prisoner given a fair trial on television for all the world to see, we will only be approximately back to go. Back to where we started. Which was not a good place at all, since the system was already broken and was high balling toward its own destruction financially, ecologically and socially.

And so we sit patiently under the tent out here on the lawn, in the final dimming moments of the Empire. We've had the appetizers and are waiting for the meat course: socialized medicine, a halving of the Pentagon's budget, nationwide public transit, a tripling of corporate taxation, (which would still not put corporations where they were in the fifties when they paid 80 percent of America's bills and still made billions), an energy plan that works toward elimination of the automobile and a the closing of coal fired plants, universal free higher education just like every other civilized first world nation – none of which can even begin to happen without complete campaign finance reform. That's some heavy meat and taters for any cook, including Nancy.

The band plays on, we fiddle with our napkins and wait. Cocktails are poured inside the grandly restored old homes in DC's Georgetown district. The deal, the insiders agree, remains the same: Who buys the most campaign ads will almost certainly play Pied Piper to the most votes

Meanwhile, not a soul under the tent has noticed that the lights in the kitchen have been turned off for a long, long time.



Order Joe Bageant's new book

DEER HUNTING WITH JESUS **Dispatches From America's Class War**

"Many friends and readers will notice that the title has changed to *Deer Hunting With Jesus: Dispatches From America's Class War*. The original title was *Drink, Pray, Fight, Fuck: Dispatches From America's Class War*. Contrary to what one might suspect, the name change had not as much to do with the word "fuck" as it did the fact that a book was recently released with a very similar title. Then too, when I started putting the title "Drink, Pray, Fight, Fuck" on the web, it kicked off some merchandising by small scale entrepreneurs of ball caps, tee-shirts, etc. bearing the four words. Which is no problem with me – I like to see the little guy printing tee-shirts make a buck" – JOE BAGEANT

Pre-order now from www.amazon.com/Deer-Hunting-Jesus-Dispatches-Americas/dp/030733936X/ref=pd_sxp_f_pt/104-7289464-5668749?ie=UTF8

The book will be released in June, 2007

READ MORE BY JOE BAGEANT

Download all of Joe Bageant's satirical essays, plus many more books, booklets, essays, newspapers and magazines – all in pdf format – all free of charge, at www.coldtype.net *(Click on this link to enter web site)*

ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING FROM AROUND THE WORLD