A Brief History of Computerized Election Fraud in America
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Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"
> --Thomas Jefferson

In the 2000 election, George W. Bush stole the presidency by combining various forms of vote fraud, not all of which could be concealed from the American public. The month-long battle in Dade County ended with open slaughter of the democratic process, and the occupation of the country by a regime of what may be accurately described as corporate fascists.

That's the bad news.

The good news is, the 2000 election also marked a turning point in American consciousness. Or, I might venture to say, an awakening.

Before W's coup, most Americans were, for lack of a better metaphor, asleep at the wheel. This metaphor works just fine, because our electoral process is the wheel that guides our nation, the mechanism that allows us to control the engines of power, and to turn our country in a new direction if, for instance, we're nearing the edge of a cliff.

Nothing is more important to an American citizen than the right to cast a ballot.

But modern Americans have been abandoning the voting booth in droves. Over the past fifty years, less than half of all eligible voters went to the polls, sometimes less than 25%. However, far more astounding is that those who voted rarely bothered to wonder if their vote was counted accurately.

A vote cast but not counted is meaningless. The only way to know that your vote is properly

counted is to watch the *entire counting process*, which is why election law requires an open, public vote count, and makes secret ballot counting illegal. However, most voters have eagerly abdicated the responsibility of overseeing their vote count to a handful of extremely dubious "experts" and "officials." Human nature is largely to blame. November election night in most states is cold -- and often wet. Those who manage to make their way to the polls after work want only to go home, turn on the TV, and let their local newscaster tell them who won. And yet, our natural instinct to curl up on the couch cannot be wholly to blame. Recent history has shown that the most avid political junkies -- even candidates themselves -- have demonstrated a profound disinterest in how the gears and levers work behind the scene on election night, or who is controlling them.

It should not surprise us that vote fraud has flourished in this vacuum of electoral vigilance. Criminals of every stripe have slithered through the unwatched gates and into positions of power in America. It has not taken them long to corrupt the entire electoral process itself, securing for themselves the gates of power. As I write this article, America is on the verge of losing the last shreds of its democracy, with the rise of ballot-less computerized voting machines.

One Machine to Rule Them All

Thanks in part to the recent Bush approved Help America Vote Act (HAVA), squadrons of shiny new Touch Screen Trojan horses are being rolled into precincts across America. Not, as we are told, to make voting easier or more accurate, or to help disabled people vote privately, or to save America from the dangers of hanging chad and butterfly ballots -- no. The real reason America is being flooded with billions of dollars worth of paperless computerized voting machines is so that no one will *ever again* be able to prove vote fraud.

These machines are not just unverifiable, they are secretly programmed (their software is not open to scrutiny by election officials or computer experts), equipped with modems, accessible by computer, telephone, and satellite. They are the final product of decades of work by the election rigging industry. When they are installed in every precinct in America, our elections will finally become completely meaningless, nothing more than charades behind which criminal thugs will wield the power of this nation.

That is the plan for America. But there's a glitch.

The blatant and multi-faceted fraud of the 2000 election -- in which the ultimate poster boy for corporate corruption stole the highest seat in the nation -- woke the American people from their dangerous slumber. The issue of election fraud is now smoldering in the minds of millions. Of course the Touch Screens were immediately offered as the solution to all our voting problems, but thanks to the wonderful work of many new computerized vote fraud researchers, most notably Bev Harris (author of *Black Box Voting*), Americans are quickly recognizing that the "solution" is worse than the problem.

Despite the best propaganda efforts of corrupt voting machine corporations like Diebold and ES&S, even those with the worst butterfly ballot jitters are coming to understand that destroying the ballot altogether, erasing any verifiable record of the vote count and making a

recount impossible, is *not* the answer to our problems. And, as the Touch Screen systems continue to openly malfunction, increasing numbers of voters will begin doubting their safety and accuracy.

It's becoming clear to Americans that, just like the aftermath of the Enron scandal, no real government reform is forthcoming in the area of election security. The news is out that the same company that was used in Florida to purge voter rolls of millions of African American votes is now being hired by other states across the country *for the same job*. As you will soon see, many of our Boards of Elections and Secretary's of State will continue to blindly defend their collusion with shadowy corporations, and spending billions of tax-payer dollars on unreliable machines that patently subvert the democratic process. Why? Because they have sold out. They have been bought by corporate interests. It happened a long time ago.

As political events at home and around the world continue to unfold in one devastating disaster after another, our cry for honest elections will only grow louder. The movement toward real election reform, and what will, in the end, amount to a revolution by the American people, is only just beginning.

We the People are responsible for taking back the control of our democratic process. No one else will do it for us. We cannot afford to be naïve, or uneducated, at this time in history. In order to fully understand the extent of the corruption we are dealing with, and to avoid making dangerous mistakes based on ignorance, we must understand the history, and the power structure, behind vote fraud in America.

Votescam: The Stealing of America
> **"One of the most mysterious, low-profile, covert, shadowy, questionable mechanisms of American democracy is the American vote count."**
>
> *--Votescam*

I grew up with two men who spent twenty-five years investigating vote fraud in America: James and Kenneth Collier, my father and uncle.

Their book, *Votescam: The Stealing of America* was published in 1992 and immediately banned by the major book chains, which listed the book as "out of print" and actively worked to prevent its sale. Votescam chronicles the Collier brother's groundbreaking investigation into America's multi-billion dollar election rigging industry, and the corporate government and media officials who control it.

Before the 2000 election, *Votescam* was widely read (thanks to independent bookstores and the Internet) by the minority of Americans still engaged in the political process, mostly members of independent and third parties trying to break the chokehold of the two party system. The corporate media will not give their causes or their candidates adequate press coverage -- if any. This censorship alone effectively controls the first stages of our political races. If a candidate can't get T.V. coverage, he or she has little chance of even making it out the gate. These citizens were not surprised to learn that the media has been complicit in rigging the final stages of our elections -- our vote counting and the reporting of results -- for decades.

Down the Rabbit Hole

The Votescam investigation began in 1970, in -- surprise!-- Dade County, Florida, where Ken ran for Congress (with Jim as his campaign manager) against Claude Pepper, the "Father of Social Security."

The Colliers were researching a book they were writing for Dell Publishing titled: "Running Through the System: Ballots Not Bullets", an idea born from their involvement in the social upheaval of the sixties.

Jim and Ken proposed that if our Declaration of Independence, Constitution and Bill of Rights were indeed the rule of the land, real change could be made in America by working within the system -- more effectively, and much more safely, than waging bloody revolution in the streets.

Putting their ideals, love of country, and political savvy to the test, the Colliers began their grassroots Congressional campaign -- and discovered exactly *why* the bullet, not the ballot, was being used to change the power structure in America.

Ken was rigged out of the election through a vote scam, which the Colliers later discovered was used throughout the country for decades. It went like this: The local newscaster would announce during the broadcast of election returns that election "computer has broken down." Instead of giving official returns from the County courthouse, the networks would be running vote "projections" for the rest of the night.

Jim and Ken, who had garnered 30 percent of the vote and were excited about running again, noticed that when the vote totals came back on the screen after the announcement, they had mysteriously lost 15 percentage points. They didn't get another vote for the rest of the night.

This piqued their interest.

When they examined the "official" election results from the Secretary of State's office for the September primary, October run-off and November final election in Dade County, the record listed a total of 141,000 votes cast for the Governors race -- in each election. *The exact same number of total votes were cast for three elections with a different number of candidates running each time.* The same identical figures were listed for the Senate race -- 122,000 votes cast in the primary, run-off and final election.

This, of course, is a statistical impossibility.

When they compared the "official" vote results with a print-out of the vote "projections" broadcast by the TV networks on the final election night, they found that Channel 4 had "projected" with near perfect accuracy the results of 40 races with 250 candidates only 4 minutes after the polls closed. Channel 7 came even closer; at 9:31 pm, they "projected" the final vote total for a race at 96,499 votes. When the Colliers checked the "official" number . . . it was also 96,499.

"In hockey, they call that a hat trick," the Colliers write. "In politics, we call it a fix."

The networks then made the astonishing claim that the results from a *single voting machine* somewhere in Dade County were run through a computer program in order to get these vote projections.

Elton Davis was the computer programmer responsible for the magic formula that could convert one machine's vote results into near perfect projected vote totals for 40 races and 250 candidates. When Jim and Ken confronted Davis in his office at the University of Miami, he responded: "You'll never prove it, now get out."

Finally the networks claimed that members of the League of Women Voters were out in the field on election night, calling in vote totals to Channels 4 and 7.

When the Colliers confronted the head of the League, Joyce Deiffenderfer, she admitted that there were no LWV members out in the field that night. She broke down crying, saying "I don't want to get caught up in this thing."

But there's more.

According to the print-out of the TV network's election night "projections," the networks were not receiving any actual voting results at any time during their broadcast, but had been using their own projections from the moment the polls closed. When they claimed that the courthouse computer had broken down, and they would no longer be reporting actual vote totals, they were lying. They had never been reporting actual vote totals.

However, the final shoe dropped months later when an official press release appeared from Dade data processing chief, Leonard White, which stated emphatically: *The county computer at the courthouse was never down, and it was never slow*.

This was the beginning.

The Collier brothers had slammed their boat into the tip of a giant iceberg. As they continued to investigate, they were horrified to discover vote fraud collusion among key individuals in every branch and on every level of the American political system. Those who were not benefiting from the fraud were too afraid to fight it. Their search for justice led to dead-ends. Their lives were threatened, they were vilified as conspiracy theorists by the mainstream press, Dell publishing cancelled their book contract . . . and yet they persevered.

The next quarter century was spent compiling a wealth of FBI documented evidence proving that elections in the United States have come under the tight control of a handful of powerful and corrupt people: Secretaries of State, Election Supervisors, Judges, owners and editors of the major media outlets, voting equipment corporations, and assorted key members of the elections establishment, including the League of Woman Voters. These groups have assured the dominance of the two party system, unfettered corporate control over government, and media censorship of issues most important to the American people, including the cover-up of vote fraud evidence.

"Now we understand why things have gone so terribly wrong in this country. It's due to the corrupted vote. It is the stolen vote that perpetuates corrupt city, state and federal governments. When those corrupt power brokers in your town weed out that up-and-coming politician, they are looking for a person who is willing to 'play ball.' Politics is 'playing ball.' Suddenly you find property decisions going against nature; land and water needed for the perpetuation of life on our earth suddenly disappear. A handful of developers get richer while the land, and the quality of life, get poorer."

--Votescam

Jim and Ken both died young during the 90's, as heroes to many thousands who read their book and heard them speak on the radio and at political meetings across the country. They helped to guide individuals and groups working for clean elections in their communities -- some of them fighting against the first wave of computerized voting machines.

The Collier's last hope was that *Votescam* would be used as evidence in a serious Congressional investigation into election fraud, if we should ever see the day. Many people still in power have yet to be held accountable for their role in aiding and abetting vote fraud. I'll give you two important examples.

When the famous Miami lawyer Ellis Rubin agreed to be Ombudsman for the original Votescam evidence, he brought it to the Florida assistant State Attorney at the time, Janet Reno. The evidence included the shaved wheels of lever voting machines, forged canvass sheets (the sheets that poll workers sign to verify the final vote count), and pre-printed vote tally sheets that were used in conjunction with a lever machine vote rigging device called the Printomatic.

Reno refused to prosecute, claiming falsely that the statue of limitations had run out on the crime. Years later, Rubin would tell my father that behind closed doors Reno had stated that she *could not* prosecute. Why? Because she would bring down many of the most powerful people in the state.

Would the 2000 election fiasco in Florida have been avoided if Reno had agreed to do her job thirty years earlier and root out the vote fraud thieves?

Another notable Votescam criminal can now be found sitting on the bench of the highest court in the nation. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, while still a Federal Appeals Judge, single handedly destroyed what would have been an historic lawsuit filed against Justice Department lawyer Craig Donsanto, who had refused to prosecute the extensive vote fraud evidence brought to him by the Colliers. The evidence included videotape of the League of Women voters tampering with ballots in a closed door vote "counting" session. The women were illegally punching holes in already cast ballots. When confronted by Jim and Ken, just minutes before the two were bodily thrown from the building (which they had snuck into), the women claimed they were only trying to remove . . . the hanging chad.

Votescam states, "Because the League of Women Voters has about it a perfume of volunteerism and do-goodism, the fact that it is actually a political club with a political agenda and a hungry treasury is shrouded by the false myth that it is a reliable Election Day watchdog."

It's no surprise to me that the League of Women Voters has recently come out strongly in

favor of the diabolical ballot-less Touch Screen machines.

And even less shocking was the role Antonin Scalia played so willingly in the selection of George W. Bush to office.

The Rise of Resistance/ Knowledge is Power

> **"Ignorance is preferable to error; and he is less remote from the truth who believes nothing, than he who believes what is wrong."**
>
> --Thomas Jefferson

Thanks to the 2000 fiasco, election reform is now growing as a public battle cry . . . but who is leading the army?

This is a question that every American has the responsibility to ask.

Various individuals and groups are seeking to guide the reform process, including politicians, government officials, voting machine companies, computer experts, activists, and members of the elections establishment. It is very safe to assume they do not all mean well. Many have agendas of their own, some obvious, others hidden.

Many are corrupt, others are ignorant.

And some, who have the very best interests of America at heart, are in the difficult position of having to make serious and potentially damaging compromises in their quest for safe elections, in order to push the issue in Washington.

Before I explore this issue in more depth, I'd like to offer a brief list of important lessons learned from twenty-five years of fighting vote fraud in the trenches.

1. If there is any conceivable way to tamper with or rig an election -- someone will attempt it. This includes average citizens as well as officials charged with protecting the process.

2. Every voting system is open to tampering, but paper ballots counted in public are the easiest system to protect and monitor. (It's estimated that only 2% of Americans still vote on a hand-counted paper ballot).

3. Secret vote counting is illegal. Remember: counting them faster is not a justification for counting them secretly.

4. When machines began to take over our vote counting systems, election rigging became an exciting new national industry.

5. Lever machines were the first to appear, and they were riggable in a number of ways. One could rig the lever machine itself, or, much more easily, the electronic scanning machines that counted the ballots. (See the Votescam video for footage of ballot rigging under the supervision of both parties and the Dade County Election

Supervisor).

6. Computerized voting machines are the easiest to rig. Their software is not open to public scrutiny, or the scrutiny of Election Supervisors (rendering their title meaningless). There are nearly infinite ways to program the machines to count votes fraudulently. Since they are accessible by modem, they can be controlled from a remote, centralized location.

7. Voting machine companies operate with no federal oversight, certification process, standards or restrictions. Controlling members of some of the most powerful voting machine corporations are convicted criminals, some are politicians with obvious conflicts of interests, others are not even American citizens. Just two companies -- Election Systems and Software (ES&S) and Diebold Voting Systems -- now control about 80% of the vote count in the U.S.

8. Vote fraud on a statewide and national scale is not possible without the complicity of (among others) corrupt Election Supervisors, Secretaries of State, Judges, voting machine corporations, and top officials of the major media outlets.

9. Both the Democratic and Republican parties have been complicit in vote rigging for decades, to their mutual benefit. Vote rigging is NOT a partisan issue (though recent evidence suggests Republicans might be gaining the upper hand in the race to control our elections).

10. The corporate major media networks play a vital role in perpetrating and covering up vote fraud. Media methods of vote rigging are explored in the *Votescam* book , including the role of Voter News Service (VNS). (VNS was a consortium of all the major media outlets. It recently closed up shop and scurried off into the shadows, but for decades, under two different corporate names, it controlled the compilation and dissemination of national vote totals, with the power to alter the reported results. The networks have actually not competed for vote totals, as they claim to have done, since 1965. They got all their numbers from VNS, which operated behind an iron curtain of secrecy. Any questions regarding their operation were met with the ubiquitous response: "This is not a proper area of inquiry." Most people erroneously thought they were simply a polling organization, though no evidence of their supposedly massive polling operation could be found by investigators). See my interview with Bill Headline, former head of VNS, at http://www.votescam.com/articles.php

11. Election Day media polls are untrustworthy at best, and very likely fabricated to influence voter decisions and to support phony vote results.

Now that I've provided the minimal context for understanding the current threats we face, we can begin to talk about strategies to win back the control of our government.

Not all strategies currently on the table are acceptable. Do not take anyone's word on the reform that is needed. Do not cede your power to government officials and so-called experts any longer. Educate yourself. It's up to us, the American people, to decide what strategies to support, and our goal must not fall short of what will truly restore democracy to this sinking

nation.

The Nuts and Bolts of Computerized Voting

The gravest error of judgment these days comes from those vote reformers who honestly believe that the answer to the butterfly ballot and hanging chad problems in the 2000 election is to embrace the ballot-less computerized voting machine.

Let's make this clear. These machines are *nothing* but Trojan horses built by and for election thieves. With the ballot-less computer, there is no way to recount, no way to prove any discrepancy, inaccuracy or fraud. Just the fact that companies like ES&S, Diebold, and Sequoia would even *make* a ballot-less machine should be cause for a Congressional investigation. (There are also many other reasons to investigate them. For a detailed examination of these sinister corporations, check out www.blackboxvoting.org.)

That said, the next error of judgment comes from those who believe that all we need to make computerized voting machines safe is a paper receipt.

Many intelligent, well-intentioned and hard working vote reformers are supporting HR 2239, proposed by Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ), requiring all computerized voting machines to produce a receipt for each individual voter. While I support the effort that has gone into creating this bill, and I recognize the monumental struggle it will face in Congress, I am unable to support it at this time, for many reasons. The first of which is that, while calling much needed attention to the dangers of ballot-less machines, this legislation does not require actually hand-counting the receipts altogether in each election.

Why is this a serious problem?

First of all, individual receipts are meaningless. They're worth nothing if not counted altogether. A person's vote might be verified by the slip of paper, but that person has no idea whether the computer accurately tallied her vote along with all the other votes. The final count still takes place inside the infamous computerized "black box," beyond the reach of public scrutiny. An individual receipt in *no way* guarantees the safety of the final vote count. It is at best a meaningless gesture that I am deeply afraid will provide an extremely false sense of security for voters.

As for recounting disputed elections, the obvious question is, which ones? *Every election is in dispute when counted by a secretly programmed, modem-equipped computer!*

Most of the supporters of this bill agree that the receipts should be counted across the board in each election, which would be the equivalent of a good old-fashioned paper ballot count. But so far there is little incentive to demand that the provision be added because it won't get any support in Congress. What does this mean? Are we interested in actually making our elections safe, accurate and verifiable, or are we willing to play political ball to the point where we lose sight of our goal completely?

I am told that perhaps, over time, the legislation will be strengthened. But history has

repeatedly shown that as a bill makes its way through Washington channels, its effectiveness is more often than not watered down. Whatever teeth it might have to begin with get filed into nubs that have no strength to tear into corruption.

HR 2239 proposes surprise "random" recounts, where a small percentage of jurisdictions are chosen for verification in each election. Unfortunately, this is completely inadequate. Individual machines can be manipulated, and election thieves can buy off the people in charge of the random recount. Anyone who thinks that is far fetched or impossible is very new to this issue.

And what if discrepancies are found? Then everyone will call foul -- rightly so -- a glut of confused and disputed recounts will ensue, and the entire elections machine will become hopelessly tangled in its own mechanized parts. Meanwhile every election criminal in the country will descend like vultures on the chaos.

Folks, let's look at this honestly. We are already deep into a horrible and expensive mess that could all be avoided by skipping the computerized middleman and *simply counting paper ballots.*

Paper Ballots - A Radical Idea

The last, and to my mind, most grave error of judgment comes from those who think that returning to a hand-counted paper ballot system is somehow impossible, that we can't go back to a simple process that works once we've stupidly and recklessly abandoned it.

I don't know about you, but that strikes me as an extremely dangerous perspective.

An MIT/Cal Tech study done in 2001 shows that manually counted paper ballots are the most accurate system out of the 5 systems used in the last 4 presidential elections. They are totally verifiable, and first-world nations across the globe still use them, including Canada which counted their last presidential election in four hours. And yet I am told repeatedly by vote reformers that there is no hope of America ever returning to paper ballots because too much money has been spent on the machines, and because the public is being sold on their benefits. My argument is that the public must be immediately educated on their *dangers* -- that should be the top priority of every serious vote reformer in the country.

My argument is that we should *stop playing ball* with these corrupt voting machine corporations and the sold-out government officials who support them.

My argument is that we should remember we're Americans -- we don't ask for *permission* to secure our own freedom. We should take these Trojan horses and burn them in the public square before our whole damn country crumbles before our eyes!

But all this debate is misleading.

The bottom line is that a computerized vote count is a secret vote count -- and that's illegal. Technology cannot supercede the constitutional and mandatory provisions of election law,

which require open and verifiable elections. There is no way to do a public vote count with computers.

Listen, here's my idea. After the public Touch-Screen bonfire (we really need more community minded events, don't you think?), we should march to our Secretary of State's office and demand the restoration of a hand-counted paper ballot system.

Picture it. Millions of citizens marching on the gates of power, demanding their keys back. It would be a quick, effective, non-violent, American Revolution. And I think it's long overdue.

The fact is, with a well-designed ballot and see-through boxes (to prevent stuffing) the paper system can be simple, user-friendly, and fosters community-based democratic participation. High school kids, even children, used to count the ballots in America. We must have a strong, diverse presence of citizen watchdog groups to oversee the count, along with *poll workers*. The only election officials who are truly independent, who represent the interests of all parties in an election, are the poll watchers. The count must be done by hand, in public, video-taped, aired live on television, and the results *posted on the precinct wall* -- just like they used to be. Ballots should be counted on the same day as the voting takes place, making it much more difficult to alter ballots.

But that is not enough to ensure the safety of the election.

Intense, multi-faceted scrutiny and public awareness must surround *every step of the process*, not just the activities at the precinct. Otherwise ballot boxes tend to disappear on the way to the county courthouse, or arrive with their locks broken. Election "officials" will be waiting with new locks, to replace the broken ones (ballot box seals are also made by multiple suppliers, making duplicate numbered seals easy to obtain).The reported vote totals tend to change mysteriously when a secret corporate media consortium is in charge of reporting them. If anyone disputes the numbers, the same centralized media can assure the charges are never investigated or reported by the press. Election officials and Secretaries of State can manipulate or withhold the final election results to prevent citizens from proving fraud, and rotten Judges can throw out vote fraud lawsuits.

I promise you, all of this can and will happen -- it has been happening for decades -- if the public as a whole is asleep and only a few good men and women are on the watch.

Hand counted paper ballots *and eternal vigilance* are the only hope left for us. The corporate fascists are taking over, and we will never depose them non-violently as long as they control our elections.