

## Kingdom of Darkness by Michael Carmichael

It is unconscionable to perpetuate fraudulent or biased electoral practices in any nation. It is especially objectionable among us Americans, who have prided ourselves on setting a global example for pure democracy. With reforms unlikely at this late stage of the election, perhaps the only recourse will be to focus maximum public scrutiny on the suspicious process in Florida.Â Jimmy Carter, 2004

American politics has given birth to a nomadic culture of hunter-gatherers. Admittedly, I am a member of this voracious nation of political vultures. For months, years and â€“ in some rare cases â€“ lifetimes, American politicians and their coteries of consultants, hordes of staff, cults of camp-followers and menageries of minions and media mavens gravitate from one scenic event to another.

As a veteran of this ritual, I wonder whether this peripatetic panorama is really a moveable feast of living, populist democracy in action or something entirely different - a highly choreographed charade, perhaps, a Machiavellian masquerade or even a counterfeit cavalcade â€“ that reveals the plasticity and corruption of political power in a period literally pulsating with virulent and pestilential propaganda. Sometimes, I ask myself, are we searching for democracy, or are we merely stalking a Leviathan?

Writing Leviathan, Thomas Hobbes described the horrors of a â€™kingdom of darkness,â€™ that strikes a resonant chord with our political culture today.

A confederacy of deceivers that, to obtain dominion over men in this present world, endeavour, by dark and erroneous doctrines, to extinguish in them the light.

Conceiving Hobbesâ€™ metaphor of darkness as the suppression of truth in syncopation with the parallel propagation of falsehoods it rings truer today in our Orwellian age of information dominated by the Karl Rove syndrome than it did in the seventeenth century when the deceptions of the Leviathans of the crown, the church and the papacy were far less subtle. In twenty-first century America, Hobbesâ€™ Leviathan prowls, lurks and stalks its prey concealed by stealth but capable of freezing its victims into ice cold pillars of stony silence - for those who gaze too deeply into the eyes of Leviathan are frozen into premature political paralysis â€“ like the victims of Medusa.

In our resplendent information age of transcendent digital technology, Hobbesâ€™ Leviathan has metamorphosed and become a protean spectre with a multiplicity of faces: Karl Rove, Antonin Scalia, Rush Limbaugh, Neil Cavuto, Ann Coulter, Dick Cheney and the list could go on and on ad infinitum. Sometimes Leviathan assumes the form of the Minotaur lurking in the shadows and winding passageways in the Machiavellian labyrinth of political deception and Diebold elections far beneath the surface of events that are reported by its docile and myopic corporate media. At other

times, the Leviathan becomes emboldened and devours its enemies in broad daylight after dashing their craniums against the walls of the subterranean caverns of political events. The people of our planet know that Hobbes's™ Leviathan exists, and they conceive of the monster as a colossal Kraken with a vicious beak and a voracious appetite for the flesh of its victims looming large and dangerous in the murky depths of political oblivion.

Some of the people know that democracy in America has never been perfect – far from it. From the outset, voting was a privilege reserved for the wealthy land-holding Anglo-American elite. Gradually, the franchise was grudgingly extended. After the Civil War, black males were occasionally granted the franchise – if they could read which many could not – or if they could endure the withering slings and arrows of a cruel and racist bureaucracy of voter registration fraught with procedures that discouraged voting by the –upstarts™ in the racial minorities. Native Americans were eventually granted a limited form of franchise with its own tortuous bureaucracy. Less than one hundred years ago American women were compelled to await the franchise until the arrival of the nineteenth amendment to the venerable Constitution that had launched the land of the free in a nation that erroneously prided itself as the birthplace of democracy.

Today, we are still hearing reports of aggressive voter suppression in Ohio; voter repression in Florida; outright vote-rigging in New Hampshire as well as in America's™ far flung provinces. Sadly, Florida suffers a chronic case of vote-rigging that extends backwards in US history to its palm-fronded inception into statehood in 1845. Twice, Florida has been the ugly scene of the crime in democratic homicides in the form of brazenly stolen presidential elections: 1876 and 2000.

Since the introduction of computerized voting in the Clinton era, the increasingly common reports of vote-tampering and election-rigging have assumed a more alarming frequency and a much more strident tone that has now become a deafening and dynamic background roar. Today, a growing number of Americans believe that their elections are being manipulated by a dark and shadowy backchannel cadre of virtually invisible operatives dedicated to the destruction of voting rights and democracy in America, itself – Hobbes's™ ubiquitous agents of Leviathan.

Yesterday, a supporter of Mike Huckabee informed me that he believes the Republican primaries are being systematically rigged against the former governor of Arkansas. He cited the recent Republican primary in South Carolina that awarded victory to McCain over Huckabee. There is a growing body of evidence to support this sort of claim. The state of South Carolina uses a particularly suspect form of electronic, touchscreen voting machine manufactured by ES&S. Since the results of the Democratic primary paralleled both the pre-election polling and the exit-polling in South Carolina, it now appears that electronic vote-rigging in the primaries may be more selective. These suspicions – and others equally serious - are multiplying and now represent the opinion of many of America's™ political elite including some – but by no means all – of its former presidents.

After the voting debacle of Florida/2000, former presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford both recommended a deep and extensive procedure of modernization for American voting standards. Today, few of their recommendations have been enacted, and fewer still have been implemented. With the demise of Ford, Carter now finds himself alone among the three living former presidents, the sole member of that elite club who has exhibited any genuine concern for the improvement of American voting standards and, perhaps, the only pro-democracy former president left in America. Lamenting the fact that voting standards in America do not yet reach the threshold of international criteria for democratic elections, Carter – the most senior former president – harbors understandable concerns for the future of democracy in his homeland.

Neither George H. W. Bush, the 41st president of America, nor William Jefferson Clinton, the 42nd president, has focused any of their massive energies on the problem confronting millions of American citizens – voting. Indeed, when former president Clinton was cosmetically inducted into a so-called Voting Rights Hall of Fame, the catcalls from the civil rights community critiqued his dubious achievements in the field and recalled his lame withdrawal of his hand-picked nominee for the post of Assistant Attorney General, the distinguished civil rights advocate, Lani Guinier, an anti-climactic event that marked a further stage in the decline of affirmative action during his presidency.

More recently, commentators in the black community stalking the deceptions of the Leviathan have singled out Bill

Clinton's failure to intervene in Rwanda and his eagerness to sign into law draconian penalties for crack cocaine popular in the black community as distinct from the generic cocaine powder that is heavily consumed by the white middle classes. Recently, the high courts struck down that dubious but indubitable racial distinction between crack cocaine in crystalline form and fluffy cocaine powder in one legal stroke that brought a new, sharper and much more critical focus to bear on Bill Clinton's personal commitment to civil rights and racial equality.

In the real world of American democracy, many eligible voters simply fail to come to terms with arcane and unrealistic standards for voter registration that are deliberately designed to discourage minority voting. Millions who do register and vote become disillusioned when it appears that their votes are not counted. In 2000, many of the voters in Florida hit the hard and unforgiving bureaucratic barriers, while in 2004, Ohio was the scene of the major electoral homicide. Robert Francis Kennedy, Jr. devoted a huge amount of time, intelligence and resources to his forensic post mortem of the stealing of the presidential election in Ohio/2004. RFK, Jr. published his authoritative paper in Rolling Stone nearly two years after the electoral crime had occurred, while Leviathan in the guise of Karl Rove rolled merrily along towards his federal "retirement" in 2007 "the most brazen rigger of elections since Boss Tweed.

The voting scandals of Florida/2000 and Ohio/2004 have passed into American history with little in the way of a whimper from the members of Congress and almost no coverage in the mainstream media. In fact, members of Congress appear to be blasé about the rising public concern over electoral integrity, while the almost total lack of mainstream press coverage raises a troubling question mark over the paralytic complacency of the fourth estate.

In a dramatic and disgraceful episode, the renewal of the Voting Rights Act recently brought to light the latent but real currents of racism that are alive and kicking in Congress. The Chairman of the Black Caucus, Congressman Mel Watt of North Carolina, has been one of the leading advocates for voting rights for the obvious reason that black Americans have been deliberately and systematically excluded from voting as a matter of course throughout US history. But, when Chairman Watt proudly put forward his list of over twenty co-sponsors for the renewal of the Voting Rights Act, Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House, balked and ordered him to remove the names of twenty members - because it would have been, "too black," and might have incurred the wrath of the reflexively racist Republican leadership. Pelosi presented her case to Watt as a fait accompli, and her reputation was deeply tarnished within the Black Caucus and the larger civil rights community as a result.

Both of the presidential voting scandals in 2000 and 2004 were detected when votes officially tallied failed to agree with pre-election polling and exit polling. A great hue and cry was heard following the electoral disaster of 2000. Many Americans focused their suspicions on the computerization of the electoral process in the hope that if only we could master that intractable technology, the appalling situation would right itself, or so they thought, but the problem goes deeper into the realm of Leviathan.

During the Clinton presidency, high-tech companies introduced touch-screen voting machines and optical scanning machines for the tabulation of votes throughout America and other nations, as well. It seemed odd to learn that all of these private companies were controlled by business interests with close ties to the Republican Party including some who were personally involved in funding the presidential campaigns of George W. Bush and Richard Cheney. The companies at the center of the US voting scandals are: Diebold; Sequoia and Election Systems & Software (ES&S).

While it might seem like ancient history today, the first elections that raised suspicions of electronic vote fraud took place in 1996 when Chuck Hagel was elected to the Senate. Hagel had been an executive with American Information Systems, one of the parent companies for ES&S, the largest manufacturer of electronic voting machines in the USA. Hagel's performance in the pre-election polls was slightly lackluster, but the official tallies eventually awarded him the Senate seat. Here is how Adam Cohen writing in the New York Times summarized the suspicions swirling around Hagel:

In his primary race in 1996, Mr. Hagel, who had lived in Virginia for 20 years, beat the state attorney general by nearly two to one. In the general election, he defeated the governor, who had been elected two years earlier in a landslide. In 2002, against Mr. Matulka, he won more than 80 percent of the vote.

Public suspicions of nefarious voting machine manipulations in American elections increased sharply when Walden Oâ€™Dell, a Diebold executive in Ohio, stated explicitly that he would deliver the electoral votes of his battleground state to George W. Bush in a formal letter to the unpopular president long before the election took place. One year after the fiasco of Ohio/2004, Walden Oâ€™Dell quietly resigned his post with Diebold. Oâ€™Dell has remained silent and undisturbed by federal investigators since his ignominious departure, and reports to the effect that Diebold will soon leave the voting machine sector are rife.

In his book, *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*, Greg Palast brought a new level of public scrutiny to insidious voter registration ploys in Florida. In 2000, the Secretary of State in Florida ordered a private firm, Checkpoint, to purge tens of thousands of Democratic Party voters. Many eligible black voters were purged from rolls in Florida following direct orders from Katherine Harris in the days leading up to that shameful election. These and other problems in the structure of elections in Florida contribute to the situation that President Carter tactfully described as a “suspicious process.”

One reaction to the obvious manifestations of voting irregularities in America came in the form of additional scrutiny of the phenomenon of digital voting. Bev Harris founded Black Box Voting, a charitable organization that investigates cases of possible vote fraud. Harris published extensively on the case of Florida/2000, where she discovered a shocking lack of safeguards against vote-tampering via backchannel interference through the new generation of digital technology. In Ohio, the investigative journalist, Bob Fitrakis, analyzed the anomalous voting results of the 2004 election. Fitrakis writes,

Wherever Diebold and ES&S go, irregularities and historic Republican upsets follow. Alastair Thompson, writing for scoop.co of New Zealand, explored whether or not the 2002 U.S. mid-term elections were “fixed by electronic voting machines supplied by Republican-affiliated companies.” The scoop investigation concluded that: “The state where the biggest upset occurred, Georgia, is also the state that ran its election with the most electronic voting machines.” Those machines were supplied by Diebold.

The “biggest upset” Fitrakis refers to in his comment above was that of Senator Max Cleland, who was apparently defeated by a right-wing extremist, Saxby Chambliss. Senator Cleland had been an outspoken critic of Bush and Cheney’s keystone policy: the war on terror. Even though Cleland was leading in the polls and exit polls, the official tally awarded yet another anomalous election victory “an upset” - to Chambliss.

After many of the Diebold cards went missing in Atlanta precincts where Cleland was overwhelmingly popular, suspicions of electronic vote-tampering mushroomed. Since the evidence simply disappeared, Senator Cleland graciously left the Senate, and the neocon Chambliss assumed his putrid and tainted mantle of illegitimacy. Chambliss is up for re-election again this year, but no effective safeguards have been implemented that would protect the votes of the people of Georgia from electoral sabotage.

With the arrival of Barack Obama as a viable presidential candidate, hopes were high for a massive influx of new black voters across the face of America heralding a new dawn of democracy. Obama’s campaign has been brilliant, largely due to his ability to produce stirring oratory and raise funds from a massive audience of small donors presaging a period of political renewal and realignment in America. Obama’s emergence as the most popular candidate in the run-up to the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary created a tidal wave of momentum for positive political change against his opponent, Senator Hillary Clinton who has become the veritable embodiment of a putrescent political past “an arc of presidential history encompassing Reagan, Bush the Elder, Clinton and Bush the Younger.

This year, a dazzling array of pre-election polls in New Hampshire predicted a runaway victory for the forces of change led by Senator Barack Obama over the forces of stasis led by Senator Hillary Clinton in the nation’s bell-weather primary. While it is true that on odd occasions “very odd occasions, indeed - pre-election polls can be confuted by election results, those situations usually occur in local or statewide races where there are no genuinely rigorous polling standards, and

when there are only one or two polls involved. That was not the case in New Hampshire/2008.

Reliance on polls authorized by major media organizations should always be suspect. Every polling and political professional knows that polls and their results can be cooked, twisted and tweaked to indicate extra support for any candidate in any race at any time. Polling is not an exact science, but when nine major polling organizations all agree on the likely outcome of the most intensively surveyed primary election in world history – the chance of error in the finishing order drops to a decimal fraction very close to absolute zero.

This year, the American public was treated to just such an extraordinarily anomalous situation. The most authoritative pollster in presidential elections, John Zogby, surveyed the New Hampshire electorate in an exquisite series of immaculately designed and executed tracking polls. Zogby’s findings were that Obama would win handily over Clinton.

Other major polling organizations published independent surveys that unanimously agreed that Obama – fresh from a runaway victory over Clinton in the Iowa caucuses – would win the New Hampshire primary. But, when the ballots were tallied, the official results gave Clinton an anomalous –upset– win. This anomaly and other glaring factors – that Clinton’s tallies rose in optically scanned precincts but dropped in hand-counted precincts - raised the collective antennas of suspicion, and two presidential candidates, Dennis Kucinich and Albert Howard demanded a recount.

The fundamental problem with the New Hampshire, Florida and Ohio voting scandals is simple. In the age of digital technology – the evidence for election fraud vanishes instantaneously via virtually undetectable tampering with the electronic voting machines and their esoteric software. No amount of recounting of the existing paper ballots can prove anything. In the case of New Hampshire, the circumstances are actually worse – far worse. A troubling complication in New Hampshire is that the elections fall under the control of a private firm, LHS, that provides, supervises and maintains optical scanning machines and their software under contract for the state. Once again, Diebold manufactured the suspect optical scanning devices. Suspicions have been raised by some of the public statements of LHS officials, who have conceded that they routinely replace voting machine memory cards in the middle of elections – a shocking revelation that on its face suggests the likelihood of voting irregularities.

Under a graphic captioned, –Red flags over New Hampshire,– Bev Harris and her team of investigators have filed field reports that there is literally no ballot security worthy of the name in the granite state of New Hampshire. Harris writes,

New Hampshire is unable to document its chain of custody properly, lacks written procedures, its secretary of state has said he doesn’t know where its memory cards are, and LHS has been encroaching on state elections with near-total control. I’ll be preparing a Special Report when I return from New Hampshire with documents and video to support this assessment.

And

The –seals– are not seals. The –chain of custody– is not a chain of custody. Ballots being transported by the –state police– actually transported by Butch and Hoppy, who are not employed by the state police. Butch and Hoppy’s real names are not really Butch and Hoppy. In New Hampshire, it’s all hidden in plain sight.

Why on earth election officials or their surrogates in the state of New Hampshire would wish to conduct their official duties while using aliases during the task of collecting boxes containing ballots for a recount is a mystery - unless they were ashamed of their electoral role for some reason that remains obscure in the labyrinthine mazes of the Granite State. The analysis of the results of the New Hampshire primary by Black Box Voting paints a darkening picture of deficient electoral integrity. When votes were tabulated by optical scanners, Senator Hillary Clinton gained votes over Senator

Barack Obama, and she lost to him when the ballots were counted by hand.

Clinton Optical scan 91,717 52.95%

Obama Optical scan 81,495 47.05%

Clinton Hand-counted 20,889 47.05%

Obama Hand-counted 23,509 52.95%

If these facts are sustained - the tally that produced this tabulation is now "official" - it would appear as if covert political operatives conspiring to engineer the presidential election have crudely manipulated the results of the New Hampshire primary, yet another black mark against Diebold. In the future, these clumsy agents of Leviathan may learn their lesson and manipulate both hand-counts as well as machine counts and optical scans. Perhaps, the field agents were suffering from physical exhaustion or a lack of resources or even clarity in the planning phase of their operations. Such a glaring error will undoubtedly lead to more tightly controlled covert electoral sabotage operations in the future, of that we can be certain. Are you listening, Karl Rove?

On the Republican side, it is interesting that Mitt Romney and Rudy Giuliani gained votes via optical scanners, while Congressman Ron Paul lost a lot of votes tabulated by optical scanners dropping him from third to fifth place. Congressman Paul appears to have been just as worthy a target of electoral sabotage in New Hampshire as Senator Obama. It has been mooted that the manipulation of the Democratic results could have provided a convenient smokescreen for the equally crude manipulation of the Republican results. This analysis might imply some sort of collusion between the Clintons and their Republican consorts in control of electronic voting machine companies, or it might leave them in the clear merely as convenient pawns of a broader manipulation of the presidential election that could be taking place behind the scenes. Pay attention, Karl!

In the aftermath of what is surely nothing less than the New Hampshire/2008 fiasco, the most volcanic protests have come from the supporters of Congressman Ron Paul who believe that his vote was intentionally reduced "via premeditation and malice aforethought - from his proper third place finish to fifth place. Supporters of Ron Paul stepped forward to state that whole families and groups of friends had voted in concert for the Congressman in precincts where the official tallies gave him absolutely zero votes.

In a state where the motto is: "Live Free or Die," it would appear that civil strife could break out at any moment, but a blanket of silence is quietly descending over the entire fiasco, as the repression of "rumors" rationalizes the uneasy doubt flushing them through the memory hole and down the drain of forgettably Orwellian nonevents. Karl Rove and his operatives with their subservient minions in the media are well versed in this sort of erasing operation "for instance, we recently learned that most of the potentially incriminating White House emails in the Valerie Plame case have been "lost."

But the anomalies and scandals of New Hampshire have not been entirely lost on the constantly astute people of America. In the minds of many Americans, professional politics now appear to be as authentically genuine as professional wrestling. The Leviathan cloaks its operations in the baffling high technology of digital mechanisms leaving no trace of its malevolent presence, but the appearance of its stealth leaves the unmistakably putrid stench of Hobbes' warnings of "dark and erroneous doctrines" designed to "extinguish the light."

The mainstream media's complacency and acquiescence following these disturbing events and freshly created nonevents are virtually inexplicable. Of course, there has been the predictable cant to the effect that, "it can't happen here." But, even the Pavlovian blindness of a complacent media remains an ongoing mystery in the face of so many egregious anomalies. It is, in fact, shameful that the story of the voting debacle in New Hampshire has received more coverage in

Europe and Russia than in the United States. Writing in the prestigious Milanese journal, *Il Giornale*, Marcello Foa, one of Europe's most respected journalists, published a report based on the alarming discrepancies in New Hampshire between machine-counts favoring Clinton and hand-counts favoring Obama under the headline: "It wasn't a miracle: Hillary won via a rigged vote."

Anna Moya, the popular television reporter with *Russia Today* covered the New Hampshire primary fiasco. Moya interviewed ranking experts from two of Washington's leading think-tanks, the Brookings Institution and the Center for American Progress, both of whom were animated by the voting debacle in New Hampshire. Curiously, the American media have largely ignored the story. Leviathan now casually plays the card of Rovian deception "Ho-hum, who cares?"

Leviathan has its keepers, its protectors, its custodians, its guardians, its security forces "the Panglossian propagandists of America who soothingly reassure the citizenry that the Leviathan does not really exist, that it is merely the figment of demented and overactive imaginations spawned by Thomas Hobbes four centuries ago.

One Rovian exception to the full court media blackout was Mark Hemingway of the *National Review*, who predictably ridiculed the thought of a rigged election. Hemingway parroted the "It-can't-happen-here" school of thought, and he had the unmitigated audacity to propose the de-emphasis of pre-election polling as his Rovian remedy for troubling concerns about the integrity of US elections. Oddly, Hemingway's plea to keep taking the tablets and trust Big Brother was picked up and published on the CBS blogsite. *Time* magazine ridiculed the pollsters with a cover story titled, "It's the voters, Stupid," their charming variation on, "It can't happen here."

Shortly before Super Tuesday, George Bishop, a political scientist from Ohio, provided a comment, "Why We Keep Getting Snowed by the Polls," for the *Washington Post*. Bishop does not even deign to consider the potential of election-tampering in George Bush's America "yet another formulation of, 'It can't happen here.'" The words: Diebold, Box Voting and Johns Hopkins (where academic research on electronic election-rigging has produced major publications in peer-reviewed journals) "do not appear in Bishop's article.

Like Grendel's mother in Gaiman's new version of *Beowulf*, the Kraken twists facts and manipulates minds in its program of political deception. Today, Americans find themselves in a looking-glass world where they have to watch Russian television or read European newspapers to learn about the collapse of democracy in their homeland.

Nancy Tobi is one of America's leading advocates for election integrity. In New Hampshire, Tobi is the Co-Founder of Democracy for New Hampshire and Chair of the New Hampshire Fair Elections Committee. In her latest paper on the New Hampshire/2008 fiasco, Tobi calls for an end to secret ballot counting "a situation that prevails almost universally in the United States and is in direct conflict with responsible democratic criteria. Tobi writes,

The problem before us is that we have outsourced the most precious thing in our democracy: the counting of our votes. And in New Hampshire, we have outsourced more than 80% of our votes to a private corporation counting those votes in secret, and, as it turns out, that private corporation has a convicted drug trafficker on its executive team to boot. A recount does not solve this problem.

and

The days of the status quo are over. The New Hampshire recount, a valuable check and balance for free and open elections, is useless in the face of possible high stakes election tampering. Using the recount to justify secret vote counting is just part of the status quo. We need an honest and open first count on Election Night, and that will happen only with structural change, not a recount.

Taken in tandem, Nancy Tobi, Bev Harris and their implacable research assistants constitute the three fates of American democracy embodying the cosmic powers of the classical fates: Clotho, Lachesis and Atropo. Metaphorically speaking, the future of America is in their hands. These wise Sibylline women weave the thread of democratic destiny, and they can also sever the thread of the tyrannical rule of Leviathan and all of his totalitarian minions from Karl Rove to Henry Kissinger. When comparing their role in American history to that of say, Betsy Ross, there is simply no comparison. They stand shoulder to shoulder with Benjamin Franklin, John Woolman, Thomas Jefferson, Abby Kelly Foster, William Lloyd Garrison, Mary Lyon, Susan B. Anthony and Martin Luther King. These women working for democracy in New Hampshire are now America's leading wedge against the massive powers of Leviathan. And, there is now reason to believe that it fears them.

We must remember Leviathan is a Hydra, a monstrous Medusa with an infinity of heads " frequently assuming the visage of a news reader presenting election results " or a former White House Press Secretary accusing a talk show host of thoughtcrime when he strikes too close to the truth. But, Leviathan has an implacable enemy. Perseus is the enemy of the Medusa-Leviathan. It fears him alone. Perseus intends to slay the Leviathan by severing its head in that moment of horror that strikes sharply after mirroring its own gaze when its pupils lock upon its own reflection, and it implodes inward upon itself.

A modern day Perseus, Bill Maher stands alone among America's punditocracy willing to expose the spoor of the monster. In the aftermath of the scandal in New Hampshire, Bill Maher boldly stepped forward to televise a roundtable discussion. When Maher's suspicions of vote fraud in the New Hampshire primary were ridiculed by Tony Snow, the former Fox News reporter and former White House Press Secretary for the election-rigged president - George Bush, Maher retorted that it is common knowledge that the Republican Party longs for Senator Hillary Clinton to be the Democratic nominee " because she would go down swiftly to certain defeat. Maher argued that the Republicans fear Senator Obama, because he represents a new wave of political momentum against whom they will have little ammunition. Well done, Mr. Maher. Well done, indeed: you have caused Karl Rove to grimace. With this interview, Maher was catapulted into the hot-seat of being hailed the boldest man in the US media.

In the immediate aftermath of the New Hampshire primary scandal, Senator John Kerry, the victim of massive election "irregularities" in 2004, swiftly and unexpectedly endorsed Senator Barack Obama. Some astute observers believe that Senator Kerry was tacitly demonstrating solidarity with Senator Obama whom he identifies as a fellow victim of Karl Rove cheated via vote fraud in New Hampshire just as he was cheated in the presidential election four years ago in O-hi-o.

Three years ago, former president Jimmy Carter summarized the groaning American concerns over the integrity of their elections:

Four years ago I served on a similar commission in chairmanship with President Gerald Ford, and we made recommendations that the Congress didn't receive with much enthusiasm. But as you know, two years later in 2002 they passed a Help America Vote Act " H-A-V-A, HAVA " and after the 2004 election, we saw that there were still a lot of omissions or needs in the overall election process in this country to make things more uniform, to encourage voter registration, to make sure that election officials were nonpartisan as much as possible, and to deal with the plethora of electronic voting machines in which the people have some doubt about if their votes are going to be counted accurately. So those kinds of questions have been very important in casting doubt among the American people about the basic integrity of the election system, and if their votes will really be counted accurately.

Let us now reflect on the image of Thomas Hobbes wielding Occam's Razor. In Rome, Cicero praised the work of a strict and sagacious judge who " when confronted with cases involving the conundrum of vague evidence or imprecise testimony " would put the question, "Cui bono?" " "Who benefits?" to the plaintiffs. Thomas Hobbes held that understanding the motivations of the agents of Leviathan, nothing establishes clarity more effectively than identifying the beneficiaries of their crimes.



In Florida/2000 and in Ohio/2004, the answer to, "Cui bono?" was the same: George Walker Bush and Richard Cheney. For New Hampshire/2008 the answer is different for while the apparent beneficiaries were former president Bill Clinton and his wife, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, the ultimate beneficiaries could well be the Republican presidential nominee and his crack Rovian cadre of professional electronic election-riggers as Bill Maher told Tony Snow "they fear Barack Obama because of his ideas for change."

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

Revelation 16:10

In 2008, America and by its historical status "the entire world" - is lost in a Machiavellian labyrinth of political oblivion staggering headlong toward a war of all against all.

POSTSCRIPT: Less than one day before Super Tuesday on the evening of February 4th, CNN's Lou Dobbs pointed out that fifteen US states use electronic voting machines that are incapable of verifying or recounting votes reliably. Dobbs' report featured clips of Diebold and ES&S voting machines. While Dobbs drew attention to the potential pitfalls of paperless voting, he made no mention whatsoever of the potential manipulation of election results in America by covert political operatives. By eliding the possibility of partisan interference in voting, the Dobbs report is simply another formulation of, "It can't happen here."