

# Silence of the Lambs

## Media Coverage of Election Integrity

*Isn't it potentially the biggest story of their lives?*

by Jonathan Simon



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To begin, the mainstream media (MSM) is now almost entirely a subsidiary of mega-corporations, with news budgets slashed to the bone, opinions displacing reporting and investigation, and insidious limits on what is, as the *Times* still puts it, "fit to print." That said, it is still astounding how impervious the MSM has been to the e-voting story. We have it, off the record, from several top journalists that their employers have flat-out prohibited them from writing or speaking on the matter of computerized election theft or reviewing any of the evidence that it is occurring.

The MSM rule seems to allow reporters to write or talk about the potential vulnerability of the machines in the run-up to elections, but after the election, when actual evidence is available, all coverage is verboten. In 2004, Keith Olbermann did start covering what had happened in Ohio. He devoted several powerful, widely-viewed, and very enthusiastically received segments to it and then ... POOF! He was off on a two-week vacation of which there had been no prior mention. And when he

their media buy into a rigged game. It may be fear of

marginalization, that even mentioning the possibility of electronic election rigging will forfeit their hard-earned place at the "serious journalism" table or, for groups like Common Cause, People For The American Way, or the ACLU, their place at the "serious advocacy" table. If that seems exaggerated, recall the fate of Dan Rather, a titanic media figure permanently exiled after once stepping "out of bounds" when reporting on George W. Bush's National Guard records. As for whistle-blowers, one such demise sends a powerful and unambiguous message to the rest.

About the only press willing to stand up are web-based sites like *BradBlog* and *OpEdNews*. These merit high praise indeed, but any story that's not in the *Times* or the networks is a tin-hat conspiracy theory, no matter how well presented and documented.

Perhaps fear that everything will fall apart if truth is rigorously pursued paralyzing the media. If investigation leads to knowledge that mandates action, an inexorable process would begin. But who in the vast system of American politics and culture can imagine what action he or she might take? The personal blowback and the national earthquake would be unimaginable. So the "action imperative" itself may paradoxically operate to block investigation at its very beginning.

The most wretched villains in this play must be the American press and media. Those who actually do the rigging, whether a Rovean figure playing God or far-right true believers, are "doing their job." But the media, whose job is to expose and promulgate the truth, are the ones not doing their job. They appear to be either in deep denial, anesthetized, or content with a sham democracy, which would suit their corporate masters just fine. Individually, by the thousands, and collectively as a force, they have served as enablers.

We do not know the extent or source of intimidation, but it is time someone with a following found the courage to risk his or her job, or even his or her life, in service to the truth. That courage is surely not unprecedented in our nation's history and it is sorely needed now, if what the courageous have fought and died for is to survive.

*This article and sidebar are excerpted from Jonathan Simon's book Code Red.*

## What about Whistleblowers?

- Clint Curtis, a computer programmer from Yang Enterprises testified under oath in 2004 before the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee, after the 2004 Ohio election debacle that in 2000. He said he was commissioned as a programmer to write a program for the Republican Speaker of the House of Florida designed to "flip the vote" in South Florida. Curtis twice passed a lie-detector test. He was ignored. Apparently not ignored was Raymond Lemme, the reporter actively investigating Curtis' allegations. Lemme told Curtis he had "tracked down corruption that goes all the way to the top" and the story would break shortly. Two weeks later, Lemme committed suicide, evidently, according to forensic photographs, by the popular method of stabbing and beating himself to death.

- Mike Connell, known as Karl Rove's "IT guru," who had set up the off-site SmartTech servers that processed the decisive presidential vote count in 2004, was compelled to testify in a lawsuit challenging the improprieties in that election. After giving a sealed deposition and being informed that he would likely be compelled to provide further testimony, Connell was killed when the plane he was piloting crashed. Attorneys for the plaintiff, taking seriously threats made by Rove against a conscience-driven Connell, had been denied FBI protection for their star witness. It is not hard to imagine other potential whistleblowers getting the message.

came back ... not another word, ever! It should be obvious that there are some powerful forces at work here, set on making sure this story never gets legs.

But it's not just the MSM. The progressive media—from *The Nation* to *Mother Jones* to *The Progressive Populist*—have all taken a pass. They bemoan the "new politics," with its gerrymandering, dark money, and voter suppression, but without an iota of attention paid to even the possibility that these bizarre and troublesome results may have something to do with a digital thumb on the electronic counting scale, not so much as a hint that there may be something to question or investigate.

It is mystifying to watch the progressives of America commit political suicide as