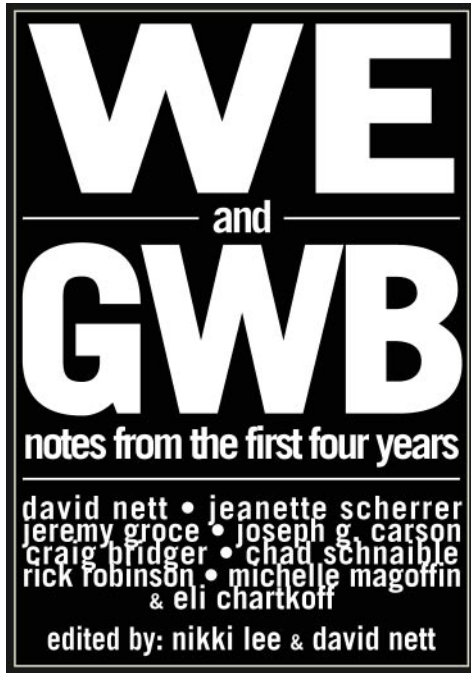




• collected essays from Clark Schpiell Productions •

## PRESS INFORMATION PACKET

May, 2005



PRESS PACKET & BOOK PREVIEW

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designed by David Nett

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# Press Release

05-01-05  
for immediate release

press contact:  
April Nelson  
952-829-8097

**W**hen George W. Bush was elected president in November of 2000, the writers of the online humor magazine Clark Schpiell Productions played it off as a joke, initially writing satirical essays about a president who seemed bumbling but mostly harmless. As his first term wore on, they slowly began to realize that this was not a joke -- this man was leading America down the wrong path, squandering the support of the world community and ignoring the basic human needs of the American people in favor of his own radical economic, social, religious and international ideologies. These same writers, who had spent the first two years of CSP's existence (1998 - 2000) writing poop jokes and drawing cartoons, began to write about the alarming political issues of GWB's presidency, and began to ponder, in bright HTML markup, what we could do to stop it.

"We and GWB: Notes from the First Four Years" (200pp., tpb, \$12.99 suggested retail price) is a collection of those essays. It tells a story of a handful of generally non-political young people who awoke to find themselves a part of President Bush's downward American spiral. Because the essays were written as events unfolded, a reader can see the changing attitudes, unfolding disbelief, and growing outrage of these regular people as President Bush enacts his increasingly wrong-headed policies, leading us to war, economic feudalism and religious hegemony. It's a story of raw emotion and, as the 2004 election comes to a climax, of bitter defeat, tempered by hope for the future.

This collection, edited by Nikki Lee and CSP founder and editor David Nett, with commentary from David Nett, is a raw and real reminder of what went down in those first four years of the George W. Bush presidency.

Nikki Lee and David Nett, editors

featuring essays from: David Nett, Jeremy Groce, Jeanette Scherrer, Craig Bridger, Joseph G. Carson, Chad Schnaible, Eli Chartkoff, Michelle Magoffin, and Rick Robinson

Published by Random Werewolf Press

([www.randomwerewolf.com](http://www.randomwerewolf.com))

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For purchase, visit [www.randomwerewolf.com](http://www.randomwerewolf.com), or search for it at your favorite online bookseller.

# About the Contributors

**Clark Schpiell Productions** is an online magazine, updated twice weekly, featuring an eclectic blend of essays, humor and art from a dozen or so mildly deranged folks. Check us out at [www.clarkschpiell.com](http://www.clarkschpiell.com).

**Craig Bridger** is an actor and writer from San Diego, recently transplanted to New York City. While he enjoys the excellent pizza and the great theater, he could do without the ridiculous cold, and the brain-numbing noise.

**Joseph G. Carson** (aka Jason Groce) is a writer and musician in Seattle, WA. By day he works in a cushy desk job for an unnamed global corporation, but by night he plays in coffee houses throughout the Seattle area under yet another name: Jacob Carver. Find out more about him and his music at [www.jacobcarver.com](http://www.jacobcarver.com).

**Eli Chartkoff** is a writer, musician and animator in Los Angeles. Lately, the majority of his time is occupied with raising little Ivan, but you can learn more about his band, the Monolators, at [www.themonolators.com](http://www.themonolators.com), and his animation at [www.monsieurgustave.com](http://www.monsieurgustave.com).

**Jeremy Groce** went from being a small-town Midwesterner to world traveler (he's lived in seven countries on four continents and speaks a handful of languages), which still surprises him. He runs a shortwave radio station in East Africa, and he and his wife recently welcomed their first child, a beautiful baby girl, into the world.

**Nikki Lee** is a writer from Toronto, currently residing in Los Angeles, where she slaves away at a dot-com to pay the rent. You

can also find her work in *The Shopkeepers*, from Periwinkle Publishers Limited, coming soon to a book store near you.

**Michelle Magoffin** is a writer in Los Angeles. To pay her crushing mortgage, she works as a producer for a dot-com in Santa Monica. She vents her great angst at [botheration.blogspot.com](http://botheration.blogspot.com).

**David Nett** is an actor and a writer in Los Angeles. He's the editor and webmaster of Clark Schpiell Productions, and is on the board (along with his wife, Shannon) of the Lucid by Proxy theater group ([www.lucidbyproxy.com](http://www.lucidbyproxy.com)). By day, he stares at the walls of a putty-colored cubicle and weeps silently to himself.

**Rick Robinson** is a writer, actor and director in Los Angeles, and is on the board of Lucid by Proxy as well (along with his wife, Val). To pay his rent, he works as a technical writer for a small software company.

**Jeanette Scherrer** is a writer, director and actor in Los Angeles, is also on the board of Lucid by Proxy, and makes her ducats as a story editor on various television shows.

**Chad Schnaible** is an actor and writer in Los Angeles and the winner of the 2002 Dakota Stage Limited Lewis & Clark Playwriting Award. By day, he runs the product placement warehouse for a large P.R. firm, while pining for the life of an international poker superstar.

# Contact Information

For all inquiries about this book and its authors, please contact April Nelson at 952-829-8097.

# We and GWB Preview

What follows are just a few excerpts from *We and GWB: Notes from the First Four Years*, the new book of political essays from Random Werewolf Press. Please enjoy.

# Introduction

On November 2, 2000, I was in rehearsal for the first play produced by what would later become Lucid by Proxy (the theater company run by Shannon [my wife], me, and a handful of my close friends, including Jeanette and Rick, both of whom have contributed to this book). While Shannon and I were driving to Rick's house (where the rehearsal was to take place), Florida was called for Gore. By the time we walked into Rick's living room, it was being called for Bush. Halfway through rehearsal, no one seemed to know who would win Florida's crucial votes, but it appeared to be leaning toward Gore. By the time rehearsal was over, FOX News, and others, had started calling it for Bush again.

That night was the first time I heard someone (my good friend John) say that if Bush were elected, he'd move to Canada. We all laughed, and agreed. But none of us really meant it. The election was disappointing, and none of us understood how this man, who most of us saw as simply an underqualified clown, could have defeated Vice President Gore. We worried about what this might mean for the environment, for the economy (Bush was already talking up his proposed tax cuts), and for abortion and stem cell research. Beyond that, though, we did not conceive of the serious damage this smirking, jovial, again, *clownish* man could do to our country.

The first few essays that appeared in our online magazine, *Clark Schpiell Productions*, about President Bush and politics under his administration were humorous – light political satire aimed at a president who was a poor public speaker and who had a history of deferring to his handlers. We were, after all, primarily an online humor magazine, or at least we were trying to be. Most of our content consisted of satire, scatological humor, and the occasional book or film review.

After September 11, 2001, that began to slowly change. More and more, essays focused on politics. More and more, the handful of writers who contributed to the site started to grasp the seriousness of the damage George

W. Bush could do to America and her ideals and place in the world. More and more, these regular, mostly historically non-political folk began to respond in the best way they knew how – by writing about what, in their minds, was going terribly wrong. *Clark Schpiell Productions*, a tiny online humor magazine, began to transform.

This is the record of that transformation; how a handful of regular folks (most of us, for our day jobs, are cubicle jockeys) began to understand the impact of the first George W. Bush administration on the future of America, and how we tried, in our small way, to change things.

David Nett  
Editor, Contributor & Webmaster  
*Clark Schpiell Productions*  
December 17, 2004

# Modern Warfare

## or, Responsibility and the War on Terrorism

Jeremy Groce

September 11<sup>th</sup> was a day that put most of the country into a state of profound shock, a sensation that isn't felt too often in a nation with 24/7 news coverage that ignores most of the world. But because this horrific event happened here at home, we were stunned, saddened, and angered to a degree rarely experienced in the United States in the past 100 years.

I'm not that interested in talking about the tragedy itself. Reflections on the dead and the presumed dead are best left to poets and pastors. I also don't want to talk about "how this could have happened," the apparent lapses in safety and security at our nation's largest airports, or the "failure in intelligence" that politicians will debate.

What I want to discuss is how we should proceed: what should we do next? Polls taken in the days since the terrorist attacks have shown overwhelming support for a strong military retaliation. That's understandable. I imagine no shortage of volunteers would be willing to track down those responsible for the planning (if not direct execution) of these attacks and personally strangle them dead. But a purely violent response on our part could escalate tensions between the West (particularly the United States) and even friendly (or at least not unfriendly) Arab and Islamic states. In the end, we can all agree that above all else we want to end terrorism. And to do that, the causes of terrorism must be understood and addressed.

The goal of "ending terrorism" is ostensibly the overarching objective of the "new war" that President Bush and, it seems, the entire Washington D.C. administration, intends to pursue. Ending terrorism is a lofty objective, but how realistic a goal is it? To answer this question, let's talk about some other "wars" that we're involved in at the moment.

Since crack became a common narcotic in this country, the government has waged a War on Drugs. Our government spends billions every year in the effort to halt the creation and distribution of illegal substances. The

problem is that drugs themselves aren't really the issue. Drugs don't attack. Drugs don't sneak into the country. Drugs don't manufacture themselves. People are responsible for the creation, distribution, and consumption of drugs. And as long as there are consumers, there will be manufacturers. To attempt to stop one without the other is folly. In a real war, a victor is declared when their opposition surrenders or dies. How will we know the war on drugs is over? When all people in the drug trade – users and manufacturers – are dead? When every last dealer turns themselves in to the police?

The United States has also, at times in our recent history, fought wars on crime. But crime has never and will never go away. Poverty, misery, even psychosis will always drive some people to commit crimes. How can crime be eliminated if its causes cannot be?

A war on terrorism could be as pointless and impossible to win as the wars on drugs and crime. Terrorists may not be as intangible as drugs, nor as common as criminals, but they are not a single political or geopolitical entity with an easily identifiable leadership that can be destroyed and eliminated. We may be able to capture, even kill, Osama bin Laden, but he is not the only radical Islamic fundamentalist obsessed with the destruction of the United States.

It's also important to consider that the men who committed the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks weren't just terrorists. They were suicide terrorists. These men were not only willing, but eager, to die for their cause. What deterrence can we have to this kind of zealot? What makes someone willing to kill himself for a cause? The primary reason is a religious one. Someone is convincingly telling these young men that their sacrifices will take them directly to heaven.

Why would someone be so anxious to end life on this world and go to the next one? The answer lies in the day-to-day living conditions of the typical terrorist recruit. Thousands of Palestinians in the Middle East, in particular, live in refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The camps are filthy, disease-ridden, and crowded. Job and educational opportunities are extremely limited – virtually non-existent. They see Israel and Israelis as the obstacles to any improvement of their lives. If a young man growing up in a Palestinian refugee camp, or in Lebanon or Afghanistan, can be convinced that blowing himself up in a crowded restaurant or slamming

himself and his vehicle into a structure full of Americans will not only take him to heaven, it will give his family and friends a better chance of escaping the misery and suffering of their daily lives, then what can really be done to stop him?

To end terrorism, we need to acknowledge this reality. While nothing justifies or excuses the terrorists' attacks, we still have a responsibility to do our part to actively create a true, just peace in the Middle East. Many terrorists believe Israel couldn't exist without the U.S.'s support. If we openly favor Israel, as our government tends to do, the Arab world will not trust us to be involved in enforcing any peace. Palestinians, Lebanese, and Afghans must see an improvement in their lives so that desperate acts of terrorism aren't viewed as promising releases from pain. At the same time, the Arab world must be willing to compromise and accept on some level the right for Israel to exist. Israel must acknowledge that their nation was created out of land that didn't belong to them and modify their society accordingly.

We must rethink our role in the world and act less unilaterally. We should act only when invited or when our direct national security is threatened, or when there exists a true international consensus that action must be taken.

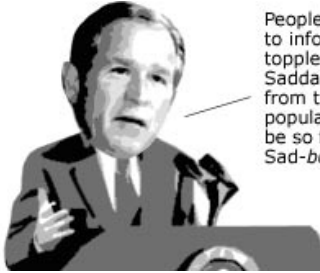
We must also realize that as the wealthiest, most powerful nation on Earth, there will always be people and groups who hate us and would like to see us destroyed. And for this reason we must defend ourselves. Defense, in fact, is the most important response at the moment. Just as you lock your doors to defend yourself from crime and you educate your children as a defense against drug abuse, we must take measures to defend ourselves from terrorism. The trick will be doing this without stripping ourselves of our civil liberties.

Of course, the suggestions I've outlined here will require a great deal of work and a great deal of cooperation and compromise among many disparate groups. They may seem impossible to realize. Surely they are no more impossible than a victory in a war "to rid the world of evil." If creating a world without terror is truly our intent, let our actions achieve justice and not more pain and suffering.

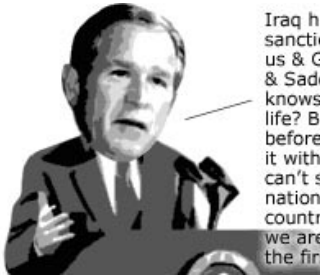
# GWB: Cowboy

David Nett

August 5, 2002



People of America and the World: tonight I wish to inform you that we intend to invade Iraq, and topple the ruthless, anti-Christian government of Saddam Hussein. You may remember Saddam from the war which made my daddy briefly popular. Well, this time the Bush popularity won't be so fleeting — Saddam's gonna git *Sad-bombed*, if you git my drift.



Iraq has refused weapons inspectors & laughed at sanctions, & its people are not Christians, & hate us & God. Covered women & unkempt facial hair, & Saddam's mustache, haunt my dreams. Who knows when they will rise up & attack our way of life? Better we launch a pre..pre-em..pre..strike before they do, wipe out the government, replace it with an unstable interim government which can't succeed, & then move on to fight another nation before we really assist in rebuilding the country whose current government (which, again, we are gonna whup-up on) we helped to build in the first place. It's just the right thing to do.



Psst. The United Nations and a coalition of countries, including many of our closest allies, plus Russia and China, have condemned the idea of attacking Iraq without direct proof of a demonstrated wrong-doing or real threat by the Iraqi government. They agree that Saddam is a tyrant, but have said have said they cannot and will not support an unprovoked US attack.



Yee-Haw! I'm a Cowboy!

# Breaking Up With America

Craig Bridger

February 19, 2004

**L**ook. It's not you. It's me. No really. It's my problem. America, listen. Listen to me. God, you're beautiful. This is so hard for me.

I think we should spend some time apart. No, there's no one else. No, I am not in love with Canada. How could you think that? Yes, she has a very nice health care system, but that's not the point. I'm not comparing your murder rate with Britain. Don't be silly. You have a very sexy murder rate. Nobody can compare with your murder rate, you know that. What? Of course I don't think France is smarter than you. Why does it always have to be about France? Well, I'm not calling them "freedom" fries because that's just silly. Please, you have to stop with this French thing.

You see, that's just what I'm talking about. I can't disagree with you about anything. I can't have my own opinions. It didn't used to be that way with us. We used to talk to each other, but you won't listen to me anymore. And you've found God – which, I think is great, really – but you're so self-righteous all the time. You're so judgmental. Well, I'm sorry, but it's true. Anybody who you don't like is "evil." It's embarrassing. You can't talk to people like that. And stop blessing yourself all the time, for crying out loud. You bless yourself more than the Pope!

What's that? Traitor? Oh, that's good, who taught you that, Ashcroft? You know, who the hell are all these new friends of yours, anyway? Well, I'm sorry, I've tried to get along with them, but they're just assholes, America. And you know something? All of our old friends think so too. That's right. Nobody can stand to be around those jerks. And you've turned into one of them. That's why we didn't get invited to Nick and Lori's party this year. Well, let's see, last year, you cheated at Monopoly, hogged the guacamole, got wasted, and took a dump in Lori's tub, remember?

Oh, you're one to talk, Missy. That really takes the cake. I'm a liar? Hi "Pot," this is "Kettle" calling. Everything that comes out of your mouth is a lie. You've told me so many lies I've forgotten what the truth sounds like:

"The moon is made of green cheese, the world is flat, war is peace, snakes don't have ears, mercury is good for you, I can do six hundred sit-ups," I mean, who knows? Who knows what to believe anymore? I don't! That's fine! Throw me out! Good, have Rumsfeld over, fine! I'm moving in with Canada! She understands me! *We're in love!*

Look, I didn't want to do this. I didn't want to fight with you. I'm sorry, America. I don't know, I don't think we should talk for a while. If you want, you can e-mail me. It's monitored? Well, *whose fault is that?*

Hello?

Christ.

# Matrimonial Discrimination

David Nett

February 24, 2004

Okay – I seriously cannot take this anymore. I want everyone to take a step back, just for a second, and realize that a Constitutional amendment banning gay marriage is the most serious, widest-reaching form of governmentally sponsored discrimination I've seen in my lifetime (I'm 30). I mean it – drop your fake moral posturing. Take off your conservative religion-colored glasses. There is no real, fundamental need for anything of this sort. A Constitutional amendment encouraging discrimination, based upon the shifting sands of religious-based moral fervor, of fear-based prejudice, of traditionalist ignorance – surely this is a nightmare, and I will wake soon. George W. Bush, court-appointed President of the United States: you, sir, have gone too far.

You see, this goes way beyond typical presidential politics. Laws, executive orders, between-session judicial appointments – these can all be overturned, and relatively easily if public opinion is behind the move. Even those laws and orders with ongoing popular support can be circumvented administratively through withholding funding, etc. (just look at what Bush has done to Clinton's popular environmental work). But Constitutional amendments are a much different animal. Overturning a Constitutional amendment is not technically possible – all that can be done is the ratification of another amendment which includes language repealing the prior amendment. This has only been done, to my knowledge, once – the 21st amendment repealed the 18th (Prohibition). Amendments, for all practical purposes, are permanent. Even an "overturned" one remains forever a part of the Constitution.

Writing discrimination into the Constitution would place a terrible blemish on the face of the most important document under United States law. All of the other current Constitutional amendments are clarifications of points of law, rules establishing the inner workings of the executive and legislative branches, and declarations of freedom from discrimination and oppression (Article XIII makes slavery illegal, Articles XV, XIX, XXIV &

XXVI make certain that everyone over 18 can vote). This newly proposed Constitutional amendment would be the first to sanction discrimination.

And, interestingly, this proposed amendment is in direct opposition of Article I, commonly called the “First Amendment.” We normally think of the First Amendment as the Freedom of Speech amendment, but what we often forget about is this little gem:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.”

This is one of the basis for the expression “separation of church and state.” Basically, it prohibits the creation of laws based upon the edicts of one religion or another. There are two arguments I’ve heard for the banning of gay marriage – the first, and often loudest, is that homosexuality, and the expression thereof, is against God’s will. If we pass a law based upon this assumption (which is held only by some faiths, not by all, not by a long shot), we are directly violating the first amendment (in this sense, Clinton’s Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional – Bush knows this, and has hinted at its vulnerability to being overturned). In passing a Constitutional amendment banning Gay marriage on these grounds, we are effectively repealing a portion of the 1st Amendment.

The second argument against gay marriage is far weaker than the first, but has more purchase in the current debate, because most opponents of Gay marriage, who in their hearts oppose it for reason number 1 (above), *know* that their reasoning is unconstitutional, so they’ve created this second argument to mask their faith-based discrimination. The second argument: gay marriage flies in the face of tradition, and damages the foundation of the American family.

The response to this argument is simple: tradition is not always right. The tradition of slavery, held for thousands of years, was wrong, and eventually we came to see that. The tradition of treating women as second-class citizens, held pretty much since the dawn of human civilization, was wrong, and eventually we (most of us) came to see that. The tradition of prohibiting mixed-race marriages was wrong, and eventually we (again, most of us) came to see that. All of these “traditions” helped define how the American family worked, in their time, and the breaking of these traditions was right and necessary, despite the inevitable changes to the “traditional American family,” because discrimination, in all forms, is wrong, and is a cancer that eats at the heart of society.

The reality is that there is no argument to defend a ban on gay marriage, anymore than there is an argument for any other form of arbitrary discrimination. The only reason we are even debating this is because homosexuals are the last well-defined group in America against whom it is still “okay” to discriminate. As with all other forms of discrimination, this has its roots in ignorance and fear. As we grow as a society we will come to realize that, whatever the Pope says, whatever our bibles tell us (remember, our Bibles tell us that a wife must obey her husband, and that slavery is a-okay), homosexuality is not a crime, any more than it is a simple lifestyle choice. Homosexuals are who they are, and they deserve the same rights and freedoms as every other human being. This proposed Constitutional amendment is nothing more than dangerous, divisive political posturing in an election year, by a President whose (nearly) every action in office has been dangerous, divisive, or both. The biggest problem with this gesture is not the petty, narrow-minded, short-term goals of this little man who runs our country, but the permanency of a Constitutional Amendment. This is why we should fight Bush’s proposal with all our strength. I think the American people will see this, will understand this. I hope they will.

The American family will endure gay marriage. The people will come to realize that the foundation of the American family is not one man and one woman who procreate and raise their biological children together – it is mutual love and respect between people who support each other emotionally, socially and sometimes financially, who sometimes decide to pledge their lives to each other, who sometimes decide to raise children (their own or others who need love), who contribute to society by providing a network of human connection which spreads across our country and the world. The American family is evolving, and always has been. Gay, straight, black, white, brown, male, female and everywhere in between – the only truly important constants are love and respect.

# More Information

For more information about *We and GWB: Notes from the First Four Years*, please contact April Nelson at 952-829-8097, and visit Random Werewolf Press ([www.randomwerewolf.com](http://www.randomwerewolf.com)) and Clark Schpiell Productions ([www.clarkschpiell.com](http://www.clarkschpiell.com))