THE KUDZU EFFECT
The Voting-Industrial Complex Chokes Our Democracy
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Computerized voting, promoted by an interlocking cabal of political operatives and vendors is strangling American democracy, like the parasitic vine of the Japanese kudzu plant. According to Election Data Services, almost 80% of all voters in 2006 voted on electronic voting machines or optically-scanned ballots nationwide. Less than 1% of voters in the U.S. used traditional hand-counted paper ballots.

What has caused this meteoric rise in computerized voting and vote counting where proprietary secrets destroy the transparency of the election process? A massive public relations campaign by a handful of strategically placed individuals has peddled computer voting as the high-tech wave of the future.

Tom Wilkey, the Executive Director of the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), an independent bipartisan commission created by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002, is a leading advocate for electronic voting. He told the *Los Angeles Times* following the 2006 Congressional elections, that "When you look at a situation [2006 election] where we have 183,000 precincts in this country, there have been very, very few problems proportionately." Wilkey also administered the testing and certifying of voting machines through NASED, the National Association of State Election Directors.

Another key proponent is Doug Lewis, the director of the Houston-based Election Center, whom David Broder of the *Washington Post* describes as, "the man who knows more about the conduct of elections than anyone else in the country." Lewis gushed in *USA Today*: "It looks like it [2006 election] actually went better than everybody expected. My God, it's a big country, and you'd expect some glitches."

In reality, there were significant electronic voting problems in the 2006 election all over the country. As Ellen Theisen, founder of Voters Unite!, points out "What if voting machines failed at thousands of polling places in over half the states, and the problems caused such severe delays in eight states that voting hours were extended? Is that 'just a few glitches?'"

Here in Ohio and across the nation, the electronic voting machines recorded statistically unlikely undervotes. In a hotly contested Congressional election in Sarasota, Florida, the machines recorded that 13%, or 18,000 of the votes, failed to register in a race decided by 368 votes. In Montgomery County, Ohio, some 30,000 votes failed to record in the U.S. Senate race

because of improper touchscreen machine "calibration." In [Franklin County, Ohio](#), a Domestic Relations judicial race produced more than 22,000 unexpected undervotes. A recount and court hearing proved that it was impossible to audit the electronic machines that "glitched."

Ohio machines deemed vulnerable

Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner's much-anticipated [study](#) found Ohio's election system riddled with "critical security failures." Released in December 2007, after attempts by the Republican-dominated legislature to block the funding, the review showed massive problems involved with electronic voting systems. The corporate vendor-connected [Microsolved](#), Inc. concluded as part of the study that Ohio's computer voting machine vendors have "failed to adopt, implement and follow industry-standard best practices in the development of the system." Among them, according to the independent academics who wrote a different section of the report, was the "pervasive misapplication of security technology."

They specifically cited the lack of "standard and well-known practices for the use of cryptology, key and password management and security hardware." The academics went on to describe computer voting software practices as "deeply flawed." The result leads to "fragile software in which exploitable crashes, lockups, and failures are common in normal use."

Paperless voting machines to be replaced

Earlier in 2007, Florida's Governor Charlie Crist and the State legislature agreed to [ban direct-recording electronic (DRE) voting systems](#). After extensive testing in California, Secretary of State (SoS) [Debra Bowen](#), announced that DRE voting systems made by Sequoia and Diebold would be banned from use. Bowen's testing prompted her Colorado counterpart, [Mike Coffman](#), to decertify many of his state's e-voting systems. Rather than install computerized vote counting machines with known system failures and security inadequacies, New York State has [refused to "improve" its lever-based voting machinery](#) by going electronic and as a result faces a federal lawsuit.

Bo Lipari, executive director of [New Yorkers for Verified Voting](#) asserts, "State after state which adopted electronic touch screen DREs are now abandoning them for paper ballots and ballot scanners. DREs cannot and do not protect our right to vote."

   It is becoming clear that the "Help America Vote Act of 2002" (HAVA), the broadest voting reform effort of the past generation, created in the response to the "hanging chads" of the 2000 election, is a $4 billion boondoggle. The legislation, is called the "Hack America Vote Act" by election integrity activists, or the "Help America's Vendors Act." And vendor-abetting is what Lewis' Election Center is all about.

Who are Wilkey & Lewis?

   A look at the top two entries on the Kudzu Chart (pp. 20-21 of this issue) documents that Wilkey and Lewis have been instrumental in the extremely successful, well-coordinated plan to hand U.S. elections, the voters, and the future of this nation over to what can only be described as a voting industrial complex: a privatized, for-profit system controlled by the voting machine equipment vendors in alliance with their key allies – neo-con ideologues and the military- and security-industrial elite.
   An investigation headed by Sheri Myers and the *Free Press* of Wilkey and Lewis, documents that they have used the cover of the "nonprofit, nonpartisan" Election Center to: create a nexus for election officials and the vendors to conspire to push electronic voting, take over the testing and certifying of the voting machines on behalf of the vendors, and assume control of U.S. elections through the Election Assistance Commission.
   Another look at the Kudzu Chart, comparing the involvement in columns 2 and 22, reveals that a core group of electronic voting advocates came out of the Election Center and now essentially run the EAC. (For bios of the players, go to: www/freepress.org) The EAC was charged by HAVA to distribute billions of dollars around the country to purchase voting machines and voter registration database systems. The EAC also has taken over the testing and certifying of America's voting machines from the National Association of State Election Directors (NASED). But NASED itself, another self-described "nonpartisan nonprofit" group, basically grew out of the Election Center.
   Wilkey and Lewis helped to create a self-enclosed system that appoints itself, funds itself, and tests itself, all the while actively ignoring the realities – the damage – the system is creating.

The Kudzu Effect: How it all began

   Think of the Election Center as an incubator for the intertwining of vendor and voting official, a parasitic vine, like the Japanese kudzu, that

destroys democracy as it crosses precinct, county, state, and national election jurisdictions. This intensely corrupt and eminently successful integrated effort to privatize voting is spreading worldwide through the apparatus of the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES).

It took a well-placed and well-connected operative like Gary Greenhalgh to plant the Kudzu seeds. Greenhalgh served with the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) from 1975-1985. He left with his FEC co-worker Gwenn Hofmann to create the International Center on Election Law and Administration (ICELA). Thomas Wilkey's bio on the EAC site also credits him as a founder, "During 1983 . . . [he] pushed for the creation of the (ICELA)."

During the Reagan-Bush administration, ties were established between the Bureau of Social Science Research (BSSR) and the ICELA. The BSSR provided initial funding to the ICELA.

The Bureau was founded in 1950 as a division of the school of social sciences and public affairs at American University. It became a nonprofit in 1956 and was used as a propaganda tool of the CIA. Its major areas of study included ". . . communication research; international program evaluation; educational research; urban renewal and community relations; military sociology; and the sociology of occupations," according to the Yale University Library. (Roper Collection)

Christopher Simpson's *Science of Coercion* (Oxford University Press) documents that ". . . the CIA clandestinely underwrote the Bureau of Social Science Research (BSSR) studies of torture. . . ." CIA expert Alfred McCoy, in his *A Question of Torture*, notes that the CIA used the BSSR as "One of the main conduits" for torture experiments.

By 1985, the BSSR was faltering financially. Greenhalgh's communications with Vermont's Secretary of State Jim Douglas at that time show that Greenhalgh was looking for a new home and funding for his Center, and would approach George Mason University, (One of Karl Rove's training grounds, where Republican strategist Morton Blackwell hosts his infamous Leadership Institute). In 1979, Rove trained at Morton Blackwell's Leadership Institute. Its slogan: "For conservatives who want to win." Blackwell helped co-found the influential Christian Right Moral Majority as well as the highly secretive and far-right Council for National Policy.

By 1986, Greenhalgh received funding from the Hewlett, Ford, and Joyce Foundations and established ICELA as the nonprofit "Election Center" as part of the Academy for State and Local Government. By 1987, the Election Center vendor membership listed Arthur Young, BRC, MicroVote, Douglas

Manufacturing, Triad, R. F. Shoup, Sperry Corp, Hart Graphics, and Office Technology Corporation – the major voting machine vendors of the day.

Certainly Greenhalgh was aware of the potential for fraud and vote rigging with the voting machines. An internet search for the ICELA reveals the following 1985 quote on the Black Box Voting site: "'There is a massive potential for problems,' said Gary L. Greenhalgh, director of the International Center on Election Law and Administration, a consulting group in Washington. He added that the problem with computer-assisted voting systems was that they 'centralized the opportunity for fraud.'"

Roy Saltman, in his 1988 report, "Accuracy, Integrity, and Security in Computerized Vote Tallying," recommended that the fledging Election Center be the "go-to" group for all information on elections and vendors. Saltman's report offers an early history of the Election Center: "The Election Center, affiliated with the Academy for State and Local Government, was established in 1984. The Center is an independent non-profit resource center serving registration and election officials."

The initial efforts by the Election Center to network with state and local election officials and propagandize for the introduction of electronic voting systems in the United States are referenced in Saltman's report: "The Center has recently distributed the report of a workshop held on Captiva Island, Florida, in February, 1987. The workshop concerned computerized vote-tallying and included, as participants, election officials, vendors, computer scientists, and others interested in the election process."

Saltman offers this pitch in his report: "Election officials require a source of neutral expertise for the receipt of new technical and administrative information. The establishment of the Election Center in the Academy for State and Local Government clearly fulfills a need. Its efforts should be expanded."

Ironically, like Greenhalgh, Saltman warned early on about the perils of electronic voting. In his 1975 report, Effective Use of Computing Technology in Vote Tallying, he wrote: "Increasing computerization of election-related functions may result in the loss of effective control over these functions by responsible authorities and that this loss of control may increase the possibility of vote fraud."

Saltman, a computer scientist then working with the National Bureau of Standards, also wrote in his August 1988 report that, "The possibilities that unknown persons may perpetrate undiscoverable frauds" was a problem with electronic voting systems.

Ronnie Dugger, in his seminal 1988 *New Yorker* article, summarized Saltman's warnings of election tampering such as ". . . altering the computer

program or the control punch cards that manipulate it, planting a time bomb, manually removing an honest counting program and replacing it with a fraudulent one, counting fake ballots, altering the vote recorder that voters use at the polls, or changing either the logic that controls precinct-located vote-counting devices or the voting summaries in these units' removable data-storage units. The problem in this segment of the computer business, as in the field at large, is not only invisibility but also information as electricity."

 Greenhalgh resigned in 1987 as Director of The Election Center to become the Vice President of Operations for the R.F. Shoup Company located in Philadelphia suburb of Bryn Mawr. Ransom Shoup, the company's namesake, had been convicted in 1979 for conspiring to defraud the federal government in connection with a bribe attempt to obtain voting machine business, according to the *Commercial Appeal* of Memphis. With the Shoup Company under investigation in Tennessee and New York, in 1989 Greenhalgh left to become president of Shoup's election machine competitor, MicroVote.

   In September 2000, just prior to the contentious presidential election, Greenhalgh emerged as Vice President of Election Systems & Software, Inc. (ES&S), one of the big Two, along with Diebold, that electronically counted or calculated most of the votes in the U.S. A recurring theme in Greenhalgh's writing from the 1980s was how to make voting accessible for the handicapped. Essentially, the Help America Vote Act enacted after the Florida 2000 election punch card debacle, was sold as a disability rights issue. The National Federation for the Blind and other groups, backed by the American Civil Liberties Union, lobbied heavily for touchscreen voting machines in order to ensure access for disabled voters before the 2004 election. The National Federation for the Blind was also backed by Diebold, who donated $1,000,000 for a new facility for the NFB.

   Carol Garner took over as the Election Center's second director in 1987. She had previously worked in the office of Bill Clements, Governor of Texas. Future George W. Bush advisor Karl Rove had worked for Clements in his 1978 gubernatorial campaign and again served as his key political operative in his successful 1986 re-election campaign.

   Carol Garner's Election Center successor, current long-time Director Doug Lewis, was also an important figure in the Texas Republican party in the late 1970s. It was a period of historic growth for the party, which Dick Cheney has referred to as a "new era in Texas politics," and Lewis served as a fundraiser, campaign manager, and the state Republican party Executive Director. Clements' predecessor John Connally (seen here at Clements'

inauguration), hired Lewis in 1977 to run his PAC, the John Connally Citizen's Forum, and later to manage his 1980 presidential bid. All the while Karl Rove was beginning his meteoric rise as the campaign manager for Republicans who would win long-held Democratic seats.

Of course, it is Rove's campaign tactics that "won" George Bush both his presidencies.

Daddy Bush's campaigns as covert operations

 Take the following quote from the *Manchester Union Leader* regarding the 1980 Iowa caucus: "The Bush operation has all the smell of a CIA covert operation . . . strange aspects of the Iowa operation [include] a long, slow count and then the computers broke down at a very convenient point, with Bush having a six percent bulge over Reagan."

In 1984, President Reagan signed National Security Directive Decision NSDD245. A year later, the *New York Times* explained the details of Reagan's secret directive: "A branch of the National Security Agency is investigating whether a computer program that counted more than one-third of all the votes cast in the United States in 1984 is vulnerable to fraudulent manipulation."

It goes on to say: "Mike Levin, a public information official for the agency's National Computer Security Center, said the investigation was initiated under the authority of a recent presidential directive ordering the center to improve the security of major computer systems used by the nonmilitary agencies . . . ."

The article goes on to note that: "In 1984, the company's program [Computer Election System of Berkeley, Calif.] and related equipment was used in more than 1,000 county and local jurisdictions to collect and count 34.4 million of the 93.7 million votes cast in the United States."

Central tabulating computers were used in an attempt to steal the 1986 election for Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos, a favorite of the Reagan-Bush administration. This is captured in Hendrick Smith's book "The Power Game" as well as the video "The Power Game: The Presidency."

Thus, even prior to the touchscreen computer voting machines, there was a tradition of suspected election rigging with computer software and central tabulators. The actual computer voting machines were introduced on a grand scale in New Hampshire's 1988 primary. The results were predictable – former CIA director George H. W. Bush won a huge upset over Dole, but the mainstream for-profit corporate media refused to consider election rigging. Here's the *Washington Post*'s account of the bizarre and

unexplainable election results when touchscreens were first used: In 1988, George H.W. Bush was trailing Dole by eight points in the last Gallup poll before the New Hampshire primary. Bush won by nine points. The *Washington Post* covered the Bush upset with the following headline: "Voters Were a Step Ahead of Tracking Measurements."

International intrigue and the IFES

   In addition to noting the congruence between the Election Center, FEC and EAC personnel, the *Free Press* Kudzu chart (pgs. 20-21) also notes the CIA-connected IFES "democracy-building" efforts and its intersection with the so-called Election Center. Under the guise of democratization, these two organizations have been the propaganda arm for electronic voting, not only in the United States, but throughout the world.
        The International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) promotes itself as "the world's premiere election assistance organization." The IFES webpage lists more than one hundred countries that it has worked in from Afghanistan to Yemen.
   The IFES, founded in 1987, was forged in the aftermath of the Iran-Contra scandal from funds provided by a CIA-connected organization. Documents show it received $125,000 from the scandal-ridden National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in June 1989 to assist the Nicaraguan political opposition to the Sandinistas. William Blum in *Killing Hope*, quotes NED co-founder Allen Weinstein saying, "A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA."
   Working under the auspices of the Nicaragua Election Monitoring Project of the New York-based Institute for Media Analysis, Inc. ex-contra leader Edgar Chomorro and former CIA analyst David MacMichael, echoed Weinsten's analysis: "NED now carries out overtly the majority of the CIA's formerly covert political activities."
   The IFES's current website states under "Current Projects" that it is "Building Pakistan's electoral infrastructure in anticipation of elections in late 2007 or early 2008, IFES is working to strengthen the capacity of the Electoral Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to establish and maintain a credible computerized voter registry . . . ." They will also be offering "technical assistance to the election commission."
   According to McClatchy newspapers, on December 27, 2007, the day she was assassinated, "Benazir Bhutto had planned to reveal new evidence alleging the involvement of Pakistan's intelligence agencies in rigging the country's upcoming elections . . . ." McClatchy reports that, "Bhutto had

been due to meet U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., and Rep. Patrick Kennedy, D-R.I., to hand over a report charging that the military Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI] agency was planning to fix the polls in the favor of President Pervez Musharraf."

"Bhutto was due to meet Specter and Kennedy after dinner last Thursday. She was shot as she left an election rally in Rawalpindi early that evening. Pakistan's government claims instead that she was thrown against the lever of her car's sunroof, fracturing her skull," according to McClatchy.

McClatchy also reported that Bhutto's report was "report was 'very sensitive' and that the party wanted to initially share it with trusted American politicians rather than the Bush administration, which is seen here as strongly backing Musharraf."

F. Clifton White, an obscure, highly-connected conservative political operative, was a key force in the development of the IFES. The F. Clifton White Applied Research Center for Democracy and Elections (ARC) is central to the IFES. White died in 1993 with a long list of accomplishments. He ran Volunteers for Nixon Lodge in 1960, and created the movement to draft Barry Goldwater for President in 1964. He managed Ronald Reagan's first campaign for President in 1968 and in 1980, Reagan's campaign manager Bill Casey and soon-to-be CIA director, "summoned White to his side at their Arlington headquarter as one of the two 'senior advisors' (the other was James Baker)," according to the *National Review*.

"During the 1980s White divided his time between his home in Greenwich, Connecticut, an office in Washington from which he directed the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, an organization that explains the techniques of democratic politics to nation's belatedly becoming interested in the subject, and the Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs at Ashland University in Ohio," wrote the *National Review*.

White served on the board of the National Republic Institute for International Affairs, a Republican Party conduit for NED funding and was involved in President George H.W. Bush's efforts to subvert and purchase the 1990 Nicaraguan election.

The big electronic push

But the big push for electronic voting came in the wake of the disastrous 2000 election. Dan Rather's HDNet investigative report "The Trouble with Touchscreens" suggests that Sequoia Pacific may have been aware of the hanging chad problem in advance. As one Sequoia employee tells Rather, "My own personal opinion was the touch screen voting system wasn't

getting off the ground . . . like they would hope. And because they weren't having any problems with paper ballots. So, I feel like they – deliberately did all this to have problems with the paper ballots so the electronically voting systems would get off the ground – and which it did in a big way."

During the 2000 Florida election fiasco, Morton Blackwell described what he saw as the likely tactics of the Democrats: "These people are basically Leninists. They will stop at nothing to win." In his assessment, "It could get bloody – figuratively and, I fear, literally."

Leading the charge for touchscreens was Doug Lewis of the Election Center, who was appointed in December 2000 to the National Elections Standards Task Force by the National Association of Secretaries of State. As the Kudzu chart indicates, Lewis testified as an "expert" on every single "election reform" commission or task force post-2000.   In 2001, Ohio Secretary of State and key Bush operative in Florida's 2000 election J. Kenneth Blackwell, was serving on the Federal Election Commission (FEC) advisory panel where he also pushed electronic voting.

This two-decade-long effort by a small group of conservative Republican operatives culminated in the passage of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002. HAVA created, among other things, the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) where many members of the Kudzu chart can currently be found. HAVA also required states to use federal funding to replace punchcard and lever voting systems with new systems in accordance with HAVA's voting system standards. In Ohio, while owning stock in Diebold, Secretary of State Blackwell personally negotiated an unbid contract with Diebold to bring touchscreen voting machines into the Buckeye State.

Just prior to the 2006 election, the highly-accurate Columbus *Dispatch* poll showed Blackwell losing by 36 points for Governor. Unexplainably, he picked up 12 points a few days later, on Election Day, losing by only 24 points.

Throughout Ohio, Democratic candidates lost 10-12 percent of their predicted vote totals. Senator Sherrod Brown, up by 24% in the last *Dispatch* poll, ending up winning by only 12 points.

Overall, we have only begun to scratch the surface of the on-going scandal of what has been done to the United States and its electoral process through the imposition of electronic voting machines. The voting-industrial complex has foisted its product on America not only for billions of dollars in profits, but also to turn the political tide of this nation to the Bush family and its minions.

In future articles, we will further explore the spread and impact of this phenomenon, and its impact on the decline of our body politic.

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