

Vote Rigging in the USA

by Mark Karlin via mander - Truthout *Thursday, Sep 13 2012, 1:30pm*
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Voting - for blue eyes only!

Mark Karlin interviews Greg Palast about his new book, *"Billionaires & Ballot Bandits: How to Steal an Election in 9 Easy Steps,"* which describes how plutocrats steal elections.



Greg Palast

Karlin: The Republicans don't just aim to steal elections in one way. They have a variety of methods to mug democracy. Can you explain a few of them?

Palast: Karl Rove - "Turdblossom" as Bush called him - has a computer-data-mining system called DataTrust, which he's joining up with a data-mining computer system set up the Koch brothers called Themis. These are voter-eating machines, designed to juice the attack on voter rolls by GOP secretaries of state. Ready for this? Over 22 million names were purged from voter rolls in the last two years. Those figures are from the US Election Assistance Commission - hidden in plain sight. And who gets purged?

Black voters, Latinos, Native Americans. In Colorado, the Republican secretary of state purged 19.4 percent of voters - that's one in five! In the book, she's the Purge'n General. Obama took Colorado in '08. He can kiss it goodbye.

My co-investigator and I, Bobby Kennedy, called the secretary of state of California, a Dem, who told us her GOP predecessor blocked 42 percent of new voter registrations because they had "suspicious" names - like Mohammed. For this reason, despite massive voter drives and the increase in Latino citizenship, Hispanic registration has dropped by 1 million since 2008. Caramba!

In all, 5,901,814 legitimate votes and voters were tossed out of the count in 2008. In '12 it will be worse. Way worse.

Karlin: Why do you think there isn't more public outrage about the GOP attempting to crush democracy?

Palast: Because Democrats are in on it, too, and that's the sick, sad truth. In New Mexico, a solid Democratic state where Latinos are half the citizenry, Bush carried the state and the GOP has the governor's mansion. Why?

Because the Hispanic Democratic elite of that state don't want no poor folk voting - or jackasses like Bill Richardson would never win a primary. When I called the secretary of state, Becky Vigil-Giron, to ask why, in one poor Hispanic precinct, there was not a single vote for president recorded, she told me that, "Those people can't make up their minds."

"Those people." I'm glad to say she's on her way to prison. But she's a Democrat.

So, Republicans and Democrats steal votes from the same people: the poor and voters of color.

But on a strict numerical scale, 90 percent of the victims are Democrats, though they are victimized by both parties.

Karlin: I've known you since you single-handedly exposed the caging strategy of Jeb Bush, Katherine Harris and a company then called ChoicePoint. Without that voter suppression in 2000, Gore would have won the popular vote in Florida as he did nationally. Yet, the mass media ignored your findings of a stolen election. Has anything changed? The mass corporate media still seems uninterested, or clueless - or both - when it comes to ratcheting down voting rights.

Palast: Yeah, it's changed. For the worse.

In the book, I've got a chapter, "De-Pressed," on how the US mainstream media simply refuses to cover the story or does so in a dumbass "he-said/she-said" way.

Example: NPR, what I call National Petroleum Radio, said of the Florida purge of over a quarter million citizens from voter rolls: "State elections officials began an investigation that appears to give that argument some credence." So NPR has concluded there's "credence" in the purge. That would mean that NPR found some illegal voters. After all, there's a list of a quarter million. They didn't find any - but they effectively endorse the idea because the Republicans said so. That's not reporting; that's repeating.

My team actually went through the lists. We found, for example, that a "Bobbi Moore" (black female) was removed as a felon because of a conviction of a "Robert Moore" (white male). It wasn't a random mistake - every name was a phony.

And NPR is the best in America. At least they put the story on air - even if they didn't get one fact right.

I report these stories on the top of the nightly news on BBC TV, so it goes out worldwide - except in the USA. Here I report on Truthout (bless you), which has the no-poop facts.

There's also this: No one inside the Great American Circus Tent likes to believe they're being fooled. America likes to think of itself as a democracy. No one really wants to know their ballot has gotten hijacked, boosted, deep-sixed, caged, purged, stuck inside a robot's pocket, fiddled, filched, flimmed or flammed.

Karlin: Of course, this is the first presidential election since the infamous Citizens United decision. That's like a fat cat license to buy the election, isn't it? They won't need to steal the vote if they can create an alternative reality with all that money going toward ads and other propaganda. They can just brainwash the vote.

Palast: Yes, they're buying your brain, not just your ballot. But who are these guys, and why do they

need a president? The point of the book is to tell you about the billion-dollar donor babies: Ice Man Simmons, Singer the Vulture, Snake Paulson - I didn't give them these nicknames, their bankers did. You should know what they have in mind for you. And I've got stuff on the Kochs you've never heard - from my files from years back when, alongside the FBI, I was investigating "Target 67C" - Charles Koch, for felony theft. No kidding. The indictment's in the book - and why Koch was never cuffed and jailed.

Karlin: Isn't it amazing that since 2000, Karl Rove has played a key role in GOP election theft strategies - and is still going strong in 2012?

Palast: Turdblossom has over a quarter billion dollars in his "social service charity," Crossroads. Over \$20 million from Ice Man. Unlike McCain, who wouldn't touch Rove because of Turdblossom's racist operations, the Republican National Committee has actually contracted with Rove to use his Jim Crow machine, DataTrust. Rove is straight-up, at least: I quote his line that the GOP can win swing states like North Carolina by "reducing black turnout by one-quarter of one." He knows how to do it: he invented voter caging. RFK says for that, he "should be in jail." But Bobby gets all upset about people committing felony violations of the Voting Rights Act. Runs in his family.

Karlin: You state that in the 2008 presidential election, 2,706,275 votes were cast and never counted. How did that happen?

Palast: Here's the facts, my friend, calculated from the raw data of the US Election Assistance Commission:

No less than

- 767,023 provisional ballots were cast and not counted;
- 1,451,116 ballots were "spoiled," not counted;
- 488,136 absentee ballots were mailed in, but not counted.

How? Well, I could write a book. And I did: "Billionaires & Ballot Bandits."

Karlin: In the chapter "The Hysteria Factor," you quote the former chairperson of the US Commission on Civil Rights, Mary Frances Berry, as telling you: "Elections aren't stolen in the vote count - they're stolen in the no count." Isn't that the essence of what the Republican Party is trying to do?

Palast: Yep, that's the Rove-arian cancer on our body politic. There are no swing voters left. If you can't tell the difference between the candidates, you probably can't work a doorknob to get out to vote anyway.

The trick is this: Take 1.45 million ballots "spoiled" (cast and not counted for technical reasons, mostly errors in machine readers). The chance your vote will spoil if you're black is seven times the likelihood your ballot will be ruined by a machine if you're white. Whose vote is that? Who gave black people the crap voting machines? The same ones that gave them the crap schools. And Rove knows how to keep it that way.

Karlin: Yet, watchdogs such as Mark Crispin Miller, Brad Friedman and many others do contend that the electronic voting machines do allow for the theft of elections through electronic manipulation of election outcomes.

Palast: That's why I'm including Friedman's analysis on my associated web site, BallotBandits.org. I,

though, don't want folks to forget the easiest way to steal votes by computer: unplug the computer. That's right. One of the key ways black votes are gone is the miraculous way that computers have glitches in Hispanic precincts, which suffer a loss of votes five times the loss in white precincts. So the votes aren't changed, they simply disappear. Oops! A "glitch" - no nasty software tricks to explain. Details? You'll have to read the book.

Karlin: You point out that Bill Clinton was beholden to big money, as is Barack Obama. Yet, the efforts at voter suppression tend to be almost all Republican - and as your book points out, they are pretty unrelenting. Why does big money play a role in both parties, but restricting voting rights tends to be confined to just one of them?

Palast: Democrats used to be the vote suppression champs: Jim Crow laws were written by Democrats. Democrats wore white sheets; Republicans use spreadsheets. I was in Chicago when Boss Daley would fire city workers who didn't pull the A Lever (you could vote party line with a single pull).

Vote theft has always targeted the poor and minorities. Today, that benefits (mostly) the GOP, so they've got the incentive to bleach the voter rolls white.

Karlin: I've asked you this before, but let me take your temperature on this again. In the United States, you continue to be shunned by the mainstream corporate media, which means the audience for your intrepid investigations is limited. Does this discourage you? Does the fact that election theft appears to be getting more brazen instead of more transparent cause you to be cynical?

Palast: Yes, it does. I have a Pulitzer Prize in Despair. But with the love of a wonderful woman, my children and Felipe II in liter size, I can make it. And as long as I have Truthout, I know I can lob my investigations for the Guardian and BBC over the electronic Berlin Wall to be read in my home country.

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<http://truth-out.org/news/item/11500-greg-palast-on-how-the-gop-is-planning-to-steal-the-2012-election>

Jungle Drum Prose/Poetry. <http://jungledrum.lingama.net/news/story-111.html>