



Humanists Hawaii

NEWSLETTER

July 2007

July meeting at Krauss Hall

A Robert Greenwald film

Iraq for Sale The War Profiteers

*July 29, 2007
10:30 a.m.*

*Krauss Hall 112
University of Hawaii*

The story of what happens to everyday Americans when corporations go to war.

Acclaimed director [Robert Greenwald](#) (*Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*, *Outfoxed*, and *Uncovered*) takes you inside the lives of soldiers, truck drivers, widows and children who have been changed forever as a result of profiteering in the reconstruction of Iraq. *Iraq for Sale* uncovers the connections between private corporations making a killing in Iraq and the decision makers who allow them to do so.

From reviews on [Amazon](#):

"For the friends of the free market operating in Iraq, it doesn't matter who gets killed or why; every day is payday, and if from time to time events take a turn for the worse - another twenty or thirty Arabs annihilated in a mosque, a BBC cameraman lost on the road to the airport - back home in America with the flags and the executive-compensation packages, the stock prices for our reliably patriotic corporations rise with the smoke from the car bombs exploding in Ramadi and Fallujah: Lockheed Martin up from \$52 to \$75 between July 2003 and July 2006; over the span of the same three years, Boeing up from \$33 to \$77; ExxonMobil up from \$36 to \$65; Chevron up from \$36 to \$66; Halliburton up from \$22 to \$74; Flour up from \$34 to \$87." - Lewis Lapham, from his editorial in the September, 2006 issue of *Harper's* magazine.

Lapham's critique also provides the answer as to why we're in Iraq - some people are making a lot of money off of it, and they want to "stay the course."

"... True to the filmmaker's form, *Iraq for Sale* does not spend a second on the speculation that the Iraq venture was consciously planned years in advance to profit those who are discussed in the film. It does spend almost the entire duration detailing how those profits were eventually made and continue to be made, the type of suffering so far engendered, and why no oversight has been established to stop the bleeding." - Cvairag

A couple relevant quotes:

"Television is altering the meaning of "being informed" by creating a species of information that might properly be called disinformation . . . Disinformation does not mean false information. It means misleading information - misplaced, irrelevant, fragmented or superficial information - information that creates the illusion of knowing something, but which in fact leads one away from knowing."

--- [Neil Postman](#)

"The corporate grip on opinion in the United States is one of the wonders of the Western world. No First World country has ever managed to eliminate so entirely from its media all objectivity - much less dissent."

--- [Gore Vidal](#)

New Humanist Hawaii-made videos:

Defend Science Forum: parts 1&2

Part one: introduction by Michael Hadfield
"Why Evolution Matters" by Steve Palumbi

Part two: introduction by Michael Hadfield
"Controversies and Promises of Stem Cell Research" by Frederick Mercier
Questions and comments from the audience

Several months ago, Michael Mueller and David Mielke attended a workshop at ['Olelo Community Television](#) to learn to make videos of events. So far, they've completed two videos: A demonstration against the Iraq War and reactions to the Military Commissions act. Now novice producers Michael and David have completed videos of the March 30th Defend Science Forum at the University of Hawaii.

The [Defend Science Forum](#) elucidates how [the Bush administration is attacking science](#) by denying scientific truths such as evolution, disrupting scientific investigations into wide-ranging issues such as health and the environment, undermining science education, and calling into question the very process of scientific thinking. The Forum is a call to action to oppose these attacks – not only for scientists, but for humans everywhere and for future generations.

"Defend Science Forum: part 1" contains the introduction to the Forum by Prof. Michael G. Hadfield of the UH Dept. of Zoology and Professor Palumbi's lecture on "Why Evolution Matters" which explains the necessity of teaching and learning evolution because of its important effects on humanity. Steve Palumbi is Professor and Researcher at Stanford University concentrating in evolution and marine ecology. He is also author of the book, [The Evolution Explosion: How humans cause rapid evolutionary change](#). In both the book and the lecture, Prof. Palumbi shows how rapid evolution is central to emerging problems in modern society.

Both videos will be shown as occasional episodes of "What is Humanism?" Part one has appeared unscheduled at least twice already and the videos are scheduled to appear on 'Olelo's stations as follows.

Defend Science Forum part 1

Saturday, July 28, 2007 on VIEW channel 54 at 3:00pm
Saturday, August 4, 2007 on VIEW channel 54 at 3:00pm
Monday, August 20, 2007 on VIEW channel 54 at 3:00pm
Monday, August 27, 2007 on VIEW channel 54 at 3:00pm

"Defend Science Forum: part 2," contains the lecture "Controversies and Promises of Stem Cell Research" by neuronal stem cell researcher Frederic Mercier of the John A. Burns School of Medicine. Researcher Mercier outlines political and religious difficulties restraining current stem cell research and promising new approaches that may overcome or avoid these difficulties. A question and answer period focusing mainly on dealing with public knowledge and attitudes toward science closes the Forum.

Defend Science Forum part 2

Sunday, July 29, 2007 on VIEW channel 54 at 12:00pm
Thursday, August 2, 2007 on FOCUS channel 49 at 8:00pm
Sunday, August 5, 2007 on VIEW channel 54 at 2:00pm
Thursday, August 9, 2007 on FOCUS channel 49 at 3:00pm

. . . and our series: The Humanist Perspective

Through the research and contact efforts of member Walter Leu and the Olelo connections of Mike Mueller and Dave Mielke, Humanists Hawaii is now able to present the weekly series The Humanist Perspective.

We start on Olelo's VIEWS channel 54 the morning of August 12th at 8:00 am. Here are the topics for our first four weeks:

"America Needs a New Enlightenment:" with Paul Kurtz

Sunday, August 12, 2007 on VIEW channel 54 at 8:00am

"What the Scriptures Really Say" with R. Joseph Hoffmann

Sunday, August 19, 2007 on VIEW channel 54 at 8:00am

"Fighting for Reason on Campus" with Sarah Jordan & Thomas Donnelly

Sunday, August 26, 2007 on VIEW channel 54 at 8:00am

"The True Believer" with Dave Puls

Sunday, September 2, 2007 on VIEW channel 54 at 8:00am

Patriot Abuse

I was gagged by the Patriot Act while the attorney general was free to tell falsehoods about it. by Janet Nocek, *Hartford Courant*, July 22, 2007

When the USA Patriot Act was being reauthorized in 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales claimed that not one single abuse of the "national security letters" provision had been reported.

It must be his poor memory that caused Mr. Gonzales to tell Congress that no abuse had been reported. What else would explain why he did not mention the reports that described abuses and mismanagement of NSLs – which we now discover were in his possession before his testimony?

I was one of four library colleagues who challenged an NSL in the courts around the time of its reauthorization. We were under a gag order because of the nondisclosure provision of the NSL section of the Patriot Act. This happened even though a judge with high-level security clearance had declared that there was no risk in identifying us as recipients of an NSL.

We were therefore not allowed to testify to Congress about our experience with the letters – which seek information, without court review, on people like library users.

It is more than irksome to discover that the attorney general was giving Congress false information at the same time that we recipients of NSLs were not allowed to express our concerns. My colleagues and I were lucky to have our gag order lifted eventually, with the help of lawyers from the American Civil Liberties Union after the federal District Court found constitutional problems with that section of the Patriot Act. Unfortunately, we were prohibited from speaking to the public – or even to our US senators and representatives – until after the Patriot Act was reauthorized.

A gag order is very difficult to deal with. A person cannot tell her family or friends she has received a demand from the government to turn in information on another person. Whether you agree with the security-letter provision or not, receiving such a letter is an emotionally wrenching experience.

And if the government requires you to compromise your professional and personal ethics, it can be an intensely disturbing experience. You feel like a character in an Orwellian book. You feel trapped in a world that others like you may inhabit, but you cannot reach outside of that world to find out.

Reportedly hundreds of thousands of security letters have been sent out. The recipients remain gagged and can never speak about their experience, under threat of a five-year prison sentence. They can never describe the scope and nature of the information they give to the FBI.

Therefore, it is laughable to assume that no abuse has been made of the security-letter provision. The secrecy under which the provision is administered guarantees a lack of oversight.

The act was reauthorized without significant change to the nondisclosure provision, which prevents anyone who receives a national security letter from talking about the experience, to anyone, ever.

I don't believe the FBI is to blame for its reported mismanagement of NSLs. The Patriot Act does not effectively address court and congressional oversight. It follows that abuse and mismanagement are practically a given.

Janet Nocek is director of the Portland library and a member of the Executive Board of Library Connection, a Greater Hartford library consortium that received a national security letter in June 2005.

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See scheduled events, pictures of officers and current and archived newsletters at our website:

<http://hawaii.humanists.net/>

HH's Meeting Place Room 112 Krauss Hall

HH meets the last (not the fourth) Sunday of each month at 10:30 am. Here's how to get there.

Driving on Dole Street past the University, turn mauka on East West Road then ewa on Correa Road. Drive to the end and turn makai toward the circle with the big tree. There's free parking on part of the circle, on the other side of Krauss Hall and various lots around campus.



Don't miss our TV shows on 'Olelo Community Television

The Humanist Perspective

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The American Humanist Association (www.americanhumanist.org) is dedicated to ensuring a voice for those with a positive outlook, based on reason and experience, which embraces all of humanity.