

JBM and NM Interview 7/13/04

(Let's /
JBM: Why don't we start with *Fahrenheit 9/11*?

I've seen it three and
~~This was my third time.~~ With each viewing, I became

more aware of Michael Moore's tricks. I would say
Particularly the portion on Iraq,
about 75% of the film is indisputable, but ~~there are too~~
need less many tricks. *in the first half he uses* Michael Moore's theories on what's
going on with this country are valid, but certainly not
watertight. Half of it is undeniable, mainly the
portion on Iraq, and how we just don't belong there
and never should have gone.

NM: I don't disagree with that. I saw it for the first
time last night, and was pretty upset through the first
half. I thought, this is the sort of bad, dumb thing that
embattled liberals do all too often. Like talk-radio on

the right, they cut too many corners. I got pretty

bored with the Saudi Arabian business, ~~because there~~

~~were no hard facts~~ You don't make your case by

showing George H.W. Bush and a Saudi sheik shaking

hands. On a photo op, important people will shake

hands with the devil.

But when Moore got to Iraq, ~~changed my mind~~

it became a powerful film. Some critics thought it

was outrageous that Moore showed two boys flying

kites on the eve of war. They were playing in a most

creary park, running in front of ugly, cement block

buildings of the sort you see in cheap housing projects,

~~in America~~ the kind of unhappy, mass architecture

that pollutes the world. I thought the critics' wrath was

excessive. Just because Saddam Hussein was a

monster, do people think nobody ever flew a kite

under his regime?

JBM: Well, ^{the right was upset because} people were nailing Moore by saying he

made it look as if ^(Iraq) it ~~was~~ ^{under Saddam} a peaceful, happy country.

But it's not as though he doctored the footage. He

101 He showed the footage that he had procured for just happened to show a ~~very~~ relatively happy moment that, and it was true, and for me, illustrated that ~~Baghdad~~ is a real city with real people in it, ~~and it was not a city of terror~~

NM: He could have done it with more irony. He was a less heavy hand. He was

trying too hard to make a case right there. The left

when he didn't need to. the facts
of office. alone

seems to think that if you can make people laugh at

the right wing, you're winning. through ridicule, they're They're wrong; that's

when we're losing. Back with the Progressive party

in 1948—more than fifty years ago—we used to laugh

and laugh at how dumb ~~and ignorant~~ the other side

And that
who we
bombed.

we're
~~more. We're~~ (further behind now than ~~we were~~ when
we started. *In any event, Moore is*

JBM: I have to agree. The right has unbelievable
skills with propaganda and sound bites. They sense
that if you take more than ten seconds to answer a
question, you've lost your audience. The left doesn't
have that. Michael Moore does.

on the left
~~NM:~~ Well, he's the closest thing we have to a right
wing demagogue.

JBM: Right.

~~NM:~~ ~~Is that necessary?~~ I don't have the answer. I
~~ponder it.~~ Some of the things he was doing were
damn ugly. There are perfectly sincere people, after
all, on the right, and they had to be ~~absolutely~~
just as
offended, ~~the way~~ people on the left are infuriated by

talk-radio's cheap shots. On the other hand, what ^{because of the position on Iraq} finally made the picture ^{incredibly} powerful was the stuff on Iraq. ^{There's} Three times as powerful as all the earlier Saudi ^{there's} material. When it came to Iraq, he didn't need cheap shots. The real story was in the faces. All those faces on the Bush team. What you saw was the spiritual emptiness of those people, starting with Bush. He has one of the emptiest faces in America. It's amazing. There's no psychic density in the man. Bush looks to have no more depth than spit on a rock.

In contrast are the faces of the American soldiers who are over there. Most of them are so bewildered, so innocent.

JBM: They're kids!

NM: They look like good people. And they are being taken for a hideous ride. The second half of the movie builds to great power. It ~~was far more artistic than the~~ ^{JBM: Yes,} first half. All right, end of the critique! ^{We're}

~~What we're here to talk about is the Republican convention coming to New York. I would go so far as to say that I am desperately worried about what the demonstrators and the agitators are going to do.~~
^{NM:} ~~Because,~~ ^{is:} the first question to ask ~~before anyone gets~~ ready to march is: Why did the Republicans choose New York? I would say they are hoping there will be ugly riots. ~~That could be their best way to get re-~~ elected. They're looking for a repeat of the Democratic Convention ^{of} 68 in Chicago. In that case, you remember, the police mowed down the

demonstrators on Michigan Boulevard. It was ^{actually} called

~~Even so,~~

"The Massacre of Michigan Boulevard," And yet, the

~~and~~

Democrats looked bad in the wake. Nixon ended up

~~squeaking through to win.~~

~~If I were a staff adviser in top~~

~~squeaking through to win. The situation here could~~

~~Administration circles, I'd be ~~very~~ thinking~~

~~develop into worse. Because the key thing to keep in~~

~~I'll put us on notice~~

~~mind is how the coolest part other side is thinking. If I~~

~~advise~~

~~were a Republican, I might be saying to myself that~~

~~like this: "The thing we~~

~~the thing I need is an ugly riot in New York. Obscene~~

~~episodes. How to obtain that? (Well, those kids are so~~

~~those kids in the street will be made mad, maybe they'll do it on their own. Even so, we~~

~~to do a lot on the street~~

~~can certainly use a corps of agents provocateurs.~~

Fahrenheit 9/11 excited the rage that half of America

is feeling towards our boy, Bush. During the

convention, when the stakes are upped, the desire of

the street people to express their rage, their contempt,

~~their anathema against our administration will be~~

~~intense. At that point~~ ^{A few} of our guys, well-placed,

~~are as good as a match on gasoline. We need~~ ^{examples}

^{a couple of stalwarts} ~~at fellows so bad they'll~~ ^(who will)

~~urinate on the good American~~

~~flag. Before the TV cameras, of course. It's been done~~ ^{Accrual}

^{Get it straight, Tuby} ~~on a minor scale in previous political campaigns.~~

~~During the '70s, the Democrats used to have a guy~~
~~named Dick Tuck. He came up with a few capers. But~~

~~that was small fry in those days. Now, we, the~~

~~Administration, have to be playing for keeps.~~

^{Could} ~~Because this may be the most important single election~~

~~in our lifetime. If we lose this time, we could be in~~

~~real trouble. Everything we've been doing for the~~ ^{all}

~~last four years is bound to come out~~ ^{given} ~~once another~~

~~administration is in the White House. So, we can't~~

afford to lose. Karl Rove was saying just a couple of

Karl Rove was saying/ could gain
years ago (that we Republicans would have a twenty-year

~~(year)~~ hegemony once we won the next election. He

hasn't said it lately, not since the worst of Iraq came

through. Because now, if we lose, we could be out of

~~we can't tell [Rove] what to do~~
power for twenty years. ~~How can we tolerate that? So,~~

I recommend
I would advise ~~that~~ we put as many of our people into

the protest movement as we can find, ~~certainly as~~

*Let them go to work,
Big Time.*

~~a:~~
~~many get away with without being caught. You know,~~

in the Fifties, the American Communist Party was

kept alive in part by the fact that a good number of the

members were FBI men. Now, it's more difficult, but

surely we can plant people in these polyglot activist

~~movements who want to cut up the American flag,~~

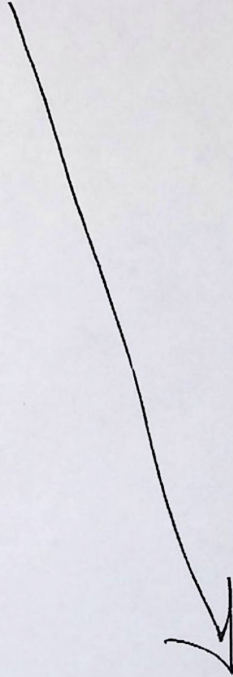
~~burn it, urinate on it. Big Time.~~

NM: The networks and cable companies will be

looking for ~~clips~~ clips

JBM: Right, but it's also for the demonstrators' own protection. A cop is much less likely to bash a protester in the head if he's holding a video camera.

NM: I must say, I hadn't thought of that.



~~NM: No. At this point things have gotten so bad that to play fair is to ask for it. It's as if you get into a fight where you are only allowed to use your fists. The other guy can bring his feet, his fists, his brass knuckles. All right, you have to go in equally armed.~~

~~Afterward, there's a lot to pay for. But~~ That's not my first worry right now. ^{Do} Are the activists ^{really} ready to watch

~~themselves, or do they not really know what they're~~ ^{going} ~~going into?~~ ^{that's my concern. Or, do they} I hope they don't assume that expressing

That's my concern.

their rage is equal to getting Kerry elected. It could have exactly the opposite effect. The better mode may be to frustrate the republicans by coming up with orderly demonstrations. Now when I was young, the suggestion to be moderate was like a stink bomb to me. An orderly demonstration? What were we, cattle?

You have to express your rage. Well, I'm trying to say, we would do well to realize that on this occasion, there are more important things than expressing our rage. If only we could remind everybody who goes out to march of the old Italian saying: "Revenge is a dish that people of taste eat cold." Instead of expressing yourself at the end of August, think of how nicely you will be able to keep expressing yourself over the four years to come if ^{we} you win. It could even be ^{our} twenty years, ~~to come if you can contain~~ ourselves. Just keep thinking how much the Republicans want anarchy on the streets, and ^{don't} we're marching right into their trap.

JBM: So, what can the activists do to avoid that?

NM: Well, the trouble with being in a cautionary

position, is that you're limited. You're trying to slow

down a wave. Everyone expects some excesses—it's

a question of how many there will be. Three of the

best words ever written happened to be by Engels. He

said, "Quantity changes quality." If you have one

potato, you eat it; if ~~you have~~ ^{with} a thousand, you bring

them to market; if ~~you have~~ ^{and with} a billion potatoes, you ~~try~~

~~to~~ corner the market. Most of the leaders of most of

the activist organizations are ~~highly~~ ^{highly} responsible, most

of them, certainly. And I think some of them see the

peril, ~~as I do. They will do their best to keep things in~~ ^{They will do well to}

~~proportion. But I would say that the leaders have to~~

look at their own ranks, and see if they've got some

peculiarly rotten apples in the barrel.

IBM: ~~Well, this is~~ ^{that's} one of the problems with this movement, ^{is the lack of a} ~~There is no~~ leader. No focal point.

NM: When you say "this movement," there are different groups, no? Some have leaders, some don't, no?

IBM: There's no leader, per se. There are spokespeople for each group. But, this is a movement that has grown organically and has relied on the goodness of human nature almost to a fault. And, I believe it's coming to a head where, without a focal point, without somebody directing the huge crowd that's going to be there ^{without saying} ~~without saying~~ and giving some voice of, "this is what the movement believes in," it could be anarchy. Because, you have people from every different corner of this country coming together with

their own purposes in mind, their own cause that

they're fighting for, ^{It's all} which goes under the huge

umbrella of "anti-Bush." They don't agree on

everything, by any means. And, the idea behind it at

the meetings is that everyone has a right to be heard,

there is no leader, we're here to listen, and to

organize. But, ^{then it becomes} it's really a question ^{(of) whether the} can masses ^{can}

without a leader be effective? ~~And~~, I don't think so. I

don't feel that.

NM: ~~You know~~, ^{in 1967} You made me think of the march on

the Pentagon. ^a There was a marvelous guy named

David Dellinger, now dead, who led it, and a man

named A.J. Muste, an old anarchist, ^{also done,} a fine old

anarchist. ~~And~~, They got together and realized they had

to find some kind of umbrella organization that could

have input to all the various activist groups. And they

succeeded. They finally ended up with a whole series

of discussions with the various elements. And there

was virtually no ^{disarray} ~~horror~~ to speak of, compared to what

it could have been. And the march on the Pentagon

even ended up having a final effect that was impressive. I

think it ^{was} ~~tended to be~~ the beginning of the end of the

war in Vietnam, for a very simple reason: Lyndon

Johnson saw fifty thousand mostly middle-class

people come to Washington to stage a set of

demonstrations that were going to be opposed by

troops and police. LBJ knew people well. From his

point of view, most middle-class people were *hardly self*

OR physical bravery
towards, if they were going to pay their own money

and come by bus or train to march into the possibility of

being hit ^{over} of the head with a cop's club, ~~pay their own~~
~~way to come all the way to Washington~~, then there
 had to be millions ^{of} people behind them. LBJ knew he
 couldn't get five thousand ^{of his own} people to DC to support the
 war ^{unless} even if he paid their way. That did something to
^{his} LBJ's confidence concerning the war. Dellinger and
 Muste held out to the demonstrators that if they
 showed a certain discipline and resolution in their
 ranks, they would ^{disconcert} discommodate the Administration
 which was counting on the fact that the demonstration
 would ^{go} prove wacky and wild.

JBM: I don't know that there's time to change the
 mood before the RNC begins.

NM: I don't think there is, but I do hope ~~that~~ words of
 warning are ~~also~~ worth something. Because some of

the kids out there, as you said, have one ~~idea and one~~
 idea only. That's to create ^{enough} ~~as much~~ uproar ~~as they can~~
~~to~~ and get on TV. That's going to be one powerful

driving force. And you're going to have some wily
 sharp cameramen from Fox News ^{among others} looking for the
 worst kids and photographing them with their mouths

wide open and their nostrils full of snot, boring in with

^{with a} the wide-angle camera right up underneath their nostrils,
^{which, hopefully for Fox News, will}
^{be full of snot} nostrils. Sure. There's going to be a lot of that. But

^{will be full of}
 There are also going to be people who have mixed
 feelings about it. People who feel fear about the
 demonstration even as they go out there. Some kids
 may like my cautions for the wrong reason, which is,
 now they don't have to take such chances. My hope is ^{that}

there are also going to be ^{enough} very serious people whose

most powerful passion will not be to get on TV, but to defeat Bush. And you know when a crowd is unruly, simple things can calm them, too.

JBM: Such as?

NM: Such as one guy who has ^{enough} ~~a certain~~ authority and charisma, ^{to} ~~and can~~ say, "Fellows, let's not blow it!"

^{can be enough)} That's all it needs ^{to} ~~to~~ quiet ~~down~~ a crowd. Then you've ^{they} ~~got to think~~, New York cops ^{can also be} ~~are~~ reasonably good

people. They used to be in my day. But, you're also going to have a few ~~cops~~ ^{enough} who are crooked ~~and on a~~ ^{to be paid} payroll. It'll be to their advantage to start a real fracas.

John, there are so many ways it can go wrong.

JBM: ~~But~~ ^(which) there are techniques to stop that, that I've seen in action ~~that~~ have worked. When a cop hits a little hippy in the head, instead of charging ~~the cops~~, if

everybody sits down, ~~instead~~ and the cameras are rolling, whoever is in charge of the police at that given time knows, ^e "this is going to look horrible; this is going to make news." ^e But, as you say, you need someone to stand up there and do it. Where is that person?

NM: I think people will emerge. You know, leaders come very often out of these situations. It's not necessarily going to be a ~~passive business, all lambs~~ ^{nothing but} heading into the slaughterhouse.

JBM: Well, I know one man who has the potential to stand up in front of a crowd and get them to go his way. He's got a set of brass balls. Of all of the activist organizing leaders that I've found, ^{few} ~~none~~ of them have this kind of death gut balls, ~~except for Cheri Honkala,~~

~~the woman~~ who runs the Poor People's Rights campaign, and
~~she's got bigger balls than most guys I know.~~ Now,

I've said to this guy that one old lady, standing up ^{in the front lines} and
~~saying "You're not going to push me out of the way,"~~

is worth ten anarchists throwing bricks through

windows. ^{And in order to get that old lady out to the protest you need to create a relatively} He disagrees. And, that is, I think, one of

the fundamental problems. ^{safe environment} The ones who look to a
~~more passive approach don't really have the stuff to~~

~~hop up and command a crowd.~~ The ones who ~~do~~ ^{could possibly} have the stuff

~~might~~ get carried away in the moment and look to lead
 that crowd crashing through Madison Square Garden.

NM: They'll never get through. Yes, you touched the
 center of my fear, which is I know myself well enough
 from the old days, and ~~in my own small way my~~

~~way was nothing historic at all~~ but, what I do recall

to hop
up and
command
a crowd
generally
have the
tendency
to

is the power and excitement you feel when you're sneaking, and ~~you're~~ getting a crowd keyed up.

JBM: It's drugs. It's adrenaline rush.

MM: It's far more powerful than a good drug; it's extraordinary. It's very hard to tone it down. This is why I feel dread about what's coming up. I think with all the cautionary words in the world, things are likely to bust loose. If I were a powerful Democrat, I would already be discounting the losses, thinking of how do we recoup from ~~these~~ ^{these} losses. But they could be ~~huge~~ ^{wide-spread}.

That's my fear. I ~~think there is nothing that the~~
~~Republicans will stop at to win this election.~~

JBM: In 2000, when I voted for Nader, there was a feeling amongst a number of us that if Bush wins, it's not the end of the world. It will galvanize the ~~left~~ who

had become pacified by eight years of Clinton. Now, I feel that we are at the brink. If we don't pull back a few steps by getting Kerry in there, we're fucked. I don't know if we can make it through another four years of Bush.

NM: Oh, we'll make it through although I'm not saying what we'll be like at the end ~~of those four years~~. By then, Karl Rove may have his twenty years.

Just think of the kind of brainwashing we've had for the last four. *Only Bush, rinses a/* ~~Every time Bush opens his mouth he~~

~~Bush sees rational speech as ugly and ineffective, unless it~~
~~washes a few hundred thousand brains with every~~

sentence. He speaks only in clichés. The question to ask next, which they don't ask enough on the ~~left~~, is what is really at stake for the most gung-ho

believe. The others—wholly manipulative. They wouldn't know what the truth is. They're interested solely in the effectiveness of the message.

JBM: Can we talk about the moderate Republicans' role in this election a little bit? Like McCain, for instance? When he came out strong for Bush? Why?

NM: We can talk about it. I don't know if it's relative. More like a side note, a sidebar. McCain, I think, wants to be president. He certainly has every right. All the same, politicians make very hard choices.

Very few people can be politicians. ~~Therefore, the~~ ^{because the} choices are ~~sometimes~~ ^{often so} godawful. In addition, you have to smile standing next to people you despise. Even a relatively honest man has to become pretty ~~dam~~ phony. It's imperative to know which way the

wind is blowing, or you're dead as a politician. You can have the honesty and incorruptibility of Ralph Nader, but, as we see, that does not get you elected, president. So, even McCain must have said to himself, "I could be president. I could be a much better Republican president than George Bush ever dreamed of being. Whereas, if I go with Kerry, and Kerry loses, I'm doomed—I ^{will be} a black sheep in my own party, ~~family~~. And if Kerry wins, ^{I'll} and I'm there for eight ~~years, they're not going to do anything with me. I'll~~ be a lame duck vice president all the way. Whereas, if I go with Bush and he wins, in four years I'm the logical choice to be the Republican candidate. Indeed, win or lose for Bush, I'm the frontrunner Republican candidate for 2008. The Republicans will know I'll be

the only possibility to beat either Kerry or, if he loses, Hillary Clinton." These are McCain's parameters.

JBM: However, if McCain comes out strong for

Bush—say, he were even to run as his vice-president,
~~and Bush wins, ^{and} has another four years unchecked by ^{think of}~~
~~reelection. The amount of damage he will do, the~~
~~amount of critique that McCain has had of Bush in the~~
~~past four years, I can't imagine ^{McCain} he would be able in all~~
 good conscience to put up with what Bush would do
 with another four years. How does that put him in a
 strong position to run for president if he kowtows to
 Bush?

NM Well, for one thing, Bush would never take
~~as Vice-President)~~
 McCain, because McCain wouldn't kowtow that
~~much. Second of all, politicians do have their vanity,~~

~~Could remind you. And~~ McCain might think, "George is an empty vessel. If I were vice-president, I could influence him. He might become a better president, if I were vice-president." That could be the barb on the harpoon that hooks McCain. "I owe it to the country to make George W. Bush a better president." That could be an element. McCain could decide, "Yes, yes, really I have to bite the bullet and work for a man I truly despise, but it's necessary. America needs it." The moment a politician says to himself, "America needs it," he can shift the direction of the wind within the halls of his own brain.

IBM Recently, Gore called for the resignation of all administration staff underneath Bush and Cheney.

But George Tenet is the one who retires, and suddenly. Why?

NM: The CIA was miserably compromised.

Everybody went to great lengths to say that the administration did not lean on the CIA ^{to produce the} ~~for their~~ results, ^{they wanted you} but I can promise, the CIA does not ignore what the administration ^(is calling for) wants. (Bush doesn't say to Tenet, "You do it my way." And then Tenet says to the next person, "You do it my way," all the way down to the poor guy at the bottom who said A is A but now says, ^{yes sir, yes sir} "Oh, yes, sir, yes, sir, A is Z." It doesn't work that openly. People in the CIA are often career-motivated. They know the right thing to do for their career. It doesn't always have anything to do with the right ^{stuff} thing so far as intelligence is concerned. You

learn quickly. Many of the people in the CIA, the power shakers, the power makers, the power brokers, learn what's needed. Intelligence in itself is ideally a ~~sublime~~ ascetic activity. Like most ascetic activities, it's miserably corrupted. That's true of every intelligence agency in the world. They all end up doing what they feel is needed for their country, for their own career, their next step. So, the CIA was abominably corrupted by the move to go to war against Iraq. Many analysts who had information that Iraq had nothing in the way of WMD soon gave it up. The urge to satisfy the president became so intense that Tenet, who was probably a good director of the CIA, got carried away. And he said—what was that marvelous remark? He shot both arms into the air to

say, "It's a slam dunk." Apparently, he didn't know

that the most electrifying slam
~~the color of the slam dunk is that it's done with one~~
dunks are done with one jump
 hand, not two. I expect George Bush ~~didn't~~ know the

difference either. That didn't keep them from

speaking in metaphor. In any event, Tenet had to get

out. It would have been intolerable. ~~It would have~~

~~been intolerable~~ for the administration and himself to

face the discord of the oncoming music.

JBM: He said the biggest reason he was retiring was
 for the well-being of his family.

once said
 NM: Samuel Johnson ~~made~~ "Patriotism is the last
 refuge of a scoundrel." Well, the family is the last

a
 refuge of ~~politician~~ who's retiring in disgrace.

JBM: What happens if there's a terrorist attack
 between now and the election?

P
6
6
1
2
M

NM: I don't know whether it'll benefit Kerry, or

That's a
 Bush ~~the~~ hard one to decide in advance. Bush has
 been saying to America: "I've made America more
 secure. I've made America safer." He could be hurt
 badly by a large attack. On the other hand, a knee-jerk
 reflex in Americans: ~~when~~ there's foreign trouble,
 you rally behind the president. So, on balance, that to
 me is like a 55% /45% question, slightly in favor of
 Bush. But I really don't know the answer. I can't
 pretend to. The character of the attack ~~will~~ *would* have a
 great deal to do with it. Don't forget: 9/11 was the
 essence of political and spiritual shock. We'll never be
 the same. Whereas if a dirty bomb were set off, that
 would be hideous, and would inspire tremendous

JBM: Just to clarify, MoveOn.org created a campaign called "Bush in Thirty Seconds," in which they put out the word to everyone: make a thirty-second commercial at home and send it in to us. We'll pick the top—however many—one hundred, two hundred submissions and put them up on the website, put them on television, perhaps. They got thousands of responses. A lot of them were damn good, so they put a bunch up, but there was one that likened Bush to Hitler. After a day or two they took it off and MoveOn said it ^{had been a} ~~was~~ in bad taste. But MoveOn is not part of the Kerry campaign. Moveon is an independent organization—so, theoretically, it's entertainment; they can do whatever they want to do. On the Bush campaign reelection website, they put up an ad, which

likened Gore and Dean and Michael Moore and,

intimately, Kerry to Hitler. They tied MoveOn into it

as well. Only they did not say that what they were

doing, was in bad taste. They've flipped it completely.

When both sides are accusing the other of tendencies

towards Hitler, has the impact of Hitler been lost?

Because, when I was in grade school, Hitler and

World War II was still fresh enough that that was the

embodiment of evil. Now the word "evil" has been so

bastardized and so cheapened that I wonder if for the

generations ^{after} ~~below~~ mine, Hitler has the same impact?

And if not, what does that mean?

NM Oh, I think for ^{the youngest generations} ~~this generation~~, Hitler has

~~not~~ ^{more} ~~there~~, ^{Hitler still has}

somewhat more impact than Attila the Hun, but it's

^{no longer}

~~not~~ that immediate. For people who lived through the

Second World War and for their children, there is still
an impact. It could be that the most tremendous
personal crime we could accuse George Bush of is
that he probably never said to himself, "I don't
deserve to be president." You can't trust a man who's
never been embarrassed by himself. The vanity of
the man stands out with every smirk. He literally
cannot control his vanity. It seeps out with every
movement of his lips, every tight-lipped grimace.
Every grin is a study in smugsmanship. If I knew
more American history, I might ^{feel} ~~be~~ authoritative
enough to say he's done more harm to this country
than any president in history. In any event, he's hurt
us grievously. But he is not Hitler. Even at his worst,
one can't conceive it. Bush is essentially a superficial

He lacks the ~~be able to~~
man. ~~Having the evil imagination to destroy six~~

million Jews? And millions of Poles, Czechs,
Russians, and gypsies, perhaps ten million people all
together in the concentration camps? Or, Stalin, with
the twenty million who died from famines and the
gulags. Those people are a different order of horror.

And I hate ~~comparing anything to Hitler~~. Even to
compare this war to Vietnam is a stretch. Because

Let's face the fact, fifty thousand Americans were
killed in the ten years of Vietnam. And two million
Asians. Now that could yet happen in ten years of
Iraq. But, for now, let's keep ~~the~~ proportions.

JBM: There are a lot of similarities between the war
in Iraq and the war in Vietnam. Just because the

numbers aren't the same yet—we haven't been there for ten years.

NM: There are a lot of similarities, there are a lot of dissimilarities. ^{Can we} Let's leave it at that?

JBM: I agree with you on Bush not possessing the wherewithal to be comparable to anyone remotely like Hitler. What about Cheney?

NM: I feel it's fair game to insult politicians on their vices or their lacks, and on their strengths, if they're ugly strengths. There's plenty to attack Cheney about. But there's no evidence whatsoever that he has any interest in liquidating huge numbers of people in institutional ways. He may not give a damn about millions of people worldwide dying of poverty, because they don't get proper medical care, but you

can't say that's Hitlerian. Let's keep the categories!

Without them, it's just a sludge out there. Politics ~~is~~

is had enough without messing it up further.

JBM: Yes, I agree. But my estimate of Cheney from every speech I've seen him give, every word I've read that he's spoken is that he's always going to do what's cost-efficient for his constituents, regardless of how many people have to die in the process.

JBM: Well, ^{Cheney} ~~he~~ doesn't see it as people ^{perishing} ~~dying~~ in the process. ^{At worst, he} ~~He~~ sees it as the weak being ^{left} ~~put~~ on a railroad siding, ^{I expect he believes that} ~~for the time being. He sees~~ history as being

is made by the top 1% of the people alive, and it's to the benefit of the other 99%, because the 1% at the top

knows what they're doing ^{The others don't} ~~far better than the bottom~~
Cheney is a study in highly refined ^{contempt.}
~~99% of his mind.~~

TBM
Revised
7/22
7/23

Doc ref: 71904

JBM and NM Interview 7/13/04

Sudeetha, Pages are 1 to 63

plus a separate box for 1A + 1B

JBM: Let's start with *Fahrenheit 9/11*?. I've seen it three times and with each viewing, I became more aware of

Michael Moore's tricks. I would say about 50% of the film is indisputable, particularly the portion on Iraq, but in the first half he uses too many needless tricks.

NM: I don't disagree with that. I saw it for the first time last

night and was ~~pretty~~ upset through the first half. I thought,

this is the sort of bad, dumb thing that embattled liberals do

all too often. Like talk-radio on the Right they cut too many

corners. I got pretty bored with the Saudi Arabian business.

You don't make your case by showing George H.W. Bush

and a Saudi sheik shaking hands. On a photo op, important

politicians

people will shake hands with the devil.

But when Moore got to Iraq, it became a powerful film.

Some critics thought it was outrageous that Moore showed

My guess
is that
1 to 63
comes
out
to
about
50%
correctly.
Let's
see.

P2

two boys flying kites on the eve of war. Just because Saddam Hussein was a monster, do people think nobody ever flew a kite under his regime?

JBM: Well, the Right was upset because Moore made it look as if Iraq was a peaceful, happy country under Saddam. But it's not as though he doctored the footage. He just happened to show a relatively happy moment, and for me it illustrated that Baghdad was a real city with real people in it. And that's who we bombed.

~~Even though he could have done it for less money. He was trying~~

~~too hard to make a case for it when he didn't need to. The~~

~~facts suffice.~~ Moore seems to think that if you ^{get} can make

people ^(laughing) laugh at the Right wing, you ^{will win} ~~are winning~~ through

ridicule. He's wrong ^{lose,} ~~that's~~ when we ~~are~~ losing. Back with

the Progressive party in 1948—more than fifty-five years

ago—we used to laugh and laugh at how dumb the other side

was. ~~and~~ We're still laughing, and we're further behind now,

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INSERT 12

24
25

~~Second World War and for their children, there is still an~~

impact. It could be that the most tremendous personal crime

we could accuse George Bush of is that he probably never

said to himself, "I don't deserve to be president." ~~You can't~~

You just can't

trust a man who's never been embarrassed by himself. The

vanity of ~~the man~~ *George W.* stands out with every smirk. He literally

cannot control ~~his~~ *that* vanity. It seeps out with every movement

of his lips, every tight-lipped grimace. Every grin is a study

in smugmanship. ~~If I knew more American history, I might~~

feel authoritative enough to say he's done more harm to this

country than any president in history. In any event, he's hurt

us grievously. But he is not Hitler. Even at his worst, one

can't conceive it. Bush ~~is essentially a superficial man. He~~

lacks the evil imagination to be able to destroy six million

Jews. And millions of Poles, Czechs, Russians, and gypsies,

perhaps ten million people all together in the concentration

camps. Or, Stalin, with the twenty million who died from

INSERT
A

than when we started. In any event, Moore is the closest thing we have on the Left to a Right wing demagogue.

JBM Right. Yes.

~~But~~ Some of the things he was doing were damn ugly.

There are perfectly sincere people, after all, on the Right, and they had to be offended ^{by the Libs} just as people on the Left are infuriated by talk radio's cheap shots. On the other hand,

~~what finally made the picture powerful was the stuff on Iraq~~

~~was power & fact.~~

There, he didn't need cheap shots. The real story was in the faces. All those faces on the Bush team. What you saw was the spiritual emptiness of those people, ~~starting with Bush.~~

~~Bush~~

He has one of the emptiest faces in America. ~~It's amazing.~~

There's no psychic density ^{to} in the man. ~~He~~ Bush looks to have no more depth than spit on a rock. ~~He~~

~~In contrast are the faces of the American soldiers who are over there. Most of them are so bewildered, so innocent.~~

JBM they're kids!

INSERT A
from p 25

INSERT A
from p 29
new page
Originally
page 26

JBM. His [the] sunny face does bring
 out the cage like the Left
~~the cage like the Left~~
 so many people's blood boil at
 the sight of an American
 President [before] Especially ~~the~~
 in New York. Of all the
 cities out there, ~~the~~
 why would the Republicans pick
 New York to hold their [National]
 Convention?

Insert 41
 5

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6

10/1/74

NM: They look like good people. And they are being taken

for a hideous ride. The second half of the movie builds to the of
great power. His little sunny face does bring out the rage in the Left
The movie shows so many people's blood boil at the
Sight of an American President, before.

JBM: Yes, end of the critique! (We're here to talk about the

Especially
in New York.

Republican National Convention

Why would the
Republicans pick
their City to have
National Convention?

NM:

Why did the Republicans

NM:

choose New York? I would say they are hoping there will be

for ugly attacks

to
riots. They're looking for a repeat of the Democratic

Convention of '68 in Chicago. In that case, you remember,

the police mowed down the demonstrators on Michigan

Boulevard. It was actually called "The Massacre of Michigan

Boulevard" and Nixon ended up squeaking through to win.

on a voice in top Republican

If I were a staff advisor in top Administration circles

circles, talking "what for New York"

(I'd be thinking like this: "The thing we need is a large-scale

a couple of

some of

riot in New York. Plus some real obscene episodes? Those

those activist

crazy

kids in the street will be mad enough to do a lot on their own,

but we can do better with a few of our guys, well-placed. We

March 1990

need a couple of stalwarts who will urinate on the good

American flag. ~~After all, ~~that~~ if we lose,~~
~~Before the TV cameras, of course. Get it~~

~~straight! This could be the most important single election in~~

~~our lifetime. If we lose, all we've been doing for the last~~

~~four years~~ is bound to come out. ~~Just~~ a couple of years ago,

Karl Rove was saying that we Republicans could gain a

twenty-year hegemony ~~once we won~~ the next election. He

hasn't said it lately, not since the worst of Iraq came through.

Because now, ~~if we lose~~ we could be out of power for ~~those same~~

twenty years. ~~I~~ ^{So,} recommend ~~that~~ we put as many of our people

into the protest movement ^{in New York} as we can find. Let them ~~get~~ ^{get their hands}

~~work. Big Time!~~

Or so, at least, speaks the cool Republican planner I
envisage in my ~~novelist's~~ mind.

IBM: There could be such people out there. But the

Republicans may not even need them. There are thousands

of fifteen, sixteen, seventeen year old anarchists, who are

third of 1994

filled with rage. And when they throw a brick through a

window, ^{it makes them feel good and} they also know ^{that} there's a good chance they ^{might} ~~not get news~~

end up on ~~TV~~. This feeds into the celebrity craze that

Television America is under right now of "Get on the ~~TV~~ tube, man, that's

when you're really important!" This may be the first protest

where there are ^{will be} as many camera ^{as} ~~people recording it as~~

protesters.

NM: Some of them will have footage to sell afterward.

JBM: Yes.

NM: The networks and cable companies will be looking for clips

JBM: Right, but it's also for the demonstrators' own protection. A cop is much less likely to bash a protester in the head if he's holding a video camera.

NM: I must say, I hadn't thought of that.

JBM: I feel we've entered a realm where the question is, whose propaganda is better? The Left is beginning to figure

[Handwritten initials]

that they can't beat the Right with intelligent argument.

They need punch phrases that get to the heart of the average American. If that's the case, what is the future for our country?

NM That's not my first worry right now. Do the activists really know what they're going into? That's my concern. Or do they assume that expressing their rage is equal to getting Kerry elected. It could have exactly the opposite effect. The better mode may be to frustrate the Republicans by coming up with orderly demonstrations. Now when I was young, the suggestion to be moderate was like a stink bomb to me. An orderly demonstration? What were we, cattle? You have to deal with express your rage. Well, I'm trying to say, we would do well

to realize that on this occasion, there are more important a good vent things than expressing our rage. If only we could remind

everybody who goes out to march of the old Italian saying:

"Revenge is a dish that people of taste eat cold." Instead of

expressing yourself at the end of August, think of how nicely

you will be able to keep expressing yourself over the four

years to come if we win. ~~It could even be our twenty years.~~

Just keep thinking how much the Republicans want anarchy

on the streets, ~~and don't~~ ^{I want} march right into their trap.

BM: What can activists do to avoid that?

NM: Well, the trouble with being in a cautionary position, is

that you're limited. You're trying to slow down a wave.

Everyone expects ~~some~~ excesses—it's a question of how

many there will be. Three of the best words ever written

happen to be by Engels. He said, "Quantity changes quality."

If you have one potato, you eat it; with ^{ten} ~~a~~ thousand, you bring

them to market; and with a billion potatoes, you corner the

market. Most of the leaders of most of the activist

organizations are responsible, most of them, certainly. And I

think some of them see the peril. They will do well to look at

their own ranks, and see if they've got some peculiarly rotten

apples in the barrel.

JBM: One of the problems with this movement is the lack of a leader. No focal point.

JBM: When you say "this movement," there are different groups, no? Some have leaders, some don't, no?

JBM: There's no leader, per se. There are spokespeople for each group. But, this is a movement that has grown

organically and has relied on the goodness of human nature almost to a fault. And, I believe it's coming to a head where, without somebody directing the huge crowd that's going to

be there, without saying, "this is what the movement believes

~~the anarchists Middle America will see nothing but / anarchy~~
in. "It could be anarchy. Because, You have people from

~~all~~ every different corner of this country coming together with

their own purposes in mind, their own cause that they're

fighting for. It all goes under the huge umbrella of "anti-

Bush." They don't agree on everything, by any means. And,

the idea behind it at the meetings is that everyone has a right

to be heard. there is no leader, we're here to listen, and to

third of 1964

organize. But then it becomes a question of whether ^{you} masses

10

(12)

Can be effective without a leader? I don't think so. I don't feel

that

NM You make me think of the march on the Pentagon in 1967. There was a marvelous guy named David Dellinger, now dead, who led it, and a man named A.J. Muste, an old anarchist, also gone, a fine old anarchist. They got together and realized they had to find some kind of umbrella organization that could have input to all the activist groups. And they succeeded. They had a series of discussions with the various elements. And there was virtually no disarray to speak of, compared to what it could have been. The march on the Pentagon even ended up having a final effect that was impressive. I think it was the beginning of the end of the war in Vietnam ^{and} for a very simple reason: Lyndon Johnson saw fifty thousand mostly middle-class people come to Washington to stage a set of demonstrations that were going

to be opposed by troops and police. LBJ knew people well.

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From his point of view, most middle-class people were hardly

full of physical bravery. If they were going to pay their own

money and come by ^{car} bus or train to march into the possibility

of being hit over the head with a cop's club, then there had to

be millions ^{of} people behind them. LBJ knew he couldn't get

fifty thousand of his own people to DC to support the war

unless he paid their way. That ^{had to do} did something to his

war ~~worak~~

confidence ^{And} concerning the war. Dellinger and Muste ^{kept pointing} ~~held~~

pointed out to the demonstrators that if they showed a certain

discipline ~~and resolution~~ ^{frustrate} in their ranks, they would ~~disconcert~~

~~any hopes in the~~

the Administration ~~which was counting on the fact~~ that the

~~action~~ demonstration would go wacky and wild.

JBM: I don't know that there's time to change the mood

before the RNC begins.

AM: I don't think there is, but I do hope words of warning

are worth something. Because some of the kids out there, as

You said, have one idea only. That's to create enough uproar

14

to get on TV. ~~That's going to be one powerful driving force.~~

And you're going to have some wily ~~sharp~~ cameramen from

~~Fox News, among others~~ looking for the worst kids and

photographing them with a wide-angle ~~camera~~ ^{lens} right up

~~and underneath~~ ^{nose,} their nostrils which, hopefully for Fox News, will

be full of snot. Sure. There's going to be a lot of that. My

hope is that there are also going to be enough people whose

most powerful passion will not be to get on TV, but to defeat

Bush. And you know when a crowd is unruly, simple things

can calm them, too.

JBM: Such as?

MM: Such as one guy who has enough authority and

charisma to say, "Fellows, let's not blow it!" The New York

cops can also be reasonably good people. They used to be in

my day. But, you're also going to have a few who are

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14.

July 19 04

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crooked enough to be paid to start a real fracas. John, there are so many ways it can go wrong.

JB: There are techniques to stop ~~that~~ ^{an all out brawl} that I've seen in

action which have worked. When a cop hits a little hippy in the head, instead of charging, if everybody sits down and the cameras are rolling, whoever is in charge of the police at that given time knows, this is going to look horrible; this is going to make news. But, as you say, you need someone to stand up there and ^{Calm the crowd} ~~do it~~. Where is that person?

VM: I think people will emerge. You know, leaders come very often out of these situations. ~~It's not necessarily going to be nothing but lambs heading into the slaughterhouse.~~

JB: Well, I know one man who has the potential to stand

up in front of a crowd and get them to ^{go his way - Jason Flores} ~~go his way~~. He's got a ^{who wrote the High Times' Activists' Guide} ~~set of brass balls~~. Of all of the activist organizing leaders that

^{met} ~~we~~ found, few of them have ~~this~~ kind of death-gut balls.

Now, I've said to this guy that one old lady, standing up in

the front lines is worth ten anarchists throwing bricks through windows. And in order to get that old lady out to the protest,

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you need to create a relatively safe environment. He disagrees. And, that is, I think, one of the fundamental problems. The ones who have the stuff to hop up and command a crowd generally have a tendency to ~~get carried away in the moment and could possibly~~ ^{want to} lead that crowd crashing through Madison Square Garden.

NM: They'll never get through. Yes, you touched the center of my fear, ~~which is~~ I know myself well enough from the old days, and I do recall the power and excitement you feel when you're speaking, and getting a crowd keyed up.

JBM: It's drugs. It's adrenaline rush.

NM: It's far more powerful than a good drug; it's extraordinary. It's ~~very~~ hard to tone it down. This is why I feel dread about what's coming up. I think with all the cautionary words in the world, things are likely to bust loose.

~~Those losses~~
~~these losses. They could be wide-spread. That's my fear.~~

BM: In 2000, when I voted for Nader, there was a feeling among a number of us that if Bush wins, it's not the end of the world. It will galvanize the Left who had become pacified by eight years of Clinton. Now, I feel that we are at the brink. If we don't pull back a few steps by getting Kerry in there, we're fucked. I don't know ~~if~~ ^{that} we can make it through another four years of Bush.

March 7, 2004

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^{want to}

rushing through Madison Square Garden.

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If I were a powerful Democrat, I would already be

discounting the losses, thinking of how do we recoup ~~from~~

~~those losses~~ *those losses*. They could be wide-spread. ~~That's my fear.~~

JBM: In 2000, when I voted for Nader, there was a feeling

among ~~a~~ number of us that if Bush wins, it's not the end of

the world. It will galvanize the Left who had become

pampered by eight years of Clinton. Now, I feel that we are at

the brink. If we don't pull back a few steps by getting Kerry

in there, we're fucked. I don't know ~~if~~ *that* we can make it

through another four years of Bush.

JBM: Oh, we'll make it through although I'm not saying what

we'll be like at the end. By then, Karl Rove may have his

twenty years. Just think of the kind of brainwashing we've

had for the last four. On TV, Bush rinses ~~a few hundreds~~ *of thousands of Americans* ~~of~~ *thousands of Americans* brains with every sentence. He speaks only in

stiches. The question to ask next, which they don't ask

enough on the Left, is what is really at stake for the most

gung-ho Republicans? Why are they so manic about winning

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this one? ~~We might try to see it from their point of view. For~~

I would say that

a great many such people, ~~(the true American religion is~~

America "America is God's country" is no small set of

words. A great many from Middle America, particularly

fundamentalists, feel that God made an exception with our

country. God wants it to be His country. He wants a country

that will lead the rest of the world. And they are sincere even

~~their leaders an overlay, secret agendas, if they live in the political company of phonies, money or neo-con agendas, oil-grabbers and grabbers, or corporate suits. But, there are some among them corporate suits.~~

~~who are impassioned and truly believe. The others wholly~~

~~manipulative. They wouldn't know what the truth is. They're~~

~~interested solely in the effectiveness of the message.~~

~~MM Can we talk about the moderate Republicans' role in~~

~~this election a little bit? Like McCain, for instance? When he~~

~~came out strong for Bush? Why?~~

JBM Can we talk about the moderate
~~Republican~~ ^{moderate} ~~in this election?~~ ^{like} ~~the 1990-1992~~ ^{Republicans' vote} 17

NM: We can talk about it. I don't know if it's relative. More,
~~McCain for instance. He came out strong for~~
~~like a side note, a sidebar~~ ^{McCain, I think, wants to be}

president. He certainly has every right. All the same, ~~successful~~

politicians ^{have to} ~~make very hard~~ ^{hard} choices. Very few ^{good} ~~people can do it,~~

~~politicians~~ because ^{hard} the choices are ^{often} ~~so~~ godawful. In

addition, you have to smile standing next to people you

despise. Even a relatively honest man has to become pretty

phony. ^{If you don't} It's imperative to know which way the wind is

blowing. ~~or~~ you're dead as a politician. You can have the

honesty and incorruptibility of Ralph Nader, but, as we see,

that does not get you elected. So, even McCain must have

said to himself, "I could be president. I could be a much

better ~~Republican~~ ^{to} president than George Bush ever dreamed

of being. Whereas, if I go with Kerry, and Kerry loses, I'm

doomed—I will be a black sheep ^{to} in my own party. And if

Kerry wins, I'll be a lame duck vice-president all the way.

Whereas, if I go with Bush and he wins, in four years I'm the

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logical choice to be the Republican candidate. Indeed, win or lose for Bush, I'm the frontrunner Republican candidate for 2008. The Republicans will know I'll be the only possibility to beat either Kerry or, if he loses, Hillary Clinton." These are McCain's parameters.

JBM: However, if McCain comes out strong for Bush—say, he were even to run as his vice-president, and Bush wins, I can't imagine McCain would be able in all good conscience to put up with what Bush would do ~~with~~ ^{over} another four years. ^(with) How ^{is he} ~~does that put him~~ in a strong position to run for president if he kowtows to Bush?

NM: Well, for one thing, Bush ^{might not even take} ~~would never take~~ McCain as Vice President, because McCain wouldn't kowtow that much. Moreover, politicians do have their vanity. McCain might think, "George is an empty vessel. If I were vice-president, I could influence him. He might become a better ^{Chief Executive} ~~president~~ if I were vice-president." That could be the barb on

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the harpoon that hooks McCain. "I owe it to the country to
make George W. Bush a better president." ~~That could be an~~
~~element.~~ ^{Yes,} McCain could decide, ~~"Yes, yes, really~~ I have to
bite the bullet and work for a man I truly despise, ~~But~~ it's
necessary. America needs it." The moment a politician says
to himself, "America needs it," he can shift the direction of
the wind within the halls of his own brain. ~~was + 32 of it~~

JB: Recently ^{ALJ} Gore called for the resignation of all
administration staff underneath Bush and Cheney. But
George Tenet is the one who retires, and suddenly. Why?
NM: The CIA was miserably compromised. Everybody went
to great lengths to say that the administration did not lean on
the CIA to produce the results they wanted, but I can promise
you, the CIA does not ignore what the administration ~~is~~ ^{was}
calling for. Bush ~~doesn't~~ ^{never had to} say to Tenet, "You ~~do~~ ^{do} it my way."
~~you did~~ And then Tenet says to the next person, "You ~~do~~ ^{down} it my way."
~~the business~~ ¹⁹⁰¹ it was all ~~covert signals and~~
all the way down to the poor guy at the bottom who said A is