

# Funky Dean dives as white people vote

**120,000** Midwesterners from the second whitest state in the union caucused two weeks ago, and if we're to believe the media spin, the earth has trembled. When the dust finally settled – and there's a lot of dust in Iowa – former Democratic frontrunner, Howard Dean was reduced to a mumbling fool, with John Kerry and Edward rising to take his place. Dick Gephardt, who finished a distant fourth, dropped out of the race. Iowa has spoken.

I can't help but think the media is placing a little too much credence on what Iowans think. First off, the Iowa debate was quite a bit skewed to a few rather bizarre Iowa-specific topics, mostly regarding corn. Hence, gasohol subsidies played a uniquely large role in determining the Iowa outcome. Topics important to other Americans, like, say, mass transportation or even fisheries, held no importance in Iowa.

Iowans, with their strange caucus system, have a disproportionate role in selecting the president. This is rather unfortunate, considering their demographic breakdown and how unrepresentative they are of the American population. While their handful of delegates probably won't make much of a difference come convention time, Iowans enjoy the privilege of setting the momentum for the coming election, derailing campaigns such as those of Gephardt and Dean, while blowing new life into others.

The power they have is based as much on who they are, as it is on when they caucus. Washington D.C. voters, almost half of whom are black, voted a week earlier, with Dean coming in first and Sharpton coming in second. Their vote, demographically as skewed as Iowa's, however, was all but ignored – with no major media outlet reporting on a "Sharpton surge." The media also mostly ignored the fact that the caucus system, in which voters literally meet and line up in corners supporting different candidates, strips Iowans

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of their right to a secret ballot. This adds to the bandwagon effect, benefiting frontrunners.

The collapse of the Dean campaign in Iowa and in New Hampshire isn't surprising. Dean is one of those products that sell well on the internet, only to be a major disappointment in real life. Iowa was Dean's debutante celebration – the first time Dean was in voters' faces on the evening news almost every night. And he just plain didn't come off presidential. Crippled by his commanding poll position, Dean developed a level of arrogance unbecoming to a waffler.

Many pundits interpreted Dean's loss as a repudiation of his anti-war position. But they never actually questioned the legitimacy of that position. Yes, unlike rivals such as Kerry, Gephardt, Edwards and Lieberman, Dean didn't vote to authorize the war. This, however, might just have been a matter of his being lucky enough not to be in the Senate or Congress when the vote came up – since evidence shows that he was duped by the same Bush administration lies as were his opponents.

Back in 2002 when anti-war demonstrators were rallying in record numbers, Dean was parroting Bush administration's lines, telling CBS News that, "There's no question that Saddam Hussein is a threat to the United States and to our allies." Dean bought into the weapons of mass destruction lie hook, line and sinker, appearing on Face The Nation and arguing that Iraq "is automatically an imminent threat to the countries that surround it because of the possession of these weapons." Dean also supported unilateral action against Iraq, even in defiance of the United Nations. On the eve of war, he told The Los Angeles Times that if Bush presented persuasive evidence showing Iraq with weapons of mass destruction, he'd support military action without U.N. authorization. Today, with the CIA publicly declaring that Iraq did not possess such weapons after the first Gulf War, Dean has changed his tune. Recently in New Hampshire, he argued that "there was no serious threat to the United States from Saddam Hussein," while telling The New York Times, "I never said Saddam was a danger to the United States, ever," while regularly condemning unilateralism.

In Iowa, Kerry campaigned arduously as an anti-war candidate. On his website, he points out that Dean publicly backed a resolution by Senators Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) and Joe Biden (D-Del.) that would also have given Bush the same unilateral power to wage war. According to Kerry's website, "mere technicalities" differentiated the congressional resolution he backed from the one Dean supported. Kerry, who admits to being misled on the war, argues Dean wouldn't have acted any differently. Kerry, like Dean, ran as an anti-war candidate in Iowa – only he did it more honestly, ultimately winning the corn state caucus. Despite the punditry, there was no denunciation of the anti-war message in Iowa

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– only a denunciation of Dean. Dean quickly joined in, denouncing himself by reaffirming his conservatism going into the final laps of the New Hampshire race. On the positive side, however, he did end his political career with a hoot – laying down the lyrical foundation for a bitchin' dub (listen at <http://homepage.mac.com/lileks/.Public/Yeagh.mp3>)

Kerry, however, literally has his own skeletons in the closet to hide. While normally a strong public speaker, he shrinks whenever anyone raises questions about his bizarre worship of the "Goddess Eulogia." Kerry, it seems, is a member of the same Yale secret society, The Order of Skull and Bones, as is George W. Bush, his father George H.W. Bush, and his deceased grandfather, Prescott Bush. Current and deceased Bonesmen include a sort of who's who of the banking and intelligence communities. A lot has been written about this spooky network of power and its frightening influence over the U.S. government. Voters, however, tend to shy away from the more complex nuances of conspiracy theories, well researched and documented as they might be. More titillating, however, are the Bonesmen's odd rituals. According to The Atlantic magazine, this would include "masturbating in a coffin." The magazine also reports that the society pays "obeisance to Eulogia, the goddess of eloquence, who took her place in the pantheon upon the death of the orator Demosthenes, in 322 B.C., and who is said to have returned in a kind of Second Coming on the occasion of the society's inception."

If Kerry were to win the Democratic nomination, the U.S. would have its first election in which both major candidate were disciples of the Goddess Eulogia." True, this is trivial, but Americans deserve more of a choice than two men who masturbated into the same coffin.

With the media still mostly obsessed with Kerry and Dean, a strange phenomenon is emerging – that being the reality that Kucinich seems to be winning all of the debates hands down. While the front runners stumble to defend their past Republican-like votes and actions, and define their new centrist politics, Kucinich is earning the loudest applauses and impressing viewers with his steadfast unshakable demeanor. Cleveland's former boy mayor, the odd little congressman who once lived in Shirley McClain's basement, seems quite presidential.

Kucinich earned himself a sort of mainstream media banishment after humiliating ABC News moderator Ted Koppel during an early debate. When Koppel opened the debate acting like a sports announcer, asking candidates about campaign fundraising momentum and other horse race sorts of questions, Kucinich called him on the carpet, demanding to talk about the issues. The result was an immediate elevation of Kucinich to the ranks of serious candidates – with alternative press organizations replaying his Koppel lambaste over and over again. ABC News, for its part, pulled their reporter from the Kucinich

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campaign, effectively freezing him out of what little mainstream media coverage he had.

The logic now goes like this: Kucinich might very well be able to stand up under pressure, and may be the best equipped candidate to take on George W. Bush in a debate, but he's "unelectable." And why is he unelectable? That's because he's not getting any media access, which he's denied because of his supposed unelectability. It's a classic Catch-22. Yeah, he had a few New Age moments in his past. But how damaging can a history of meditation be when the leading candidates are worshipping at the feet of the Goddess Eulogia? If mainstream Americans had the opportunity to listen to Kucinich's populist message, he could be president. But they won't and he won't.

On the subject of supposed electability, Michael Moore was in the news this week following his endorsement of former general Wesley Clark. Needless to say, Moore's endorsement of Clark, who might be facing a potential war crimes indictment for actions he supposedly ordered in the Kosovo War, raised a few eyebrows and rattled some of the filmmaker's fans. Moore, making the old "people change" argument in defending his choice, declared that the ex-Republican former general, who has been throwing political bones to progressives lately, would be best equipped to defeat a demonic Bush in the American heartland. He summed up the potential general election saying he looked forward to watching "the general" debate "the deserter."

This caused ABC's Peter Jennings to invoke Moore's name as he questioned Wesley Clark during a recent televised New Hampshire debate. With Michael Moore at home eating pizza and watching the debate on TV, Jennings rebuked Clark for allowing Moore to call Bush a "deserter" in his presence. Jennings claimed it was "a reckless charge not supported by the facts," scolding Clark for allowing Moore to be "standing up in your presence and calling the president of the United States a deserter."

The fact is, and Clark declined to point this out, that Bush is in fact a military deserter. From May of 1972 until May of 1973, National Guard records show that Bush was absent from his duties without leave. The Guard did not discipline Bush, whose father was a Representative to Congress at the time, instead allowing him to leave the service six months early with an honorable discharge. U.S. military law clearly states that "Members of the armed forces who, without permission, leave their place of duty or organization with the intent to remain away permanently are guilty of desertion." The statute goes on to clarify, "The status of an absentee changes to that of a deserter after 30 days of absence." Look up Article 85. Moore's right – that would be a fun debate. But a fun debate doesn't quite add up to Clark being a fun president.