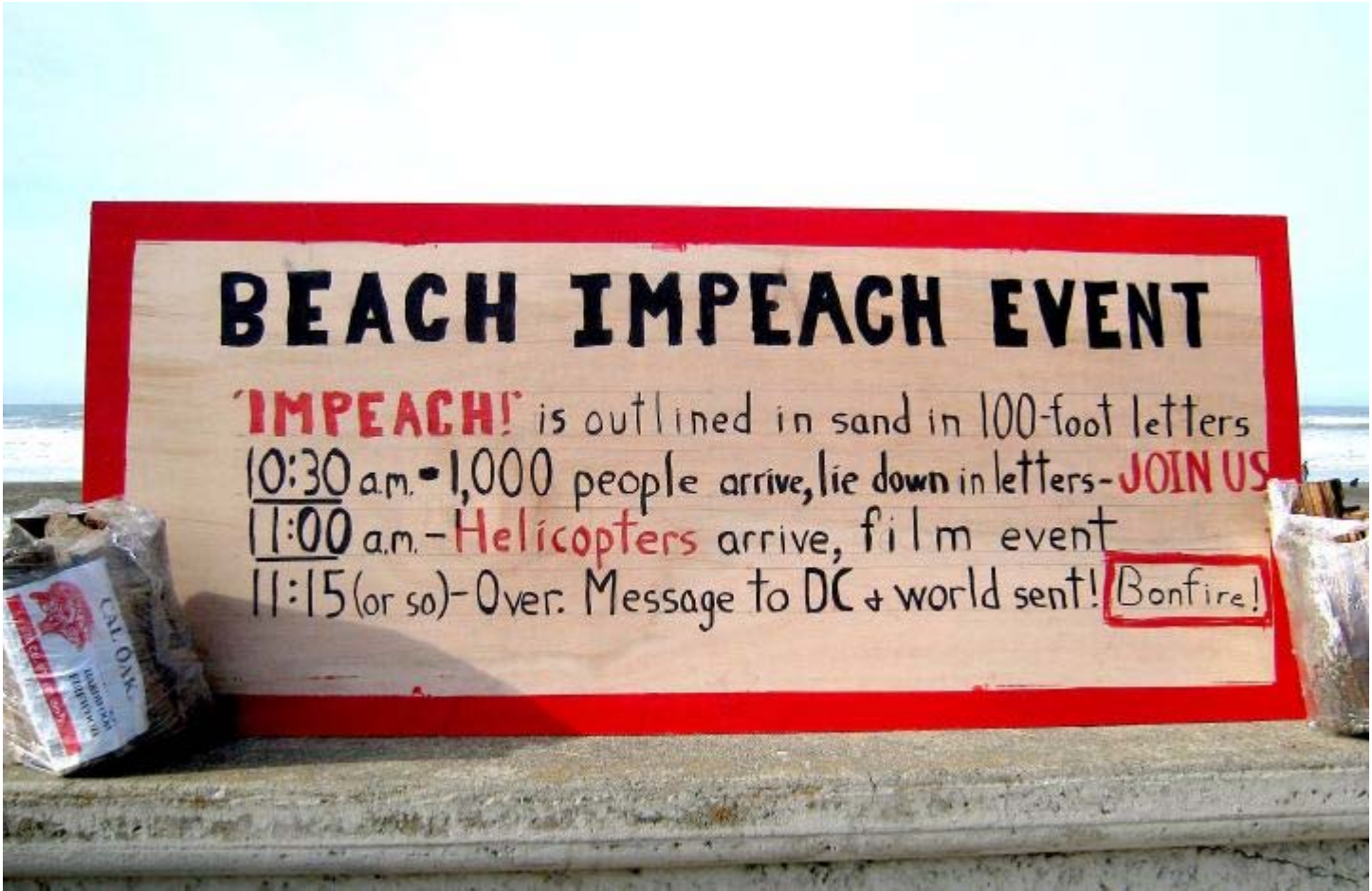


BEACH IMPEACH

A photo journal of the "Beach Impeach" event in San Francisco on January 6, 2007

On Saturday, January 6, 2007, over 1,000 people gathered on San Francisco's Ocean Beach to spell out the word "IMPEACH!" with their bodies in the sand.

This is a record of what happened that day.



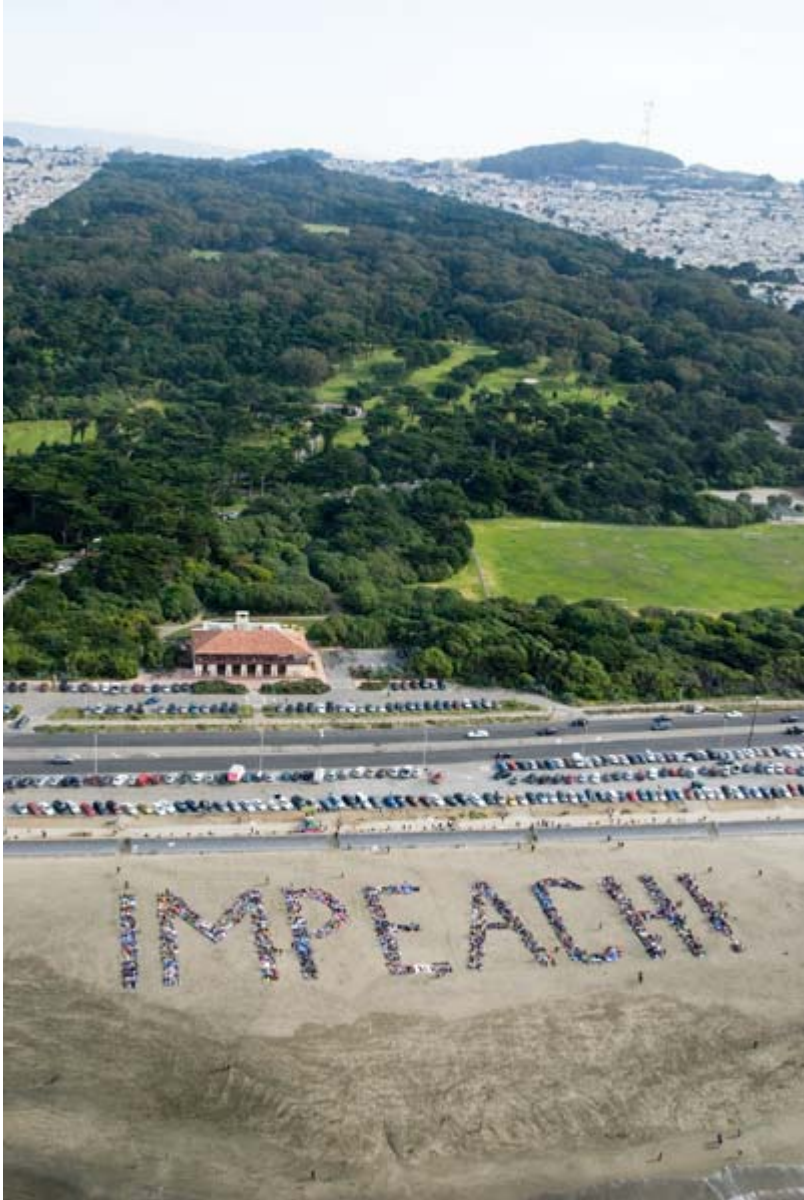
What was the purpose behind this event? To provide some visual inspiration for the impeachment movement, to make Nancy Pelosi president, and, well, Brad Newsham -- the mastermind behind Beach Impeach -- explained it better than I ever could [in this blog post](#):

The impeachment movement needs a visual. There are lots of words swirling around, lots of chatter, but no image to go along with them. I thought that a photo of 1,000 people on the beach, voting not just with their feet but with their whole bodies... would catch some attention, and provide some focus and maybe even a physical rallying spot for the movement. ... I want Bush to resign. First he should accept Cheney's resignation, and then he should announce his own resignation.... Speaker of the House Pelosi becomes President. ... Imagine what a masterstroke it would be -- suddenly a woman is the American President, the most powerful person in the world! And if Pelosi named Barack Obama as vice-president... what a change in the face America shows to the world! Shock and awe would take on a whole new meaning. The international community would again shower America with the same empathy, support, and goodwill that were showered upon us after 9/11.

To achieve this glorious dream, a call went out across the Bay Area: gather on Ocean Beach to kick-start the

impeachment process!

And so we did. Over 1,000 people showed up and laid down on the sand, as a helicopter hired for the purpose flew overhead and took our picture.



The moment arrived! This is what the scene looked like from above, with Golden Gate Park and San Francisco receding into the distance. *(Photo courtesy of John Montgomery, The Beach Impeach Project.)*

More photos from above can be found [here](#).

We all waved at the helicopter. That's me somewhere in the "H."

As hoped, Beach Impeach did get media coverage, including the [San Francisco Chronicle](#), the local [ABC News affiliate, KTVU-TV](#), and others.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's go back to the beginning of the Beach Impeach concept, and then see what it was like at sea-level, not from a helicopter.



The original plan had been to hold the event on November 11, 2006, right after the mid-term elections that elevated Nancy Pelosi to Speaker of the House. Brad had optimistically spelled out the entire phrase "DEMOCRACY: IMPEACH!" in the sand. But he was unable to secure an event permit for that day, so [only 30 of us showed up](#), and all we managed to do was fill in the exclamation point, while the other 17 letters and punctuation marks remained sadly vacant. (That's us on the right-hand edge of this picture taken from a helicopter on November 11.)

After this debacle, Brad obtained a permit from the Park Service to hold an official event on the beach on January 6, and spent two months promoting it. And, crucially, he jettisoned the overly ambitious "DEMOCRACY:" part and stuck to the basics: IMPEACH! This time around, Beach Impeach was going to be a success.

In fact, it was more than a success: it was **the Woodstock of the Impeach Generation.**



By the time I arrived on January 6, the letters were already well-formed.



I first scoped out a place in the "P." From sand level, it was impossible to make out the shape of the letters. All I could see was a jumble of bodies.



The "P" was a little too crowded, so I scampered over and found a vacant spot in a different letter -- the "H" from the looks of it. I sat down just in time, as the helicopter appeared overhead shortly after 11am, to cheers from the crowd. We all laid down to maximize ground coverage in the photo.



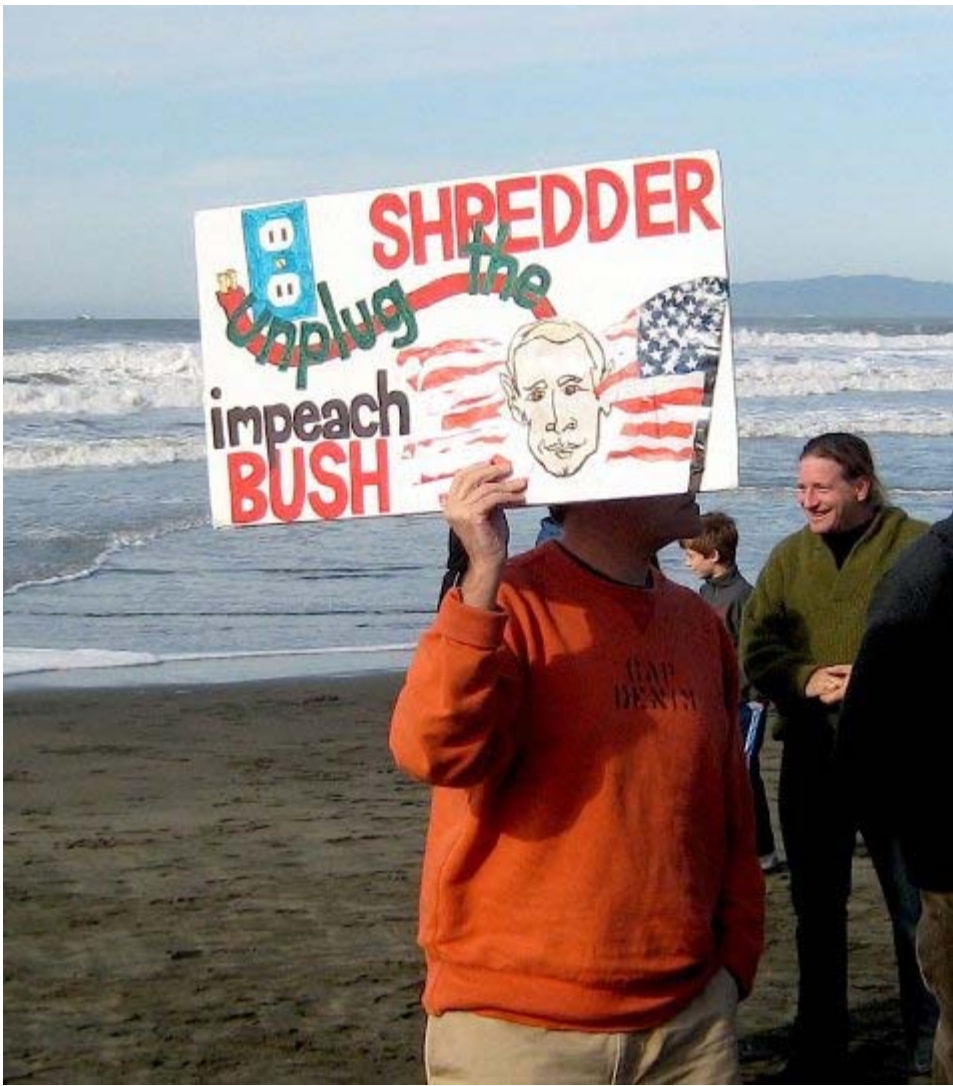
We did the Wave to add a little zing to the pictures.



Beach Impeach honcho Brad Newsham picked his way through the crowd with a bullhorn, shouting encouragement and giving instructions.



Between takes, I jumped from letter to letter to scope out the scene.



Since this wasn't really a street protest, there weren't too many signs in evidence. Here's one of the few.



The ecstasy of impeachment!



A group of people wearing corporate-sponsored made-in-China plastic masks from the pseudo-anarchist film *V for Vendetta* showed up to impress us with their hip rebelliousness. (Apparently, falling for the capitalist marketing of *V for Vendetta* anarchist chic is a [growing trend](#).)



[Frank Chu](#), San Francisco's ever-dependable all-purpose lunatic demonstrator, showed up as usual.



For half an hour, the helicopter that Brad had hired hovered overhead, snapping pictures for posterity.



ABC sent their copter too.



At times, the whole thing felt surrealistic.



It seemed as if we were worshipping some kind of Helicopter God.



At a certain point, people started taking out pieces of foil and handing them around.



What could this be about? I was a bit mystified.



I scampered over to the E, but they had even *more* foil over there. I was given a piece as well. What was going on?



Ahhhhhhh. The mystery was solved when we got the orders: Wave your foil at the helicopter! Each piece was supposed to reflect the sun, creating a sparkly "IMPEACH."

But it was right then, after the foil-waving, that things started to get a little strange. For reasons I still can't fathom, nearly everyone who had a piece of foil put it on his or her head and started to wear it as a hat!

Why? I still don't know. The event was over, the letters dissolved. And hundreds of people were walking around the beach with tin-foil hats -- as you can see here:



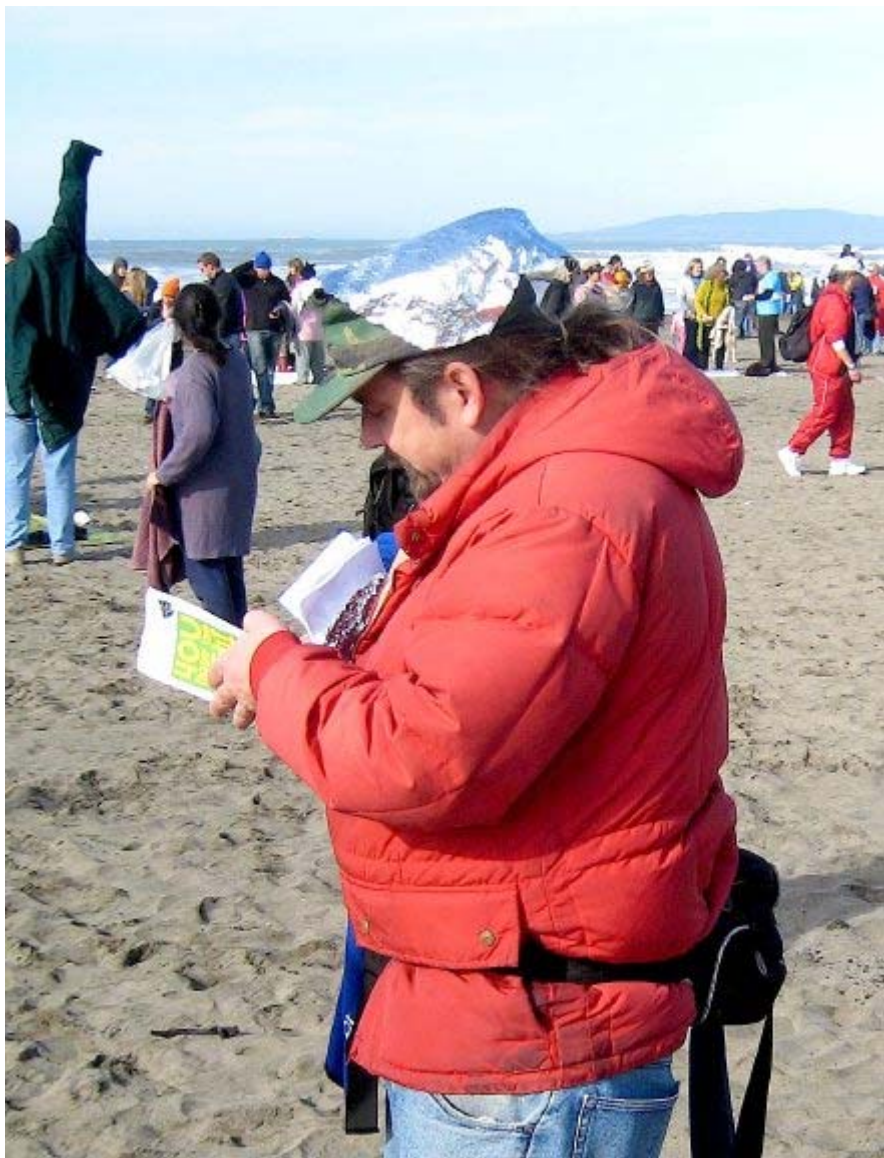
























You can see some more tin-foil hats in other people's Beach Impeach reports [here](#) and [here](#).



"Attention everyone: Why are you wearing the foil?"



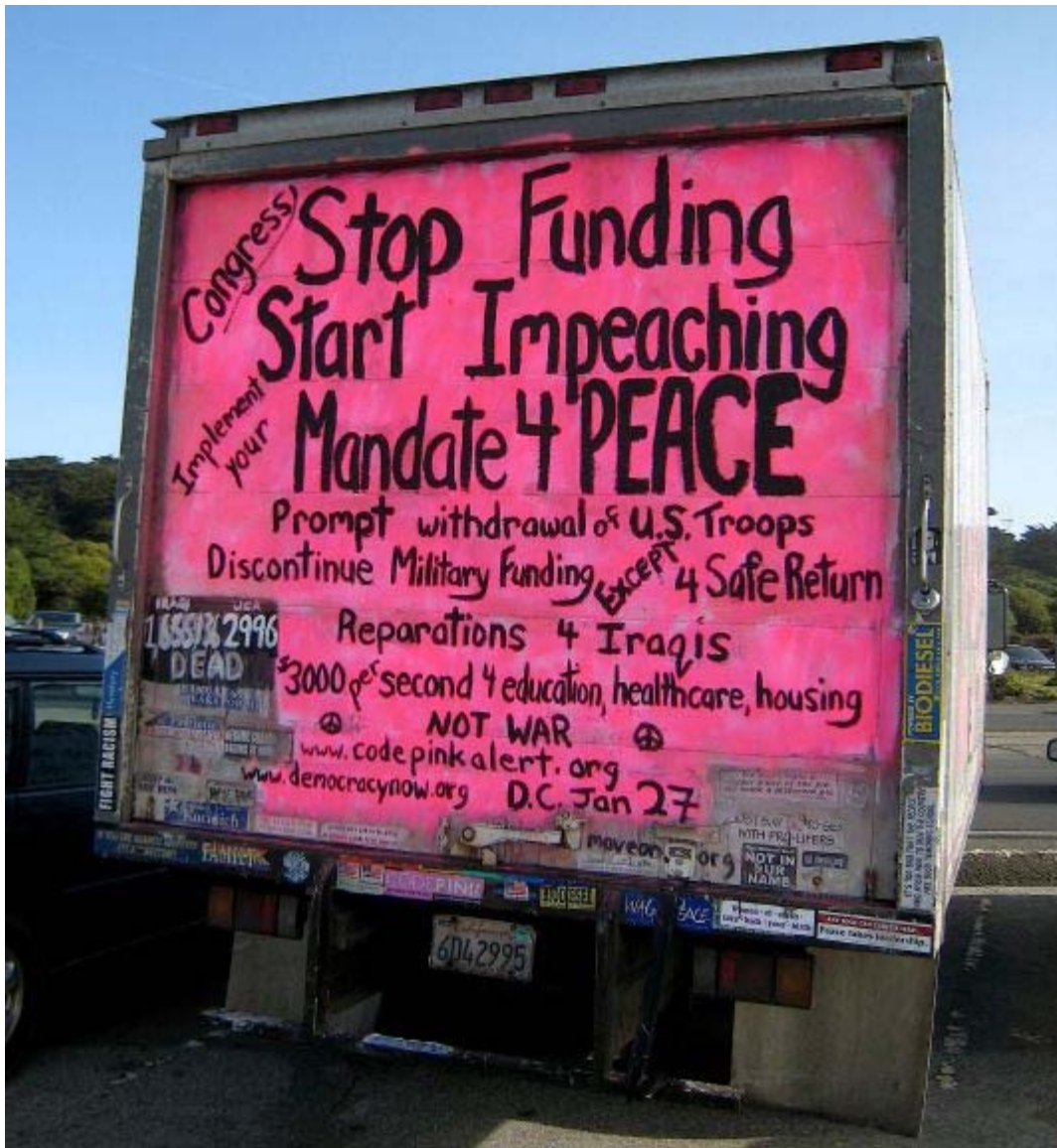
Click [here](#) to see short movie (QuickTime mpeg video, 2.1mb) of some foil-waving and chanting, to get the flavor of that morning.



When the final aerial pictures were snapped, Brad -- who is in fact quite a nice and friendly guy, all kidding aside -- was ecstatic. His dream had come true.



Nearby, the seagulls seemed to emulate the humans by spelling out a message in their own mysterious language.



On the esplanade above the beach, Code Pink was in evidence, with a booth and their unmistakable truck.



The Green Party trawled for new members.



Much impeachment paraphernalia was to be had.

After it was all over, I went to the parking area to see what kind of messages were on the Beach Impeachers' cars:
(All license plates have been blurred out.)



Hmmm.... Why am I not surprised?



And more and more...



...and the next car over...



Plenty of "Truthers" in the crowd as well.



God Forgive America!



I like it! So succinct. A one-word summation of everyone's hopes and dreams.

Chimpeach!

Other Independent Coverage of Beach Impeach:

[PoliPundit has a Beach Impeach report.](#)

[BlastPattern's Beach Impeach Picasa Web gallery.](#)

[Basetree Beach Impeach photo page.](#)

[Indybay Beach Impeach page](#), with six pages of photos.

[\(Click here to return to the main zombietime page.\)](#)