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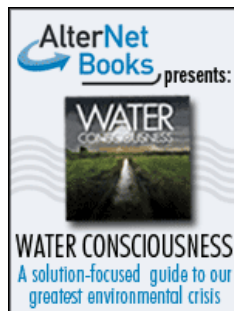
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Election Observer Arrested in Arizona

Posted by [Steven Rosenfeld](#), [AlterNet](#) at 1:45 PM on September 7, 2008.

Will cops crack down on election observers in November?

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According to the [Election Defense Alliance](#) blog, John Brakey, one of the country's leading election activists known for bring secretive electronic voting into public view, was arrested while observing problems in local elections this week in Pima County, Arizona.

The arrest begs the question of whether the same response will be forthcoming against election observers this November. That scenario is hardly moot after the police used excessive force in St. Paul in response to protests and other First Amendment activities at the Republican National Convention.

The EDA blog report said Brakey was arrested while officially observing the vote count.

From the EDA blog:

While monitoring a handcount of ballots from the September 3rd Arizona primary, in his capacity as an official election observer for the Democratic and Libertarian parties, EDA Investigations Co-Coordinator John Brakey was arrested and ejected from the Pima County election headquarters on orders of Pima County Elections Director Brad Nelson.

Brakey had noticed that several of the incoming bags containing ballots from the precincts had unsecured or missing seals. The seal failures appeared to be the result of pollworkers not knowing how to properly lock them.

Brakey then wondered whether the serial numbers on the bag seals matched the serial numbers recorded by the precinct pollworkers when they sealed the ballots. One question led to another, and Brakey ended up in handcuffs.

Watch the [television news video](#) of the incident from KGUN TV, Pima AZ.

Seal serial numbers are supposed to be recorded on yellow report sheets, called "End of Day Certification Reports." The certification sheets are supposed to be signed by all precinct pollworkers and included with the ballots inside the delivery bags. The bags are supposed to remain sealed until opened for counting at county election headquarters.

In one bag, instead of the signed official certification sheets, there was instead a slip of white paper with what Brakey said were "two illegible, scrawled signatures." Brakey watched Election Manager Brad Nelson read the slip, say he recognized who the two pollworkers were, and approve acceptance of that bag of ballots for counting.

Brakey found it rather remarkable that Nelson would be so familiar with the county's 3000 pollworkers that he could identify two of them by illegible scrawls on a slip of paper.

Brakey then began checking other incoming ballot bags. In the first 7 successive ballot bags he checked, the required yellow certification reports were missing. This included bags with open seals, as well as bags with seals intact.

As Brakey was speaking to members of the counting panels alerting them to his discoveries, Election Director Nelson came up to him and told him to leave.

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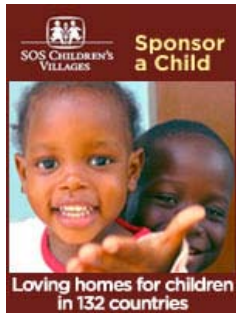
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Brakey replied that he was appointed to be an election observer and he intended to stay on the job until closing time at 1:00 a.m. Nelson told him to leave immediately or he would be arrested. Brakey refused. At that point a deputy sheriff present placed Brakey under arrest for trespassing, handcuffed him, and removed him from the building.

Once outside, Brakey requested his legally allowed phone call, and placed it to his attorney, Bill Risner. Word of Brakey's arrest immediately went out to the network of election integrity activists Brakey has built with the grassroots group AUDIT-AZ.

Shortly thereafter the county elections building was swarming with television news crews.

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Steven Rosenfeld is a senior fellow at Alternet.org and author of Count My Vote: A Citizen's Guide to Voting (AlterNet Books, 2008).

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Here we go again

Posted by: nochicagoboy on Sep 7, 2008 4: 18 PM
Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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Pima County is resorting to Gestapo tactics in order to influence an election outcome. I agree, the custody transfer of ballots, not to mention a legitimate paper-trail, has been violated. This looks like a dress rehearsal for the general election on November 4th.

If the margin is razor-thin in the presidential race, as it's shaping-up to be, there's a good probability it'll be stolen again. Additionally, all the congressional races and gubernatorial races that are up for grabs will probably not be scrutinized as they should. I see an illegitimate McCain victory about to unfold.

Here we go again.

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- » **RE: Here we go again** Posted by: JSquercia
- » **RE: Here we go again** Posted by: nochicagoboy
- » **RE: Here we go again** Posted by: thealltheone
- » **RE: Here we go again. Exactly what we need.** Posted by: Lauren

Oh, Jeebus.

Posted by: grumble-bum on Sep 7, 2008 5: 12 PM
Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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Having just watched the video (surprisingly even-handed & factual, for local news), & hot on the heels of witnessing the intimidating behavior of Twin Cities "law enforcement", I am filled with increasing dread about the future of participatory democracy in our country.

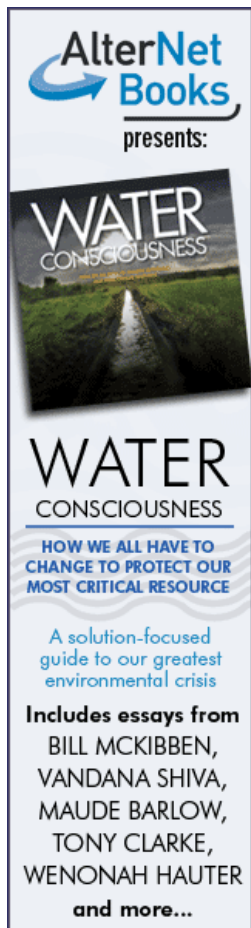
Now even the most blindly trusting citizen must be aware that something *seriously* stinks in our election process.

Indeed, if the MSM continues its role as reality-show producer, artificially keeping the Presidential race "close" through its laughably incurious "coverage", & everyday citizens are increasingly subject to brutality & arrest for asking questions or stating opinions, then we are certainly in for one extremely stolen election.

Will this be the one (third time's the charm) that finally wakes us up?

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- » **RE: Oh, Jeebus.** Posted by: seastar
- » **Hmm, Yesss. Also A Good Way to Reacquaint Ourselves With the Judicial System, It Seems...** Posted by: grumble-bum



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How close is it really?

Posted by: lenioui on Sep 7, 2008 6:26 PM
 Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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Really, who can even trust the poll?

How can 80% be against Bush and yet still have 50% support of McCain?

They tell us its close...then as in Pima County, and Florida and Ohio and God knows where else...the heist is underway...and they can sweep it away by saying...but it was close, might as well stop the recount.

Hell they never counted it in the first place.

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Stop obsessing about Palin

Posted by: BobbieP on Sep 8, 2008 5:23 AM
 Current rating: **4** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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Obviously we need to spend our obsession on elections themselves, not the distraction who is running

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Troubling

Posted by: CJC on Sep 8, 2008 6:05 AM
 Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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Troubling news, good video.

Fair elections require bipartisan surveillance. If one election observer is judged to be disruptive, then the count should be stopped until another person arrives. Otherwise the vote count cannot be certified as fair.

This is basic democracy.

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Windwalker Joan

Posted by: windwalker_joan on Sep 8, 2008 6:37 AM
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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We just watched Hacking Democracy last night - so this is no surprise. if you haven't seen it do - but then we need to figure out how to change it. They have all the control right now AND McCain and Rove could win!!

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Read more in your next life

Posted by: EJJLima on Sep 8, 2008 6:38 AM
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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In the hereafter. You planted your future. Enjoy.

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Welcome to NeoDemocracy

Posted by: CTvoter on Sep 8, 2008 6:41 AM
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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If you notice, whenever the MSM talks about the polls, they only talk about the overall percentage of votes. For instance, the poll this morning shows McSame/Impaler leading Obama by 50% to 46% or something like that. They refuse to talk about the electoral votes, where Obama is leading by a substantial margin. We're looking at landslide here, comparable to Reagan v. Carter. But this way, when the election suddenly "swings" at the last moment (due, of course, to the inaccuracy of all of the polls, including exit polls on election day), there will be no real surprise to the people who don't understand how our election system works (let alone how the MSM works).

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» [RE: Welcome to NeoDemocracy](#) Posted by: Lauren

Video link?

Posted by: sktyler on Sep 8, 2008 7:10 AM
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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Looks like the video is gone from the KGUN website... can't view it...

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» [Never mind... it's there after all](#) Posted by: sktyler

its endemic and systematic

Posted by: lclark on Sep 8, 2008 7:36 AM
 Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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The whole thrust to standardize on electronic voting machines that produce no audit trail, as well as the privatization on vote totaling with no onsite supervision is part of the agenda to 'virtualize' the vote of citizens.

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» [RE: its endemic and systematic](#) Posted by: Lauren

Why is all accountability off the table anymore?

Posted by: common intelligence on Sep 8, 2008 8:36 AM
 Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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Unless Blakey was being a disruptive nuisance why would anyone call the cops? Are we not being give a true picture of what really happened?

An investigatinon should go into who Election Director Nelson is and who directed him to call the cops. Who does Nelson know in his line of associations and influences.

It is so amazing to me that any official or corporate leadership is virtually safeguarded from being made

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accountable for actions and incompetency when it comes to having grave affects to others. How is it this has come to be an accepted norm and that Congress and any other legal gaurdians of the public trust simply claim ignorance or completely ignore what and how the peoples are being run-over the system?

Why was Blakely Arrested?...until the voting was over?
Sort of like why where so many people in St. Paul arrested? ..until the convention was over?

Why do the candidates not recognize and address any concern about what is happening in the wake of their own campaigns like this? No public address has ever been addressed by them or even the officials in office as their concerns. It's like they are hiding from the truth themselves.

We can call it fascism or what ever we want. But **what is important is for people to come to grips with the absolute unilateral need for organization**. That means people must find and build their own leadership and army of truth. This is how the *system* has a leg-up over the people.....They have the resources and organization that they have been bequithed by this so called democracy. Where as **The people have to build and create one they trust beyond that in order to have a true Check and Balance process** watching and making accountability over these high payed lawyers and corporate controllers of the very country the people are suppose to trust in. But then why is it we have to be a *system* ourselves, in order to safegard ourselves from the "System", as it is?
This should simply not be..but it has come to this.

The truth is we don't trust it as it is, because we have all become and experienced the corrupted methods of the system. Yet we are divided from our collective power by having been lead to believe we are by our individual selves in our experiences. Nothing can be further from the truth.

Each of us seemingly experiences the shaft we get in someway everyday. We get screwed financially and are robbed of our lives-time by having to argue and debate in order to justify our recognition of the facts of the same, *getting nowhere*. None of us has a clue if the voting system is true and just. But we are "forced" to accept the consequences of a 51% to 49% split as being fair and democratic.

This is serious business. Now, how do we do it?

Good morning and Good luck!

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» **RE: Why is all accountability off the table anymore?** Posted by: Lauren

MORE OF GOP TACTICS

Posted by: bigbill3 on Sep 8, 2008 9:29 AM

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Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

This is nothing new, they did this in Florida in 2000 and in Ohio in 04. I'm 45 yrs old and I can tell you we never had these problems with voting before that corrupt Bush and Chaney took over with their Karl Rove tactics. The GOP have people in some neighborhood trying to get rid of votes. In Florida in 2000, they took peoples votes and threw them out, they set up road blocks so blacks and hispanics couldn't vote, they told voters they couldn't vote because they did not live in that district, pulled blacks and hispanic over and held them up for hours or just plain arrested people for no reason. They even had dead people voting, no joke, people that were dead voted, they even had some of the machines rigged, if you voted for Gore, your vote would go to Bush or Pat Buchanan. Then in 04 they did the same thing in Ohio, same play book and they got away with it and now, WE the american people are paying for it now with high GAS prices, foreclosers, jobs being ship over seas,unemployment at a all time high 6.1, 4000 plus U.S. troops dead over in Iraq, still no WMDs and now the talking lies are IRAN. SO America if you people are so stupid to elect Mcsame and LYING Palin we truly deserve what we get. OBAMA/BIDEN 08

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» **ANOTHER WASTED ATTEMPT to get People to REALIZE** Posted by: madmax427

Archie1954

Posted by: Archie1954 on Sep 8, 2008 9:31 AM

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Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Brad Nelson should be held personally responsible for his egregious actions. First for allowing improperly sealed and witnessed ballots to be entered and secondly for illegally removing the only observer protecting the veracity and bona fides of the election.

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» **RE: Archie1954** Posted by: Lauren

What's next?

Posted by: Grandma Crabby on Sep 8, 2008 9:42 AM

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Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Arrested for asking legitimate questions?

WTF?????

I have been appalled and mortified quite a lot over the past 8 years watching our country slide toward fascism and totalitarianism but this is so out of bounds I would think even Shawn Hannity would be up in arms.

But he's not. He's too busy oogling Sarah Palin.

Any hope I had for a change with this election has gone completely up in smoke after witnessing the arrests at the R. convention and now this.

If this guy gets arrested for asking questions, I guess the next thing is to arrest folks for signing petitions.

Do I hear someone beating my door down?

Luv,
Granny

Granny's crazy videos = Go get a chuckle!

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Kitty

Posted by: Kitty on Sep 8, 2008 12:10 PM

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Current rating: **Not yet rated** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

"It's not the people that vote that count; it's the people who count the votes." Joseph Stalin

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Posted by: two on Sep 8, 2008 11:07 PM

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Current rating: **Not yet rated** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Welcome to Arizona, the land of BIG LIES and innuendos. McCain's group is based in the northern mountains where they use cops to shut someone up. Jobs, freedoms are allocated according to the group you belong to. If you aint got a group then you are at the mercy of all who disagree with ya. Individualism is abhorant to them. Multiply Bush by 10 and you got McCain's group.

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Posted by: two on Sep 8, 2008 11:19 PM

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Current rating: **Not yet rated** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Up in the Mountains where McCain has a home, some of the tour guides have to give equal time to religions ideas that believe that the earth was created on October 9, 5000 yrs ago. The Grand Canyon was scooped up by the Flood according to them. Please look up Mrs. McCain's history, be ready for the shock. In the Mountains they solve problems of diverse openions by calling the cops to arrest and undelining all this is the use of Big Lies. In fact, lying is an art form here, like during the Athens time, where after a time a person was judged on how well he could deceive and lie and not on truth.

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