

Artist's Statement

I first learned about the power of the Internet some years back when I posted a message on Craigslist.com asking people to call Gavin Newsom's office and ask him not to prosecute members of the Biotic Baking Brigade who had thrown a pie at him.

Willie Brown was pressing charges — and thousands of taxpayer dollars were later squandered prosecuting and then imprisoning these courageous individuals for exercising their free speech rights — and Gavin had threatened to follow suit.

I got a call on my answering machine from none other than Gavin who told me that he did not intend to press charges and, to his credit, applauded by practice of community democracy.

A few years later, I was in Puerto Rico at a hotel where I had asked my absentee ballot for the supervisorial runoff to be sent. Sadly, my ballot did not arrive, but an extremely disingenuous form letter from Gavin endorsing Brown machine candidate Juanita Owens did. District Six supervisorial opponent Matt Gonzalez was never mentioned in this portrayal. I found the disingenuous portrayal of Juanita Owens — a totally uninspired candidate if there ever was one — to be singularly distressing.

What bothers me so much about Gavin is not so much his views but the lack of substance behind him. As with the Bush sons, Gavin was born into wealth and has had everything handed to him all of his life. I don't envy him for this; I feel compassion. However, this type of individual, because they have so little experience in the real world, are particularly dangerous when they get into public office. It is not that they are purposefully sociopathic. Rather, it is that they just do not know any better.

If Gavin realized how incredibly reprehensive it is to try to ride into the Mayor's office on the backs of penalizing the poor (as with Proposition N), perhaps he would not do it. Perhaps he knows but is so disassociated from his own feelings that he pretends he does not know. To deny a homeless person a miserly stipend of a few hundred dollars per month of workfare is heartless beyond belief. For every homeless person that Gavin believes to be improperly using this money, there are hundreds for whom it is a lifeblood.

In a very real sense, Gavin demonstrates what is wrong with this styrofoam society. We have chains encroaching on and smothering the very diversity of our communities. We have people such as Walter Wong, a "permit expeditor" who has brought Burger Kings and McDonalds galore to our neighborhoods through highly questionable practices. We have "political" newspaper columnists (such as Samson Wong, Ken Garcia, and Warren Hinckle to name a few local examples) that invent facts, twist logic, and seem to be incapable of rational thought.

These days are beyond satire. But effective satire cuts deep, too close to the truth for comfort, for those who it criticizes. Our worse nightmares seem to be a pale shadow of reality these days.

It would be criminal if Gavin Newsom becomes mayor. It is not just because he is unfit. He has been as deliberately cultivated as the Spice Girls or the Backstreet Boys. He is the representative of the corporate interests that wish to push out the homeless to increase property values and to further homogenize the city. The soulless area south of "South Beach" is a sample of what they have in store for San Francisco. The sad thing is that people who should know better — Leland Yee, Fiona Ma, Nancy Pelosi, Angela Alioto, to name a few— have sold their souls to him. Together, we can work to stop it!

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