

2004 FALL EDITOR'S NOTE

In 1971, Gore Vidal wrote the cover story for the June issue of *Esquire* magazine, which announced: "Ralph Nader can be the next President of the United States." In the article, Vidal fantasizes and proposes an independent run for the presidency by Ralph Nader in the 1972 election. At the time Vidal, who was co-chair of the New Party - an early (in contemporary history) experiment in independent politics - saw Nader as a "figure around whom those disgusted with traditional politics can rally, a point of hope, a new beginning in our tangled affairs."

Nader did not answer Vidal's clarion call in 1971, though I suspect that today he may wish he had. A lot of Americans would gladly summon back the days when our affairs were merely tangled - not mangled, as they have so disturbingly become.

In reading "Ralph Nader can be the next President of the United States" - having bought an original copy of that 1971 issue of *Esquire* on eBay for \$19 - I was touched both by Vidal's prescience and his naivete. In August, I called Vidal at his home in Italy and asked his permission to reprint the article. I told him that I thought it was important to restate the concerns he raised 33 years ago - the corruption of the Democratic Party and the need to create a new political institution that was independent and progressive. He very graciously granted me permission to do so, even though he is not supporting Nader's 2004 bid.

Vidal's piece helped me frame an article I'd suggested to Fred Newman, who is backing Nader. I asked Newman to share his insights into and experience of the tangled affairs of American progressives since the Vietnam war. Newman, at once a piercing analytic philosopher and an ingenious political renegade, is a chief engineer of an independent political movement not unlike the one Vidal urged be undertaken more than three decades ago. Brought together by a kind of journalistic destiny, the two articles seem to me to speak to one another across 30 years in time and many political capitulations - if there are such things. Read Newman's "Postmodernism and the Democratic Party Convention of 2004" to find out.

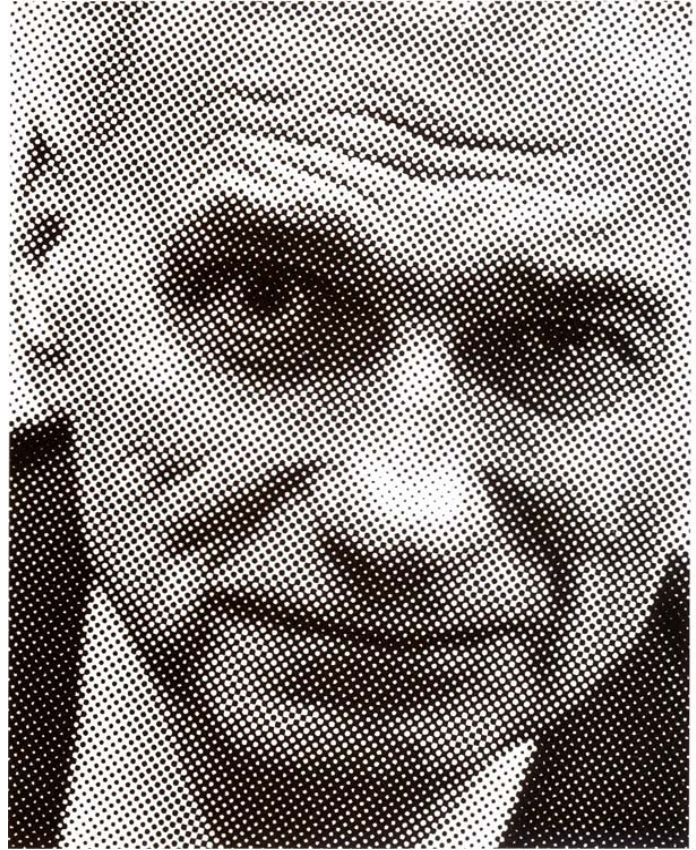
Legal eagle Harry Kresky is currently representing independent voters in federal court, alleging a conspiracy by John Kerry, Democratic National Committee Chair Terry McAuliffe and others to sabotage Nader's campaign and prevent the emergence of a third party; meanwhile, he is battling partisan election officials on behalf of the Independence Party of New York, the Committee for a United Independent Party, and Ralph Nader. Kresky documents these and other seminal confrontations in a provocative essay, "A Constitutional Crisis."

International affairs expert and former political director of the Rainbow Lobby, Inc., Deborah Green, takes us into the foreign policy sphere with "The Congo-Compton Connection," an insider's look at democratic nation-building pre-Iraq. In breaking the "rules of engagement," U.S. independents helped an African democracy movement gain traction in the late 1980s and early '90s. This particular story ended badly, the result of bipartisan collusion to subvert the democratic aspirations of the Congolese. It is, however, a case study of an *independent* political model for influencing U.S. foreign policy.

Guest columnists Mike Murphy and Garry South bring us up to date on Proposition 62, a brash open primary initiative on the ballot in California this November. Murphy, chief strategist for Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and South, chief strategist for Governor Gray Davis in 1998 and 2002, advocate for the nonpartisan elections that Prop 62 would create. With 3 million independent voters who stand to be enfranchised by the passage of Prop 62, we wholeheartedly agree with Murphy and South.

As in our previous issue, we count on the late Walter Karp to keep the anti-hypocrisy meter running. This excerpt about Franklin D. Roosevelt and Lyndon B. Johnson from *Indispensable Enemies: The Politics of Misrule in America* is a helpful reminder that George W. Bush is not the first occupant of the White House to use his status as a "wartime president" for political gain. I wrote "Quotations from Chairman Terry" to highlight a silly side of contemporary political hypocrisy and to shed some light on independent/Republican partnerships.

Finally, as the new kid on the "thought leadership magazine" block, I'm very grateful for the support, subscriptions and salutations that have come our way since we began publication with the previous issue. Thank you all so very much.



Ralph Nader

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