Very Secret Service  
by Dan Jacoby

George W. Bush and his Republican friends claim to be loyal, patriotic Americans. In fact, this President, like all Presidents before him, took an oath to “preserve, protect and defend” the U.S. Constitution. The entire Constitution.

One of the most basic rights Americans have is freedom of expression. This freedom is so important to us that it is laid out in the first amendment to the Constitution. But this President, who took that solemn oath, has decided that freedom of expression is grounds for arrest.

Around the country, as George W. Bush makes his campaign stops, people are being arrested for carrying an anti-Bush sign or wearing an anti-Bush t-shirt. In every case, the charge is thrown out of court, because these people are merely expressing themselves in a way protected by the first amendment.

And in every case, the U.S. Secret Service ordered the arrests.

The Secret Service claims to be “apolitical”, and they have, up until this administration, acted that way. But now, the Secret Service is clearly serving as George W. Bush’s attack dogs. This “apolitical” organization has taken sides in partisan politics.

How could this happen?

There is one significant difference between the Secret Service of the past and the Secret Service of the present; the agency used to be part of the Treasury department, but now it falls under Homeland Security. By answering to Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge, the Secret Service becomes an instrument of a man whose every action demonstrates his lapdog loyalty to the Bush administration.

Does it stand to reason, then, that the Secret Service’s actions would mimic Tom Ridge’s loyalty to George W. Bush? Or should they maintain their apolitical stand?

Why has anyone with the courage to demonstrate against George W. Bush within view of the Secret Service been arrested?

Fortunately, state judges who have the final say in these cases are far more concerned with protecting our constitutional rights than the Bush administration is, which is why every single one of these arrests has been thrown out of court. Unfortunately, nobody has yet held the Secret Service, Tom Ridge or George W. Bush liable for these violations of the Constitution. So the arrests, the harassment of loyal, freedom-loving Americans, will continue.

The real question is, how far will this deterioration of the U.S. Constitution go? In the next four years, the President may appoint as many as four justices to the Supreme Court. The next President’s appointments can maintain the strength of the supreme law of the land, or they can tear it down. If the appointments are made by George W. Bush and approved by a Republican-controlled Senate, there is every reason to believe that American citizens will be denied the right to protest.

And George W. Bush’s attack dogs will continue to get away with their plan to do away with the U.S. Constitution.

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