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## Don't Let It Bring You Down

By William Rivers Pitt  
truthout | Perspective

Monday 05 December 2005

***Don't let it bring you down,  
It's only castles burning,  
Find someone who's turning,  
And you will come around...***

-- Neil Young

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Wolf Blitzer got up on his hind legs during his Sunday morning confab with Senator Biden on CNN and expressed his outrage that the Iraqi people and their so-called leaders have not thanked the United States for invading and occupying their country. "There was not one word of appreciation," said Blitzer, "to the United States for liberating Iraq from Saddam Hussein." Wolf went on to ask Biden if the Senator found this as alarming and depressing as he did.

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The disconnection is staggering, the comment so two years ago. Remember when Dick Cheney told us before the war that, "My belief is we will, in fact, be greeted as liberators"? The vast gulf between our present reality and Cheney's pre-invasion optimism is wide enough to sail the Sixth Fleet through with room to spare. Yet there was Wolf, still waiting for the hearts and flowers.

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Blitzer, one can assume, would be appalled by another video on the 'net of a caravan of oil tankers being driven by US troops through Iraq. One troop, driving the tanker and narrating the video, tells the viewer to be ready for the next stretch of road. Children, it seems, gather on that stretch of road to throw rocks at the passing soldiers. The video clearly shows young Iraqis pelting the truck as it rolls along; one rock

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smashes the windshield. The soldier in the video is vocally frustrated by the rules of engagement which keep him from shooting the rock-throwers.

Maybe those kids are foreign fighters, insurgents shipped in from Iran and Syria to disrupt the march of democracy.

Let's see. Tens of thousands of Iraqis have been killed and maimed during this occupation. 70% of the population is unemployed. Long gas lines are the rule of the day. Hospitals don't work. Electricity is intermittent. Potable water is hard to come by. Bombs go off every day, slaying civilians, police and soldiers indiscriminately. Iraqis disappear into torture chambers. Religious factions growl at each other like dogs in a fighting pit. Even the children throw rocks.

Where's the love, Wolf? Where's the thanks?

Don't let it bring you down, Wolf. It's merely an accent in the symphony. There are a number of people walking around these days groaning for a little love, for those good old days when things like rules and laws were for other people. The Abramoff scandal has a whole pile of Republican trough-diggers in Congress thinking about keeping a bail-bondsman on speed dial. It didn't used to be this way for them, and more than a few are wondering when the rug is going to get jerked out from under them.

Big George and the boys are likewise feeling the heat, and have coughed up a scattered bag of platitudes and blue-sky predictions in the form of a "plan" to "win" in Iraq. Rep. Murtha put a burr under their collective saddle when he demanded a withdrawal from Iraq, and the White House PR mavens still haven't quite figured out how to deal with him. The old chestnuts about elitist liberal weenies don't scan with Murtha; the only time he ever stuck his pinkie finger out while drinking a latte was so he could pick up the Distinguished Service Cross he earned after a lifetime in the Marine Corps.

There is video from Al Jazeera floating around on the 'net allegedly showing [the explosion that killed ten Marines](#) in Fallujah last week. The Pentagon folks are vehemently denying that this video actually shows those ten Marines getting blown up. Perhaps they are correct, but one thing is certain. The video definitely shows a crowd of American soldiers and a Humvee disappearing into the vortex of a terrible detonation.

Those ten Marines who died last week, by the way, had names and

homes. Almost half of them were not old enough to legally buy a beer in America when they died in Iraq.

Adam Kaiser was 19, and was from Naperville, Illinois. Andrew Patten was also 19, and was from Byron, Illinois. Anthony McElveen was 20, and was from Little Falls, Minnesota. Robert Martinez was also 20, and was from Splendora, Texas. Craig Watson was 21, and was from Union City, Michigan. John Holmason was also 21, and was from Scappoose, Oregon. Scott Modeen was 24, and was from Hennepin, Minnesota. David Huhn was also 24, and was from Portland, Michigan. Daniel Clay was 27, and was from Pensacola, Florida. Andy Stevens was 29, and was from Tomah, Wisconsin.

It is important to know their names, because you will never get to meet them.

Since January 2001, we have lost faith in the idea that our votes matter, we have lost two towers in New York, we have lost an entire city in Louisiana, we have lost two thousand one hundred and twenty nine soldiers to Iraq, somewhere along the way we lost a whole pile of weapons of mass destruction those soldiers died trying to find, we have lost a substantial portion of our children's future by spending hundreds of billions of dollars so those soldiers could die far from home, we have lost our standing with the international community, and a good portion of the planet looks long and hard at us, wondering if we have also lost our minds.

Don't let it bring you down, though. We're staying the course, fighting them over there so we don't have to fight them here, spreading democracy, rolling with the noble cause, doing the Lord's work and saving Christmas, all at the same time. It's all good.

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*William Rivers Pitt is a New York Times and internationally bestselling author of two books: War on Iraq: What Team Bush Doesn't Want You to Know and The Greatest Sedition Is Silence.*

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