

# Recalling the 2004 US Presidential Elections: The Footprints of Electoral Fraud

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*This article originally published 3 days after the November 2, 2004 presidential elections under the title Footprints of Electoral Fraud: The November 2 Exit Poll Scam sheds light on the process of fraud offered by “black box” voting. This analysis is of particular relevance in relation to the forthcoming November 2012 presidential elections.*

Republican electoral fraud in the 2004 presidential election was widely anticipated by informed observers—whose warnings about the opportunities for fraud offered by “black box” voting machines supplied and serviced by corporations closely aligned with Republican interests (and used to tally nearly a third of the votes cast on November 2) have been amply borne out by the results.<sup>1</sup>

One of the clear indicators of massive electoral fraud was the wide divergence, both nationally and in swing states, between exit poll results and the reported vote tallies. The major villains, it would seem, were the suppliers of touch-screen voting machines. There appears to be evidence, however, that the corporations responsible for assembling vote-counting and exit poll information may also have been complicit in the fraud.

Until recently, the major American corporate infomedia networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox, and AP) relied on a consortium known as the Voter News Service for vote-counting and exit poll information. But following the scandals and consequent embarrassments of the 2000 and 2002 elections, this consortium was disbanded. It was replaced in 2004 by a partnership of Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International known as the National Election Pool.

The National Election Pool’s own data—as transmitted by CNN on the evening of November 2 and the early morning of November 3—suggest very strongly that the results of the exit polls were themselves fiddled late on November 2 in order to make their numbers conform with the tabulated vote tallies.

It is important to remember how large the discrepancy was between the early vote tallies and the early exit poll figures. By the time polls were closing in the eastern states, the vote-count figures published by CNN showed Bush leading Kerry by a massive 11 percent margin. At 8:50 p.m. EST, Bush was credited with 6,590,476 votes, and Kerry with 5,239,414. This margin gradually shrank. By 9:00 p.m., Bush purportedly had 8,284,599 votes, and Kerry 6,703,874; by 9:06 p.m., Bush had 9,257,135, and Kerry had 7,652,510, giving the incumbent a 9 percent lead, with 54 percent of the vote to Kerry’s 45 percent.

At the same time, embarrassingly enough, the national exit poll figures reported by CNN showed Kerry as holding a narrow but potentially decisive lead over Bush. At 9:06 p.m. EST, the exit polls indicated that women’s votes (54 percent of the total) were going 54 percent

to Kerry, 45 percent to Bush, and 1 percent to Nader; men's votes (46 percent of the total) were breaking 51 percent to Bush, 47 percent to Kerry, and 1 percent to Nader. Kerry, in other words, was leading Bush by nearly 3 percent.

The early exit polls appear to have caused some concern to the good people at the National Election Pool: a gap of 12 or 14 percent between tallied results and exit polls can hardly inspire confidence in the legitimacy of an election.

One can surmise that instructions of two sorts were issued. The election-massagers working for Diebold, ES&S (Election Systems & Software) and the other suppliers of black-box voting machines may have been told to go easy on their manipulations of back-door 'Democrat-Delete' software: mere victory was what the Bush campaign wanted, not an implausible landslide. And the number crunchers at the National Election Pool may have been asked to fix up those awkward exit polls.

Fix them they did. When the national exit polls were last updated, at 1:36 a.m. EST on November 3, men's votes (still 46 percent of the total) had gone 54 percent to Bush, 45 percent to Kerry, and 1 percent to Nader; women's votes (54 percent of the total) had gone 47 percent to Bush, 52 percent to Kerry, and 1 percent to Nader.

But how do we know the fix was in? Because the exit poll data also included the total number of respondents. At 9:00 p.m. EST, this number was well over 13,000; by 1:36 a.m. EST on November 3 it had risen by less than 3 percent, to a final total of 13,531 respondents—but with a corresponding swing of 5 percent from Kerry to Bush in voters' reports of their choices. Given the increase in respondents, a swing of this size is a mathematical impossibility.

The same pattern is evident in the exit polls of two key swing states, Ohio and Florida.

At 7:32 p.m. EST, CNN was reporting the following exit poll data for Ohio. Women voters (53 percent of the total) favoured Kerry over Bush by 53 percent to 47 percent; male voters (47 percent of the total) preferred Kerry over Bush by 51 percent to 49 percent. Kerry was thus leading Bush by a little more than 4 percent. But by 1:41 a.m. EST on November 3, when the exit poll was last updated, a dramatic shift had occurred: women voters had split 50-50 in their preferences for Kerry and Bush, while men had swung to supporting Bush over Kerry by 52 percent to 47 percent. The final exit polls showed Bush leading in Ohio by 2.5 percent.

At 7:32 p.m., there were 1,963 respondents; at 1:41 a.m. on November 3, there was a final total of 2,020 respondents. These fifty-seven additional respondents must all have voted very powerfully for Bush—for while representing only a 2.8 percent increase in the number of respondents, they managed to produce a swing from Kerry to Bush of fully 6.5 percent.

In Florida, the exit polls appear to have been tampered with in a similar manner. At 8:40 p.m. EST, CNN was reporting exit polls that showed Kerry and Bush in a near dead heat. Women voters (54 percent of the total) preferred Kerry over Bush by 52 percent to 48 percent, while men (46 percent of the total) preferred Bush over Kerry by 52 percent to 47 percent, with 1 percent of their votes going to Nader. But the final update of the exit poll, made at 1:01 a.m. EST on November 3, showed a different pattern: women voters now narrowly preferred Bush over Kerry, by 50 percent to 49 percent, while the men preferred Bush by 53 percent to 46 percent, with 1 percent of the vote still going to Nader. These figures gave Bush a 4 percent lead over Kerry.

The number of exit poll respondents in Florida had risen only from 2,846 to 2,862. But once again, a powerful numerical magic was at work. A mere sixteen respondents—0.55 percent of the total number—produced a four percent swing to Bush.

What we are witnessing, the evidence would suggest, is a late-night contribution by the National Elections Pool to the rewriting of history.

It is possible that at some future moment questions about electoral fraud in the 2004 presidential election might become insistent enough to be embarrassing. The pundits, at that point, will be able to point to the NEP's final exit poll figures in the decisive swing states of Florida and Ohio—and to marvel at how closely they reflect the NEP's vote tallies.

The Ohio Fifty-Seven (is there a Heinz-Kerry joke embedded in the number?) and the Florida Sixteen will have done their bit in ensuring the democratic legitimacy of the one-party imperial state.

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#### Note

1. Among the warnings, see Bev Harris, Black Box Voting: Ballot Tampering in the 21st Century (Talion Publishing/Black Box Voting; free internet version available at [www.BlackBoxVoting.org](http://www.BlackBoxVoting.org)); Infernal Press, "How George W. Bush Won the 2004 Presidential Election" (Infernal Press, 25 June 2003); Steve Moore, "E-Democracy: Stealing the Election in 2004" (Global Outlook, No. 8, Summer 2004); and Greg Palast, "An Election Spolied Rotten" ([www.TomPaine.com](http://www.TomPaine.com), 1 November 2004). Early assessments of the election include Greg Palast, "Kerry Won... Here are the Facts" ([www.TomPaine.com](http://www.TomPaine.com), 4 November 2004); and Wayne Madsen, "Grand Theft Election" ([www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca), 5 November 2004).

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