

<http://rncwatch.typepad.com/rncwatch/> (July 12th, 2004)

Letter to Daily News On its "Anarchy Threat to City" Cover Article

RNCWatch just got a copy of this letter to the Daily News regarding its front-page expose on "[Anarchy Threat to City: Cops Fear Hard-Core Lunatics Plotting Convention Chaos.](#)" Assuming the paper does not print the letter (or at least not in full), we decided to print it in its entirety:

Dear Daily News:

My name is David Rankin, I am a law student working to organize legal observers for the National Lawyers Guild New York City Mass Defense Committee. Your cover story was very misleading. There is no way anyone or anything is going to be a threat to New York, let alone the supposed 'hard-core lunatics.'

The sidebar '[Trail of Global Mayhem](#)' could have easily had the title, 'The Worst Police Abuses in the Last 5 Years.' These events are some of the best example of police overreaction causing injury and resulting in copious litigation from false arrests, police brutality, to numerous First Amendment violations.



Just as an example in Miami [Richard Margolius, a 60-year old circuit judge who witnessed the police response, said in open court that it was "a disgrace for the community." "(I saw) no less than 20 felonies committed by police officers," said Margolius. "I probably would have been arrested myself if it had not been for a police officer who recognized me."] From the St. Petersburg Times (Florida) January 18, 2004 Sunday Pg. 6P

In New York City, we can, and do expect better.

This articles takes one very small group of activists and magnifies their importance to demonize all people who do not agree with the Bush presidency. By focusing on one unidentified group of activists and saying this is what demonstrations are, it is like saying what happened to Abner Louima is how police handle arrests. We would never say that about the police, but somehow it is permissible to defame activists with the behavior of a very few.

Sensational articles like this can be dangerous.

- 1) Makes the police more agitated and nervous because it makes peaceful protesters seem, somehow, dangerous. We do not need the police looking at demonstrators as potential threats, all that does is cause unnecessary tension.
- 2) It makes people afraid to go to the streets to express their indignation at our current administration. Once people are afraid to express their opinions we have lost one of the most important parts of our country.
- 3) The fear irresponsible journalism like this creates is used by the police to justify needlessly repressive tactics.

The Daily News readers should know there are many organizations working diligently to provide the people of New York an opportunity to give a clear and persuasive message to this Presidency. We should not let articles like this take away from the great work people are doing.

See you in August!

David Rankin

RNC Mass Defense Project