A thesis project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in
Mass Communication

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May 2015
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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to my project. First, thanks to my thesis committee members, Professor David A. Blumenkrantz, Dr. José Luis Benavides, and committee chair, Dr. Melissa Wall, for their notes and guidance along the way. Without their help, my project wouldn’t exist.

Next, I want to thank Noam Chomsky, Amy Goodman, Ralph Nader, and Luis J. Rodriguez for allowing me to film them. Their interviews and perspectives were the most crucial parts of my project. A special thank you to Noam Chomsky for granting me the opportunity to meet with him upon my first request, which in turn, opened the doors to subsequent interviews with Amy Goodman and Ralph Nader.

I would like to thank my dedicated crew of three, Hector Zamora, Cesar Moreno, and Scott Glasser. They were the tripod on which I stood for over a year of shooting, traveling, and editing. Without them, I never would have accomplished shooting the campaign, and survived Boston, New York, and Washington DC. Thanks to Stephanie Henkel for helping me with interviews. A special thanks to Ankur Patel for keeping this fire burning from start to finish.

Lastly, I want to say thank you to my wonderful daughter, Jade Maria Ickler. During this year, you gave me a reason to keep pushing forward. Your smile kept me going, even when it was difficult. Thank you for being patient with your busy father.
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ABSTRACT

LEFT OUT: BEYOND THE TWO-PARTY HORSE RACE
A DOCUMENTARY FILM

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This thesis project examines the role of media in American democracy by looking at how third-party candidates are marginalized in news coverage. It is a documentary film about media coverage of third-party political candidates. It follows Luis J. Rodriguez, the best-selling author of “Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days in LA” a memoir of his life as a Los Angeles gang member. The film documents four months of his campaign in the 2014 primary election for Governor of California as a Green Party candidate. It shows debates and events on the campaign trail as he went to different venues talking to voters all over California.

This exploration continues after the election is over with interviews from leading experts on the topic, including Noam Chomsky, Amy Goodman, and Ralph Nader. The film will shed light on the ways that third-party candidates are gaining support and how they are being marginalized by the news media. It is a critique of the mainstream news
media’s lack of coverage regarding candidates outside the two-party system. In doing so, it also uncovers large misconceptions about American democracy and the marginalization of the voters.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Mainstream news media play a key role in shaping American democracy by influencing voters’ minds and thereby potentially steering the outcome of political campaigns. The mainstream news coverage offers two parties by which to categorize all the issues and simplify the discussion. As a result, key issues, such as climate change, economic disparity and corporate entitlement, are left out of the debates. However, third-party candidates often force these important issues to resurface. When this occurs, the media acts as a mechanism for the two party system, marginalizing third party candidates by ignoring and labeling them (Wolfsfeld, 2011).

Aims of Project

The aim of this thesis project is to explore how the media marginalizes third party candidates by following Luis J. Rodriguez’ 2014 California gubernatorial campaign. The goal was to find out if third party candidates are relevant in today’s politics and to see if they could provide realistic solutions to the issues that are most often ignored. This thesis also aims to better understand what it takes for third party candidates to compete in a race that is designed for only two parties to compete with each other.

Research Questions

This thesis project will answer the following questions:

1. What role do third-parties play in the American two-party system?

2. What are the obstacles third-parties face?
3. How does the media marginalize third-parties?

4. How does the marginalization of third-party candidates disenfranchise voters?

**Significance**

With the most of the important issues being vastly ignored by the two-party system, the majority of citizens feel that American democracy doesn’t represent them. Therefore, a large population of the country chooses not to participate. If, however, there were more options to reflect more of the ideas that represent more voices of the people, they would be encouraged to get involved. Regardless of their ability to successfully elect candidates to office, third-party candidates should be given an equal opportunity to have their issues discussed in the news media. Unfortunately, this is not the case. It is necessary in a democracy to have all voices represented, not just the loudest.

Americans know very little about third-party candidates, partly because the media marginalizes them. They learn about candidates from coverage of campaigns. For this reason, it is important for independent media to offer equal coverage to those who are left out of the mainstream. This thesis project will provide an example, which will give a better understanding of all sides of the debates and open up a larger range of opinion on important issues.

**Overview of Thesis**

This chapter introduces the project aim, research questions, and significance of this thesis. Chapter 2 is a literature review on the areas encompassing electoral politics and media, beginning with the propaganda model. The second section of Chapter 2
addresses the patterns and rules and themes of political coverage in the news. The third section defines third-parties in America and describes why the run, and the challenges they face. The fourth section ties Chapters 2 and 3 together by examining media coverage of third party candidates to see how they are marginalized. Chapter 3 is the methodology, which explains the logistics involved in carrying out the project. Chapter 4 is a complete transcription of the documentary film. Chapter 5 lays out the findings, conclusions, and limitations of the project.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review starts out by explaining the domination of news media by a combination of government and private interests. In the next section, I will examine the key role journalists play in excluding dissenting voices from news stories. This literature review will then address the important role of third-party candidates in American democracy. The final section of Chapter 2 will analyze the ways third-party candidates are marginalized by the media.

Propaganda Model

The propaganda model explains the inequality of access to the private media systems that communicate messages and symbols dominated by power and money to the general populace (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). It is much easier to see a propaganda system at work in countries where the state bureaucracy has monopolistic control over the media and imposes official censorship. Propaganda systems are more difficult to see, as Herman and Chomsky state, “where the media are private and formal censorship is absent” (p.1).

Herman and Chomsky (1988) explain how the government and dominant private interests are able to marginalize dissent by passing the news through five successive “filters” before it is “fit to print”. These five ingredients are essential to the propaganda model: (1) size, concentration of ownership and profit orientation; (2) advertising methods of news; (3) reliance on information provided by agents of power; (4) “flak” as a disciplinary measure; (5) anticommunism as a national religion. (p.2)
According to Herman and Chomsky (1988) the first filter, the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms, explains the limitation of media ownership to corporate giants. The increasingly requisite large size of investment over the last century has resulted in a mass media system controlled by major corporations, banks and government. Herman and Chomsky state,

This trend toward greater integration of the media into the market system has been accelerated by the loosening of rules limiting media concentration, cross-ownership, and control by non-media companies. There has also been an abandonment of restrictions. (1988, p.8)

This filter also explains the constraints market-profit-oriented forces and corporate interests place on mass media managers. The media are tiered, with the top tier defining the news agenda and supplying most of the news to the bottom tiers and to the public. In Herman and Chomsky’s words, “the greater profitability of the media in a deregulated environment has also led to an increase in takeovers and takeover threats. This has forced the managements…to focus…more aggressively…on profitability” (p.8).

The second filter that affects news choices is advertising as the main income of the mass media. Herman and Chomsky (1988) explain that the advertising model gives advertisers power over programing because they pay for the programs. The media have developed specialized staff to solicit and compete for their patronage because as Herman and Chomsky put it, “the choices of these patrons greatly affect the welfare of the media” (p.16). According to Herman and Chomsky (1988) advertisers discriminate against media institutions, such as working-class and radical media, as well as programming based on their own tendency to support culturally and politically conservative principles.
Herman and Chomsky (1988) point out that an advertising-based media system will marginalize programming that deals with serious complexities and disturbing controversies, seeking instead to lightly entertain and encourage a purchasing environment. For this reason, programmers have trouble finding sponsorship for programs that are critical of corporate activities, such as environmental degradation, military-industrial complex, or corporate support of third world countries.

The third filter is news sourcing. According to Herman and Chomsky (1988), news organizations, dictated by economics, depend on large bureaucracies to supply a steady, reliable flow of material to the news outlets. Since news organizations cannot possibly afford to report on every story that happens in the world, reporters rely on regular news “beats,” such as city hall and the police department. In Herman and Chomsky’s words, “These bureaucracies turn out a large volume of material that meets the demands of news organizations for reliable, scheduled flows” (p.19). In return, these powerful bureaucracies gain privileged access to the mass media. Herman and Chomsky point out that while these contributions of raw materials subsidize the news, it is this dependency by the media that leaves them vulnerable to be manipulated into following a special agenda or framework. Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue that another reason the media relies on government and corporate sources is to avoid any possible criticisms of bias or threat of libel suits, while at the same time reducing the costly investigative expense of researching source credibility. This serves to maintain the news’ image of objectivity, but at the same time marginalizes non-routine sources, making them struggle for access. Sparks (2007) agrees that source dependence exists as a function of news production, yet disagrees with the notion that this guarantees compliance by journalists.
Sparks further argues that the propaganda model fails to account for the existence of disagreements among elite sources, as well as the influence of “Amnesty International, Greenpeace, trade unions and so on – that provide alternative sources of information and opinion” (Sparks, 2007, p.78).

According to Herman and Chomsky (1988), the fourth filter, flak, refers to the negative enforcement the media might face from a program or statement that powerful entities disagree with. Flak is produced both directly, in the form of letters or phone calls from the White House or FCC, or indirectly by generating ads to voice their dissatisfaction, and funding right-wing think-tanks that monitor or attack the media. Herman and Chomsky’s research shows that, “the government is a major producer of flak, regularly assailing, threatening, and correcting the media” (p.28). Despite these regular attacks, the mass media treat the flak machines with large degree of respectful attention. Jackson and Stanfield (2004) point out that during the Iraq war, Fox news acted as a producer of flak, using the climate of extreme patriotism to sideline any anti-war debate. As Herman and Chomsky state, “this reflects the power of the sponsors, including the well-entrenched position of the right wing in the mass media themselves” (p.28)

The fifth and final filter, anticommunism as a control mechanism, explains how the ideological view of communism as the ultimate evil serves to mobilize the populace against anybody advocating policies that threaten powerful interests. Herman and Chomsky (1988), point out that the superior status and class positions of Western elites are threatened by communism. The well-documented traumas of Soviet, Chinese, and Cuban state abuses have elevated anticommunist ideology and politics to a Western religion. Since the concept of communism is fuzzy, something can easily be labeled as
communism and demand for serious evidence is suspended. It is the choosing of sides and dichotomized framing by that mass media that pushes a Joe McCarthy into the limelight. In Herman and Chomsky’s words, “the anti-communist control mechanism reaches through the system to exercise a profound influence on the mass media” (p.30). This political-control mechanism keeps liberals at home on the constant defense about their alleged communist sympathies, fragmenting left and labor movements.

These five filters sharply limit what becomes news. Herman and Chomsky (1988) identify an over arching dichotomy that treats worthy victims with more humanization than victims deemed unworthy by the news media. This dichotomization frame leaves the worthiness of victimization in the hands of elite interests. Propaganda campaigns require the collaboration of the mass media whether instituted by government or media firms. By analyzing the story choices, Herman and Chomsky found that, “dichotomization in the mass media is massive and systematic” (p.35). In summary, domestic power interests use these five filters to gain advantage from the system and to serve political ends.

**News, Journalists, and Political Coverage**

The literature reveals subtle rules and patterns, which journalists use for their symbolic representations of politics in the news. According to Gans (1979) “recurring pattern(s) of news are about a fairly small number of actors and activities.” (p.5). Bennett (1996), identifies five rules of political coverage: 1) get an official reaction, 2) indexing, 3) follow the trail of power, 4) observe, narrate, adjudicate, and 5) news icons. The rules are anchored in the context of three normative orders: the journalistic norms of
objectivity and fairness, the role of press in politics, and the normative constraints of profit interests in story reporting. These norms rationalize the rule system as a counterbalance to determine a political reporting pattern. This pattern of news content standardization is identifiable by subtle journalistic judgments as well as by daily work routines, such as pack journalism, beat reporting, and habitual reviewing of the New York Times and the wire copy (Bennett, 1996).

Objectivity in the Newsroom

According to Meyers (2010), objectivity became a fundamental principle of journalism ethical codes in the 1920s. According to Gans (1979), value exclusion and value inclusion are two results of objectivity in journalism. Journalists exclude certain values in their pursuit of objectivity and detachment, “disregarding the implications of the news” (p.183). Meyers (2010) adds that in order to be objective, a journalist must “approach a story factually, impartially, and independently” (p.139). Among the journalists Gans (1979) studied, those with conscious values were in the minority, “they had no favorites, they were only interested in getting the story” (p.184-5). According to Cunningham (2003), objectivity makes journalists “passive recipients of the news rather than aggressive analyzers and explainers of it” (p.1). Gans (1979) points out that objectivity is important to protect journalistic credibility by enabling audiences to come to their own conclusions, but it, “is also a commercial consideration” (p.186). Because of conformity pressures, values need not be discussed during the hiring process, ideologists are simply not wanted by the news media. “The vast majority of opinions in the news enter unconsciously, largely through the use of connotative, often pejorative words and
phrases” (Gans, p.199). Because of the heavy weight placed on the norm of objectivity, journalists rarely change their opinion for fear of being charged with inconsistency. So, according to Cunningham (2003), under the pressure of a deadline, objectivity becomes an excuse for a reporter to assume that having “both sides of the story,” is sufficient (p.2).

*Profit Considerations*

Gans (1979) states that “story selectors must attend to some commercial and audience considerations” (p.214). Budget restraints often lead to cost cutting measures by newsrooms. In order to increase revenue, the audience must be increased, thereby increasing the value of commercial space. News firms come before the news organization and these firms exist to make money. The news organizations consist of story buyers and story sellers. This process simplifies stories to their most dramatic, novel or unusual components. Mullainathan and Schleifer (2005) found that many scholars accuse these profit motives of leading to political bias and inaccurate news reporting. Gans (1979) points out that news organizations are hierarchically controlled by corporate and news executives, who exert power in four ways, through budget and major personnel decisions, by protecting the commercial and political interests of the firm, by making policy, and by supervising story selection.

*Authoritative Viewpoints*

The first rule of political coverage is to “get an official reaction” (Bennett, 1996, p.376). Whenever possible, journalists build storylines from authoritative or official perspectives. In order to accomplish this, news organizations institutionalized a “beat
system, that links reporters with officials who are presumed to occupy powerful or authoritative positions in the decision-making or policy-implementation process” (Bennett, 376). The people who populate the news, whom Gans (1979) refers to as “actors”, could be “Knowns” or “Unknowns” (p.8). Gans identifies five types of Knowns that dominate the news as well as five types of Unknowns that appear in the news about a fifth of the time. The five Knowns are incumbent presidents, presidential candidates, leading federal officials, state and local officials, alleged and actual violators of the laws. The five unknowns are protesters and rioters, victims, alleged and actual violators of the laws, participants in unusual activities and voters.

Indexing

The second rule Bennett (1996) identifies is indexing sources according to conflicts among key players. Political bias and balance can be reliably measured when public opinion and official statements coincide, however, indexing weighs heavily in the favor of powerful elites by artificially restricting the range of public debate. Kaid (2004) points out that this journalistic bias is a widely recognized norm in coverage of presidential campaigns. Kaid adds that, “for example, if reporters regard a candidate’s loss of support in opinion polls as highly newsworthy, losing candidates will receive negative coverage regardless of party” (Kaid, 2007, p.239). According to Bennett (1996), indexing implies journalistic filtering in news reports of public opposition to government policies and social dissent. Normative pressures, such as: heavy investigative reporting costs, aversion to lawsuits in sensitive stories, and avoidance of
reporting stories from sources that are unwilling to go on the record, encourage use of the index rule by journalists.

*Follow the Trail of Power*

The third rule Bennett (1996) outlines, “follow the trail of power” is identifiable by the development of stories beyond the normal newsbeats (p.378). This means that journalists turn to the perceptions of key players when a political situation does not fit within institutional contexts. Perceptions of key players depend on journalists’ level of exclusion and the complexity of representing political processes. This rule is limited to institution based political situations, such as, Congress, presidents, courts, state governments, and international alliance politics (Bennett, 1996).

*Observe, Narrate, and Adjudicate*

According to Bennett’s (1996) fourth rule of political coverage, the themes and customs of political culture are observed, narrated, and adjudicated by journalists. There are many familiar narratives used in coverage of stories, such as: horse race themed election reporting, consensual presidential honeymoon periods, and the invocation of rituals from civil religions to ease tragedies. As culture brokers, journalists evoke deep cultural images of threat, solidarity, and military prowess; as well as popular culture displays, such as, coverage of flag waving, yellow ribbon wearing by anchors, and board game themed war room sets. Gans (1979) found that nation and society were two recurring thematic subjects found in the news. “The nation is made up of such symbolic complexes as Government, Business and Labor, the Law, Religion, Science, Medicine,
Education, the Arts – complexes that have also become sections in the newsmagazines” (p.19). Stories where symbolic complexes are threatened or celebrated are considered newsworthy. Ceremonial events indicate, “that the nation remains a unit…defined by American spirit” (pp.20-1).

**News Icons**

The fifth rule of political coverage according to Bennett (2008), explains how politically marginalized ideas can be moved to the center of news coverage by journalists when defining moments that contain powerful images become news icons. These icons authenticate politically volatile content, giving license to journalists to “construct narratives that may challenge official definitions of political reality” (p.380). Lawrence, (1996) agrees, explaining the pattern of news construction with the conversion of news icons in the case of Rodney King. However, as Bennett (2008) points out, even in moments when journalists have more autonomy to speak with direct interpretive voices, a “remarkable standardization of content emerges” (p.379). Familiar official or cultural themes are reintroduced by the reapplication of rules 1-4. Gans (1979) explains that journalists have leeway to make changes, but further identifies five obstacles to leeway: “audience reduction, increased pressure, higher costs, organizational obstacles, and the competitive bind” (pp.288-9). These obstacles are strengthened by a lack of economic incentives.

**Horse-Race Election Coverage**
The rules, as Bennett (1996) explains, subtly rationalized by journalistic norms, produce familiar narratives - such as horse race election coverage. Broh (1980) analyzed the framework of the horse race metaphor, explaining that it can be simultaneously beneficial and damaging to the electoral process. In this metaphor, the candidate is the horse, so it follows that “the candidate's image, personality, staff relations, and strategy are the main foci of reporting” (Broh p.515). Broh (1980) adds that journalists can use horse race coverage to generate the interest of uninvolved voters by simplifying complex ideas. However, according to Powers (2008), horse race style reporting leaves out “serious reporting on the issues that really matter to Americans, reducing the campaign to a little buzz factory for insiders” (p.66). This is particularly important to understand when considering third-party candidates, which is the topic of discussion in the next section.

**Third-Party Candidates in the American Two-Party System**

Kruschke (1991) points out that although there is extensive literature on third-parties, the subject has been treated by both scholars and journalists as inconsequential. Following the standard practice of Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus (1984), Rappaport and Stone (2005) and Pankiewicz (2010), use of the terms *third-party candidate*, and *minor-party candidate* are interchangeable in reference to candidates who run for elected office by nomination from a party other than Democrats or Republicans. Gillespie (1993) defines a third-party as a loosely organized group that designates itself as a party, expresses the interests of its members, advocates for these interests either within the political and party systems or by outside political methods, and is unable to attain or
sustain a substantial amount of public loyalty. Gillespie (1993) breaks down V.O. Key’s (1955) analysis of third parties into two types. The first type is the continuing doctrinal party, which sustains for decades due to the commitment of dedicated members. The second type is the short-lived party, which has a brief existence but tends to influence the issues and public policy of major parties. Gillespie (1993) contributes a third classification to Key’s types of third-parties: the non-national significant other, which become influential in their own state or local community, but their influence never extends beyond these boundaries even after achieving major party status within its confines.

9 Myths of the Two-Party System

Theodore Lowi (1983) argues that there is no hope for the two-party system. Lowi identifies nine myths, which defenders of the two-party system use to flatten the debate. Myth #1- American democracy was always dominated by two-parties. Myth #2 - The two-party system creates necessary competition to stabilize government. Myth #3 – The two-party system is historically the most consonant American system with the single member district electorate. Myth #4 – Voting for third-party candidates is like throwing away a vote. Myth #5 – Voting for third-party candidates contributes to the worst major-party candidate. Myth #6 – Third-parties would destroy Congress by their very presence. Myth #7 – Election of a third-party presidential candidate with enough electoral votes could cause a constitutional crisis. Myth #8 – A third-party candidate’s presence would disproportionately influence the balance of power. Myth #9 – A third-party President would not be able to govern across party lines. Lowi (1983) adds, “nothing about the
present party system warrants our deep respect. Presidents need a party and have none. Voters need choices and have none. Congress needs cohesive policies and has none” (Lowi, 705).

**The Role of Third-Parties**

Rapaport and Stone (2005) point out that the last time a third-party was capable of emerging to nationally elect multiple candidates into American political offices was when the Republican Party emerged out of the pre-Civil War era. Rosenstone, Behr and Lazarus (1984) add that “although many parties at first seem as though they might displace one of the major parties…only one – the Republican Party – has actually been able to do so,” and that was over a hundred and fifty years ago. For this reason, Rapoport and Stone (2005) follow the Walter Dean Burnham (1970) definition of third-party success as attracting at least five percent of the vote. Minor-parties may not have a chance at winning, or even getting in the two-party race, but historically they have played a major role in America as release valves for the discontented and oppressed (Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus, 1984). Gillespie (1993) adds that another important role minor-parties play is to assist in correcting the policy and even the ideology of major parties.

**Constraints on Third-Party Success**

Pankiewicz (2010) describes three specific constraints on third-party success as identified by Dwyer and Kolodny (1997). The first constraint is cultural bias by voters (Pankiewickz, 2010). According to Gillespie (1993), cultural bias is a “political socialization process” that teaches new generations to believe that deviation from the
two-party system is “un-American” (p.29). The second category of constraints on third-party success is legal barriers (Pankiewicz, 2010). Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus (1984) identify three types of legal barriers: constitutional bias, ballot access restrictions, and campaign finance laws. The third category of constraints on minor-party success is institutional barriers (Pankiewicz, 2010). According to Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus (1984), major parties employ delegitimizing tactics to marginalize minor-parties. Another institutional barrier is media coverage of third-party candidates, which is discussed in the next section.

**Media Coverage of Third-Party Candidates**

As the “voter’s primary source of information about politics,” the media’s coverage of third-party candidates convinces voters that their cause is hopeless (Rosenstone, Behr, & Lazarus 1984, p.37). According to Wolfsfeld (2011), “if the news media were truly objective or even fair, then they should provide equal coverage to all political parties, even those that don’t have a chance of being elected” (p.60). Gillespie (1993) points out that the 1934 Communications Act and the 1949 Fairness Doctrine provided equal opportunities for all candidates and compelled broadcasters to cover differing views on important issues, but by 1988, Congressional acts and the repeal of the Fairness Doctrine eroded third-party access to media coverage. Gillespie (1993) adds that despite the legal disadvantages, the media could provide access to third-party candidates, but research reveals very little media exposure for minor parties.

Rozell and Mayer (2003) point out that media coverage has made it easier for the two major parties to disseminate their message during campaigns. Both Democrats and
Republican Party organizations can advertise on a few targeted major media markets and the news media will broaden the reach to local news outlets all over the country, thus extending the influence of both major parties beyond what their resources would allow. In contrast, unless a third party candidate is high-profile enough to command media attention – such as Ross Perot, Jesse Ventura, or Ralph Nader – “the party is unlikely to gain notice and be taken seriously by the media as a player in policy debate” (p.169).

The media doesn’t only ignore third-party candidates; “at times they are overtly hostile towards them” (Rosenstone, Behr, & Lazarus 1984, p.36). Wolfsfeld (2011) identifies two ways that the mainstream news media marginalizes candidates running for office outside the two-party system: ignoring and labeling. Kirch (2008) examines how third-party candidates are ignored by the news media through the prominence of their coverage. Kirch (2008) also quantifies the labels that are given to third-party candidates in his analysis.

**Ignoring**

The simplest way news media marginalizes candidates outside the Democratic and Republican parties is by ignoring them. According to Wolfsfeld (2011), there were fourteen political parties running candidates for president in 2008, but only the Democrats and Republicans got serious coverage by the news media. Zaller (1999) points out that the large amount of third-party candidates running for office gives reporters justification to exclude all of them from coverage unless they show some rare potential. “Thus, in the case of multi-candidate fields, the press will cover candidates it expects to do well, and to ignore candidates it expects to do poorly” (Zaller, p.61).
According to Wolfsfeld (2011), “The mainstream news media ignore these political parties because journalist see them as marginal and in doing so guarantee that those parties stay that way” (p.60). Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus (1996) argue that minor-parties are ignored simply because “we don’t have a multiparty system” (p.35).

According to Kirch (2008), third-party candidates are excluded from stories in many ways. The most common way was simply not mentioning any candidates on the ballot that were not Democrat or Republican. A less common way Green and Libertarian candidates were ignored was by failing to mention the candidate’s name, even when they were part of the story; instead, referencing them indirectly as “The Green Party candidate” (Kirch 2008, p.148). Kirch’s (2008) findings show many differences between the way the news covered Democrats and Republicans and the way it covered Greens and Libertarians. For example, Kirch (2008) found that Democrats and Republicans were featured more prominently than minor party alternatives, even when voters reflected eagerness for alternative voices.

**Prominence of Coverage**

In terms of prominence of coverage, Green and Libertarian gubernatorial candidates appeared in significantly fewer stories than did Democrats or Republicans. Third party gubernatorial candidates in California’s 2002 race appeared in only a quarter of the stories that were included in the study, compared to Democrats, who appeared in almost ninety percent, and Republicans, who appeared in almost three quarters of the stories (Kirch, 2008).
Kirch (2008) also studied where a candidate appeared first in a story. His analysis revealed that major party candidates were mentioned by name in nearly half of the cases studied, whereas minor-party candidates were only mentioned by name at the beginning of stories or in headlines one quarter of the time. “When a third-party candidate was featured in a story, his name did not appear until at least the tenth paragraph” (Kirch, 149-50). On the other hand, Rozell and Mayer (2003) point out that “it is not uncommon for the Democratic and Republican parties each to be mentioned prominently (in the headline or first paragraph)” (p.169).

Kirch (2008) found that Democrats and Republicans appeared on the front page three times as often as Greens and Libertarians in the study he conducted. Even the length of stories about major-party candidates tended to be longer than their third-party counterparts. The Democrats and Republicans in this case study often appeared in stories alone, but Kirch found that “when a Green Party candidate appeared in a story, that same story also mentioned the Democrat and Republican in one hundred percent of the cases” (p.153). In other words, third-party candidates are almost never presented without the inclusion of their major-party rivals. Major-party candidates officials were also quoted considerably more often than Libertarians and Greens (Kirch, 2008).

Kirch (2008) adds that Greens and Libertarians were often presented as outside the main contest. This is important to note when considering how the use of these particular sources by journalists help guide the debate in favor of the two-party dominated system. The reason “these parties are ignored (is) because they are considered as either unimportant, extremist, or both” (Wolfsfeld, p.60).
Labeling

According to Sifry (2013), despite the historic role third-parties play in American democracy, they are usually portrayed as “nuts, nuisances, or nonpersons” (p.283). Wolfsfeld (2011) points out that when the third-party candidates aren’t being ignored, they are being marginalized by the news media through labeling. Wolfsfeld also adds that these labels usually come, not from the journalists’ perspectives, but “more often they appear in news stories as quotes from politicians, government officials, or people in the military or the police.”

Wolfsfeld (2008) lists a few of these labels, such as: “violent, extremist, radical, fringe, fanatical, communist, socialist, fundamentalists, zealots, cult, or…suspected of having ties to Al-Qaeda,” on the more extreme side, or on the lighter side, “wacky, weird, or bizarre” (Wolfsfeld, p.60). Kirch (2008) adds that Democrats and Republicans are usually portrayed as serious contenders, but third party hopefuls are typically viewed as “spoilers” or “long-shots” (Kirch, 145). According to Kirch’s analysis, Greens and Libertarians were presented as either spoilers or long shots in almost half of the stories in which they appeared. By contrast, Democrats and Republicans were presented as spoilers in less than one percent of the stories analyzed. Pirch (2004) adds that candidates are given these labels before the race has even begun. This clearly pigeonholes the third-party candidates automatically by framing them as vote stealers in opposition to the major-party (Kirch, 2008).

Coverage for third-party spokespeople is usually limited to the “weirdest” or “scariest” quotes (Wolfsfeld 2011, p. 60). Kirch’s (2008) analysis also revealed that minor-party candidates were more likely to be portrayed as “offbeat” or “extreme”.
Democrats and Republicans were described as extreme in only two percent of the stories analyzed. By contrast, Greens and Libertarians were described as radical in eight percent of the stories (p. 174). Wolfsfeld (2011) points out that many of these groups might deserve the labels they are given, but adds that “these labels are often based on the news media relying too heavily on official perspectives, the need to create drama, or because journalists tend to conform to the mainstream views of their audience.” (p. 61)
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The research portion of this thesis project is in the form of a documentary film. What follows is a detailed methodology including the project design, interview subjects, interview questions, financing, qualifications, equipment used, and limitations.

Project Design

This project follows Luis J. Rodriguez, the best-selling author of “Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days in LA” a memoir of his life as a Los Angeles gang member. The film documents four months of his campaign in the 2014 primary election for Governor of California as a Green Party candidate. It shows debates and events on the campaign trail as he went to different venues talking to voters all over California. After the election is over, the film continues with interviews from leading experts on the topic, including Noam Chomsky, Amy Goodman, and Ralph Nader.

Qualifications

I was formally trained in Video Production at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale for two years from 1995-1997, where I received my Associate of Science Degree and Outstanding Academic Achievement Award for Excellence in Video Production. Following this training, I received Best Film Award at the 1999 San Antonio College, Fine Arts Festival. I have worked at broadcast production companies in many different capacities over the years and in 2004 I was hired as an instructor at Austin Community Access Television, teaching video production and editing for broadcast on public access
channels. After working there for two years, I moved to southern California and again found employment in multiple productions companies. In 2012, I earned my bachelor of Cinema and Arts Degree in Screenwriting from CSUN. I currently run my own freelance production company, Walking Eye Pictures, and I expect to earn my Master of Arts in Mass Communication in May 2015 from CSUN. My lengthy film and video experience coupled with my educational background give me the experience and knowledge necessary to complete an ambitious project such as this. In addition, my ten years of experience as a stand-up comedian gave me the edge needed to interview the subjects I chose. I also have over twenty years experience as a musician. I currently teach guitar lessons, and I’m taking a Composing for Film course in the CSUN music department, which gives me the experience, necessary to complete the ambitious soundtrack that will accompany the film.

**Preparation**

My qualifications outlined above, combined with two years of practice, producing journalistic videos for different departments at CSUN, such as, the Art Department, American Indian Studies, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, and Journalism departments leading up to the production of my documentary film, gave me the hands on experience needed to create a film that is journalistic, cinematic, and artistic.

I also studied many documentary films, including but not limited to:

**Bowling for Columbine (2002)** – Directed by Michael Moore. This film documents the tragedy and controversy surrounding the Columbine High School Massacre. It uses the school shooting as a platform for a discussion on gun control. The film gave me a better understanding of the use of subtle comedy to purvey a serious
message. It also helped me to better understand the use of metaphor in the title sequence and the framing of a documentary through the eyes of the filmmaker.

**An Unreasonable Man (2006)** – Directed by Henriette Mantel and Steve Skrovan. This film is an examination Ralph Nader’s career from consumer advocate to presidential candidate. The film gave me a better understanding of a traditional political documentary narrative form. The use of interviews combined with relevant b-roll gave me a framework for the editing of my film.

### Interview Subjects

The following is a list of people I interviewed for my documentary film:

**Noam Chomsky** – Professor Emeritus of Linguistics and Philosophy at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and author.

Professor Chomsky is a leading expert on the subject of government propaganda in America. His book, Manufacturing Consent (1988), which he co-authored with Edward S. Herman, is a standard text for journalists and scholars. He explained to me the meaning of his theory, the Propaganda Model, which is outlined in the book. His insight into the workings of the concentrations of private power and their effects on media coverage of third-party candidates, gave legitimacy and context to my documentary film.

**Amy Goodman** – Host of Democracy Now (one of the largest and fastest growing independent news organizations in the country) and flagship of progressive media.

Amy Goodman is one of the most popular independent broadcast journalists in America. She explained to me the failings and shortcomings of the mainstream news
media. Her insights on the importance of an open and free public media provided a mass communication angle on the discussion of third-party candidates in the news from an alternative media perspective.

**Ralph Nader** – Five time candidate for President of the United States as a write-in, Independent, and Green Party nominee.

Ralph Nader is a well-known consumer advocate, lawyer, political activist, lecturer, author, and famous corporate critic. He explained to me the legal and institutional obstacles that a candidate faces running for elected office from outside the two-party system. His insight on the importance of third-parties in the American two-party system, gave context and personal experience to the discussion of minor-parties outlined in my film.

**Luis J. Rodriguez** – Former Los Angeles gang member turned activist, author, poet, and 2014 Green Party candidate for Governor of California.

Luis is a best-selling author, well-known in California for his book, “Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days in LA. His campaign for Governor of California as the Green Party endorsed candidate was unsuccessful and didn’t get any mainstream media attention. By allowing me to follow him on the campaign trail, he gave my documentary film the context needed for a discussion of third-party candidates.

**Ankur Patel** – Campaign Coordinator for the Luis J. Rodriguez campaign and 2015 candidate for LAUSD School Board.

Ankur is an Alumnus of California State University, Northridge. He acted as campaign liaison between my documentary and Luis J. Rodriguez. By allowing me to
film his work on the campaign, he gave my documentary film the necessary context of the workings and organization of a minor-party campaign.

**Tony Prince** – Campaign Manager for the Luis J. Rodriguez campaign, community activist, and attorney.

Tony is a long time friend of Luis J. Rodriguez from their early days of community activism. He organized the scheduling and managed the volunteer membership of the Luis J. Rodriguez campaign for governor of California. By allowing me to film his activities, he gave insight into the inner workings of a minor-party campaign and provided broader context to the film from an insider perspective.

**Dr. Martin Saiz** – Professor of Political Science at California State University, Northridge, and author.

Dr. Martin Saiz is an expert on the subjects of American Political Institutions, and State and Local Governments. His interview gave a political overview and general academic analysis of the two-party system and third-parties to my documentary film.

**Interview Questions**

*For Tony Prince:*

1. What does the job of Campaign Manager involve?
2. How long have you known Luis J. Rodriguez?
3. How did you meet Luis?
4. What is the Rodriguez campaign doing to gain support without media coverage?
5. Is Luis sincere in his campaign?
6. Does he think he can win?
7. Who are your biggest supporters?

8. Where does the campaign money come from?

9. Is the two-party system flawed?

10. What can 3rd party candidates offer a system dominated by two main parties?

For Luis J. Rodriguez:

1. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of running as a third-party candidate?

2. How does the media enable or hinder third-parties?

3. Why are you running for governor?

4. How are you involved in the Chicano movement?

5. What inspired you to write “Always Running?”

6. What got you out of the gang life?

7. How did you become the Green Party candidate?

8. What got inspired you to become a community organizer?

9. Why do third-parties run when they know they can’t win?

10. Does lack of media coverage lessen your chances of winning?

For Martin Saiz:

1. Are Minor Parties relevant in politics? Do they provide realistic hope and solutions?

2. What obstacles do 3rd Party candidates face that are unique to being outside the two-party system?

3. Does the two-party system provide room for all voices?

4. What issues are left out?
5. Are Democrats and Republicans different, or are they two branches of the same party? Please explain some similarities and differences.

6. Do outside parties influence the two main parties? If so, how?

7. How do independent party candidates gain support without media coverage?

8. Do candidates like Luis J. Rodriguez stand a chance in California?

9. What elements does a candidate like Luis J. Rodriguez need to have to be a legitimate contender in a Governor’s race?

10. What changes could be made to allow more dissenting voices into politics?

For Noam Chomsky:

1. Are Minor Parties relevant in politics? Do they provide realistic hope and solutions?

2. What obstacles do 3rd Party candidates face that are unique to being outside the two-party system?

3. Does the two-party system provide room for all voices?

4. What is the Propaganda Model? How does it apply to third-parties?

5. Why don’t young people vote anymore?

6. What is the Fairness Doctrine? How does it apply to third-parties?

7. How do independent party candidates gain support without media coverage?

8. Do candidates like Luis J. Rodriguez stand a chance in California?

9. What elements does a candidate like Luis J. Rodriguez need to have to be a legitimate contender in a Governor’s race?

10. What changes could be made to allow more dissenting voices into politics?

For Amy Goodman:

1. Are third-parties marginalized by the media? How?

2. Can alternative media provide an outlet for third-party candidates?
3. Does alternative media challenge the mass media? Is it effective?

4. Why don’t young people vote anymore?

5. Do third-parties represent marginalized voters?

6. Do outside parties influence the two main parties? If so, how?

7. How do independent party candidates gain support without media coverage?

8. Do candidates like Luis J. Rodriguez deserve media coverage?
9. Why are more people turning to alternative media?

10. What changes could be made to allow more dissenting voices into politics?

_for Ralph Nader:

1. Are Minor Parties relevant in politics? Do they provide realistic hope and solutions?

2. What obstacles do third-party candidates face that are unique to being outside the two-party system?

3. Do third parties represent marginalized voices?

4. What do you say to critics who label third-parties as “spoilers?”

5. Are Democrats and Republicans different, or are they two branches of the same party? Please explain some similarities and differences.

6. Does the marginalization of third-parties reflect a suppression of free speech?

7. How do independent party candidates gain support without media coverage?

8. What are the legal and institutional barriers to third-party success?

9. What elements does a candidate like Luis J. Rodriguez need to have to be a legitimate contender in a Governor’s race?

10. What changes could be made to allow more dissenting voices into politics?

Equipment

30
The majority of footage for the campaign was shot with a Canon EOS 7D EF, DSLR camera with a 28-134mm kit lens and a second Canon EOS 7D EF with a 50mm standard fixed lens. GoPro HeroHD and GoPro3 Black cameras were used as a back-up cameras for car shots and shots of me during the campaign and interviews. Three point lighting was accomplished using a Britek kit with two soft boxes on the key and fill lights and barn doors on the back light. Two Bogen Manfrotto tripods were used for the Canon 7D cameras. One was a 475b with 501 Manfrotto fluid head, and the other was a 3221W with a 3036 Manfrotto fluid head. The microphones used were a Sony ECMM shotgun microphone, Audio-Technica BP4071, and Audio-Technica 4073a. Audio was recorded on a Tascam DR-40 Linear PCM recorder and a Fostex FR2LE. All editing was done on an early 2009 Mac Pro “Quad Core” with 4gb of ram and two 3TB hard drives. The video editing software was Final Cut Pro 6 and audio editing was done in Logic Pro 9.

**Financing**

I received $500 in assistance from the Associated Students travel funding in April 2014 to cover my travel to different events where Luis J. Rodriguez debated. I was again awarded $400 plus an additional $400 for my crewmember, Cesar Moreno, to cover travel funding in January 2015 for my trip to Boston to interview Noam Chomsky. I was also awarded a thesis grant of $900, to pay for my trips to New York and Washington D.C. with one crewmember, Hector Zamora, to interview Amy Goodman and Ralph Nader. The rest of the funding to cover equipment costs, and additional travel funding was paid for by student loans.
Limitations

Most of the limitations of this project were financial. My goal was very ambitious from the outset. I wanted to make a feature film documentary with well-known experts such as Ralph Nader, Amy Goodman, and Noam Chomsky. I knew it would be very expensive to follow Luis J. Rodriguez’ campaign around California and even more expensive to fly to Boston, New York, and Washington DC, especially with the addition of a necessary crewmember to help me carry and set up equipment. Luckily, a good portion of the travel expenses was reimbursed, as I discussed in the financing section of this chapter. However, I still ended up spending a few thousand dollars of student loan money, which will have to be paid back with interest. If I had more money for equipment and travel, for example, I could have obtained better footage and more events. Another limitation was the lack of serious research on the topic. Although there was a lot of literature on third-parties, there was a limited amount of literature on the media’s role in maintaining the two-party system. This leaves much room for my research and for future research on the topic.
Noam Chomsky

Seventy percent of the public is simply disenfranchised, the lower seventy percent in the income scale. So that has very little resemblance to democracy, that’s plutocracy.

Stephanie Henkel

Do you vote?

Ashley N. McCabe

I haven’t voted in three years.

Jide Akinpela

Uh, no. I do not vote.

Jodi Lopez

I just recently turned 18, so I haven’t like been on a rush to do it yet. So I guess it’s not really one of my top priorities.

Emily Pereira

I just registered to vote.
Stephanie Henkel
Do you know who our current governor is?

Charlie Va
No I don’t.

Stephanie Henkel
Do you know who our governor is currently?

Jodi Lopez
I really don’t.

Stephanie Henkel
Do you know who our current governor is?

Emily Pereira
No.

Marcos Hernandez
Same here.

Stephanie Henkel
Do you know who our current governor is?

Will Vitanza

Yea, Jerry Brown.

00:02:12

Jesse Ickler (V.O)

As I flew over California I began to think about where I came from, what brought me here, and what led me to make this film. There I am working on the soundtrack to my first documentary. Even as a child I was fascinated by the idea that creative media could be used as a learning tool. Back then we just assumed the American dream would be available to us. It was my mother who first taught me how to use a camera. As with every American child, I grew up thinking we live in a democracy. Through years of study and work in the broadcast industry, I came to realize that in the wrong hands this tool of media could be used as a force of power manipulation and destruction.

00:03:30

ALIVIO

Erick Eztli

Thank you all for coming. There’s a lot of people here. When people ask you, “What you did Friday night?” make sure you tell them you were somewhere that nurtures community. He can be anywhere else, but he’s here in a garage in Bell.
He is really busy right now with his campaign, and he took his time to come out tonight. So I really appreciate that a lot. Please give it up to Luis Rodriguez, give it up.

Luis J. Rodriguez

I’m running for governor, and you have to be pretty nuts to do that. I’m not running to make you think that voting for me is going to set you free. I’m running to unveil the undemocratic nature of this whole process. I’m running to let people know that our issues have got to be heard everywhere. They got to be heard in every street, in every corner, in every school, all the way to Sacramento, all the way to Washington. Everywhere, we got to infuse our revolutionary ideas and our revolutionary spirit.

Marlon Stern

I’ve seen people break down to tears, over being inspired by like hey, this guy is going to try do this. You know, he is going to try to do this in the elected system, and I’m going to work on this campaign, and I’m gonna vote for him, and I’m gonna get people to know that you should vote for him. Here’s a candidate who is not going to sell to Wal-Mart, or Coca Cola, or Exide, or whatever.

Luis J. Rodriguez

You know that Exide plant that people been talking about. I actually worked in that plant. People didn’t know that. It used to be called National Lead. The same
place that’s poisoning people then, is still poisoning people now. And they’re not going to shut it down. And if they do its because we fought for it. We fought to shut it down. They’re poising our land, they’re poising our ground, they’re poisoning our kids. This is why we have to get organized. We cannot let any more people be poisoned. And I don’t mean the poison by toxic stuff, poisoning our mind, colonizing our brain, colonizing our DNA. They’re poisoning everything. They’ve been doing it for five hundred years, and it’s time that it stopped. And we, us, you, me; we’re going to do. All colors, all races, everybody belongs here. Everybody is here for a purpose. No media is going to touch me barely. You make the media. Put it on social media, put it on Facebook, put it Twitter. Take pictures. Go tell people this garage. Talk about Erick and this beautiful scene he’s got. Put it out there. You make the media. We’re going to fight this in our terms, not there terms.

00:05:43

Marta Jiménez Flores

When I heard about him, and all this wonderful bookstores that are opening up for us Latinos in our communities. I think they are very important. I think he’s done that. I think he opened the eyes of some of us that it can be done. That we can still sell books, and let our children become literate and knowledgeable about the world. So I think that’s a very important thing that he’s done. That’s what I know him for.
L.A. Weekly in 2012 named Luis Rodriguez one of the sixty most fascinating people in the city. Luis is the author fifteen books of poetry, children’s literature, fiction and nonfiction, including the controversial 1993 memoir of gang life “Always Running; La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A.”, is known as one of the most checked out books in public libraries and one of the most stolen.

When I was organizing anti-war demonstrations and civil rights demonstrations in 1969 ’70 ’71 he was running the streets as a gang member with a very, very violent background. But when he saw the marches, when he participated in them. When he was arrested like hundred of others were and mistreated again by the police. He began, the seeds were there of seeing people together struggling on things. Seeing the resistance, but that people wanted to overcome it. He changed his life, and he has been a creative writer, artist advocate, and world traveler. Bringing out how grassroots people must and can be involved in solving the problems.

You know I’m running for governor for a lot of reasons, but one of the most important reasons is the voice of the poor, the working class, the forgotten is being heard. I don’t think people are looking at these issues of poverty, the prison rate, of the environment, poisonous environment, free health care, free education.
These issues that mean a lot to me and to most these people, they’re not really raising them. I think Democrats and Republicans have become almost like the same chorus, the same line, the same story. Maybe a few differences but not much. I’m trying to bring in a whole new imagination. A radical way looking at how to change things, how to look at our state, our governance; how to include all the people it’s not included.

Prof. Martin Saiz

I think they stand a chance to say something. To win, I would say no.

00:08:13

CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS

Karina Ceja

Things come up really fast. We have a press release that needs to go out and we all need to just make sure that we make the time to do that. And I myself I get out of my like you know my day job and head to the nearest coffee shop to start working on campaign stuff and literally it’s every day work. Every day you have something to be emailed, to be you know sent out. So it’s daily work but I think it’s very good work and beneficial for everybody.

Tony Prince

We talked about the fundraising event for John Densmore of course, of the Doors, formerly of the Doors, who is been nice enough to host the event a fundraising
event May 3. We definitely are going to continue to publicize that. We got the invitation out to maybe some of these Doors fans. Would you want to spend $100 to have an evening with John Densmore? And at the same time support Luis Rodriguez I almost said John Rodriguez. Luis Densmore. So we have a lot of work to do to make sure that that event comes off successfully. We have to finalize the tour. Luis is speaking on the 26th in Fresno at the M.A.P.A. convention. The day before that, he’ll be at the poets against gentrification. That’s the big issue in San Francisco.

All of the money that we have received for this campaign has come from individual donors, people who believe in what we’re doing. We have appealed for funds on our website, we have a PayPal, and people have given mostly small amounts, under hundred dollars, In some cases more than $100. Those contributions represent individuals who are of modest means, but who believe in the programs and principles of the campaign. We have received some contributions from people in the arts community, very generous contributions. And of course we have received the volunteer work and I regard that is just as important as financial contributions. We have received a volunteer participation of hundreds of people up and down the state of California.

Karina Ceja

We also could look at maybe getting housed by people if you know a few people so we don’t have to pay for hotels.
Tony Prince

Yeah, well we’ve been doing that. We hit a few couches and a few floors along ways.

Karina Ceja

I’m okay with floors. Social media is actually one of the key things for us in this campaign, because it’s away for us to create our own media.

Tony Prince

I think we had a good productive meeting today. I don’t see anything else on the list. Okay? Everything good?

00:11:07

Jesse Ickler (VO)

Following Luis J. Rodriguez campaign left me with a lot of questions. Fortunately, I was able to set up a meeting with Noam Chomsky a leading expert on government propaganda in America. I knew he wore sweaters in most of his interviews, so I put on my best sweater to blend in. Luckily I was right, he wore a sweater.

00:11:30

CAMBRIDGE, MASSECHUSETTS

Jesse Ickler
Are independent parties and third party candidates relevant in politics today, and do they provide realistic open solutions?

Noam Chomsky

Actually you could ask another question. Is a second party possible in the United States? The answer to that is not the moment. Right now there’s only one faction, and it’s neither Democrats nor Republicans it’s actually moderate Republicans who are called Democrats. Today’s Democrats, The so-called new Democrats, The core of the Democratic Party are what used to be called moderate Republicans. The other faction is still called Republicans but it’s not clear that it’s a political party in any traditional parliamentary sense. Its commitment to its constituency, the very wealthy in the corporate sector is so extreme that it is only policies are to try and undermine everything serve them. That’s not parliamentary politics. So it’s a one party state with one party, kind of moderate Republicans.

00:12:39

CESAR CHAVEZ MARCH

Ankur Patel

So we’re at the Cesar Chavez march today and I just finish distributing about 300 flyers on the fairness to farm workers act. It was vetoed by Jerry Brown in 2012. It would have provided more shade and water to farm workers in California, but we got a governor, Jerry Brown, who’s vetoing these sorts of things. Which makes no sense, it actually does. In his justification he said that agro-business
doesn’t need more regulation. Well that’s not what the Luis Rodriguez campaign is about; it’s about getting workers rights. We are being repressed across a whole slate of issues, including in our schools, in hospitals, in public places, and we need to organize and do something about it. Right now we got a bunch of Democrats saying “si se puede” but they aren’t doing anything. They’re literally vetoing Farm… going to war in other countries, they’re cutting ethnic studies, they’re firing teachers, they’re increasing money for prisons, all these sorts of things. What do you think about Democrats generally? He’s running as an independent third-party Green party candidate for governor of California. That ballot is going to be on June 3. Also on the ballot is sheriff. It has the potential to catch on, to go viral, to get people to pay attention. And it doesn’t take money, It takes people who care, people who are willing to pay attention, people who are willing to read a little bit and talk to a couple more people, post on Facebook, e-mail simple stuff. That’s all it would really take. Most people don’t vote. Most people don’t even vote.

Voter

I’m going to vote

Ankur Patel

Yeah, elections is June 3. Are you registered to vote? You can do it online. I got some voter registration forms somewhere. What party?
Voter
I’m gonna vote for the Green party.

Ankur Patel
Green party? I am pushing you too hard? Decline to state is cool, Independent is cool, but Democrats and Republicans, please no.

Prof. Saiz
There’s a large number of people in the United States who don’t vote at all and if you had other parties that had other issues that might bring more bells with more people, because not everybody is the same, but we try to put everybody in two similar molds, then people would have something to vote for, but they don’t, because they’ve know no they can’t win. So they know it’s essentially a wasted vote.

Noam Chomsky
A third party in order to be viable would have to amass huge amounts of capital and that means be based on corporate interests. That’s where the capital is.

Jesse Ickler (VO)
I wondered about the media’s role in the outcome of political campaigns, so I flew to New York City, the media capitol of the world. The city lights of LA looked like a giant circuit board.
It was my first time in the big apple. Unfortunately, I didn’t have any time for sight seeing. I was able to set up a meeting with Amy Goodman, a leading expert in the failures of mainstream news.

00:16:44

DEMOCRACY NOW

Jesse Ickler

You’ve met Luis J; does he deserve media coverage?

Amy Goodman

If the only way a candidate can feel fairly represented is by paying for an ad and then they flood the airways, then these candidates need more and more money, why would that networks be questioning the whole system that requires them to turn to moneyed interests? When there the beneficiaries of that money. Most of the money and campaigns goes to television advertising. So you’re not going to have the networks where people get most of their information although that’s changing in the digital Internet age. Why would you have them challenging that system? That’s why we need independent media like Democracy Now. Public radio, television, internet fighting hard to open up the public spaces, where you don’t have to pay to play.

Jesse Ickler (VO)
Then I drove a taxi from New York to Washington DC. There I am actually driving the cab. While I was in D.C., I decided to stop and say hi to Abraham Lincoln.

I tried to set up an interview Barack Obama he didn’t answer any of my phone calls.

Protester

Protest for peace and anti-nuclear atomic weaponry.

Voter one

I know a lot of people like some of my friends that aren’t exactly into voting they can’t really see themselves doing it because they’re so uninformed.

Protester

The protesters been here since 1981.

Voter two

I’m not a person of votes depending on whether there republican or democratic or if they are third party. I vote based on what they’re providing and what they’re going to provide for the country itself not what party they belong to. I believe I will vote for whoever stands for the most that will benefit this country in the long run.
Voter one

I don’t really focus on third-party candidates I, but you know, if I find one that I think has a platform I can agree with I will totally vote for them.

00:19:06

WASHINGTON D.C.

Jesse Ickler (VO)

I was able to set up a meeting with Ralph Nader, a leading expert in the politics of 3rd party candidates.

Jesse Ickler

I appreciate you talking to us.

Ralph Nader

You’re welcome.

Jesse Ickler

We are a very low budget independent film company.

Ralph Nader

I know, ha ha.
Jesse Ickler

Does the marginalization of third party and independent candidates reflect the freedom of speech suppression.

Ralph Nader

Third party and independent candidates are what make possible a belief in the first amendment, because if you run for office it’s the consummate use of the First Amendment: free speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of petition; all three, and if they are excluded by a two-party tyranny, then a competitive democracy is excluded.

Jesse Ickler

So what can we do to change these things?

Ralph Nader

Well the first thing is to use the courts. We won a lot of lawsuits curtailing some of these ballots access obstacles. You usually have to make constitutional violation arguments. The second is to go after this malicious top two that is already in California and a couple other states. So, by the primary, to the top two candidates, only, advance to the November election.
Protesters

Stop these communities under attack, What are we do?, We fight back! What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now! What do we want? Justice! When do we want? Now! Air pollution has got to go hey, hey, ho, ho. Air pollution has got to go hey hey ho ho. Air pollution has got to go.

Protest host

We’re here today to tell Exide that we want healthy hoods. That we don’t want no chronic polluters in our community.

Announcer

Unfortunately Exide is not the only chronic polluter in the state.

(EXPLOSION)

Dissenter

They were just changing the filters down there when I walked in okay. They got a fresh batch of goo. I asked the guy. Do you guys have all the, the?

Announcer

Excuse me!

Dissenter

No problem
Radio journalist

What in your opinion was that?

Luis J. Rodriguez

Well that is the actual lead fumes coming out of the plant. When they have a glass furnace they have to look all that go out.

Protesters

Exide, here us, we don’t want you near us! Exide, here us, we don’t want you near us!

Chuck Todd

Did you have any health issues as a result of working here?

Luis J. Rodriguez

Friends actually told me to quit I was hear from 1978, six months. It doesn’t seem like a long time. I work four years (incomprehensible), but everybody told me to get out of there, my friends.

Chuck Todd

When you worked here…describe to me the environment.

Luis J. Rodriguez
It was even worse than it is now. As you can imagine there was a big glass furnace. I ran the glass furnace. Constant work, constant lead. We were being polluted all those years and nobody told us about.

Chuck Todd

Can I get your name?

Luis J. Rodriguez

Luis J. Rodriguez.

Chuck Todd

And you’re running for governor?

Luis J. Rodriguez

I’m a Green party candidate for governor of California.

Chuck Todd

Thank you.

Luis J Rodriguez

I talked to three different people so, I don’t know. The last one was KTLA, but there was three. One of them has got to put something on us.
Olga Moedano
They are shut down temporarily. We have that little mini explosion, we had a lot of media. Then also the fact that, you know, the youth program from community surveyor environments…they’ve been really active with this campaign. So, I stand with the youth and the community because we’re not all just here we’re all being affected. You know, South East LA communities Boyle Heights communities, not only the fact that it’s in this area but throughout California we have facilities just like exile that are polluting us.

Tony Prince
I was born and raised and spent most of my life in California and at one time the Democratic Party paid attention to the working class. At one time you can seek democratic candidates coming to the plant gates or coming out to the communities. they don’t do that anymore not at the state level. Because their political base is no longer the working people. Their political base is big business.

Amy Goodman
The majority of people are marginalized. That’s what’s so important to understand. Those who care about war and peace, life-and-death, the environment, global warming, those who care about the growing economic disparity; these are voices that are not reflected. And who cares about these issues? The people on the front lines of these policies. The mics traditionally
haven’t been open to them, but those kinds of mass protests in the street challenge the corporate media.

00:23:42

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

Jesse Ickler

I was invited to an event where Luis would be debating. So I packed up the family and headed out on the open road to Fresno, California. My daughter, Jade was excited to go on a trip. I thought about the future, my daughter’s future, and the future of media. Jade learned how to use a camera. It was such a long drive everyone fell asleep except me. Along the way I picked up my friend Omar to help me film the event.

Ralphy

Gov. Brown has been put on the ballot but they never got back to me so we are going to go with the two candidates we have here today with us. Everybody please get around of applause to Cindy Sheehan. She has been endorsed by the Peace and Freedom Party.

Cindy Sheehan

First of all like to thank Ralphy for making the contact with me. One of my opponents Jerry Brown says that California is back. What he means is California’s back for him and his cronies. 20% of Californians live below that
federal poverty line. But California is back? He has balanced the state budget off of the backs of people who are already poor, who are already vulnerable. And he has stolen money from the future out of pension funds to do it to. But nobody talks about that.

The two party system has long been failing us and really now is just two different sides of the same coin. These people Democrats and Republicans, Especially the higher level they go up, The more devoted they are to the status quo to the wealthy, to robbing the poor to give more to the wealthy. And so there’s not, like Ralph Nader says, who is a famous third party independent activist, political activist, “There’s not a dime’s worth of difference.”

**Ralph Nader**

Nothing infuriates corporate Democrats and the corporate Republicans and to call them Tweedledum and Tweedledee, but they are different in a number of ways. They have different views on civil liberties and civil rights. The Democrats are better on Medicare, They better on workers rights, but on huge issues they are pretty much now converging; foreign and military policy, the militarization of foreign policy. Look at the seamless web from George W. Bush to Barack Obama. Number two, they both curtsy before Wall Street. They raise enormous money from the Wall Streeters and the billionaires, and in return they do not regulate Wall Street and they do not tax Wall Street financial transactions, or have a sales tax the way we have to pay 6 to 8% sales tax when we go to the store and
buy things in states around the country. And thirdly, they have not done anything about the corporate tax system. They have different rhetoric maybe, But, It keeps getting worse and worse regardless of who is in the White House. And fourthly they are both for these corporate manage trade agreements that are exporting millions of jobs damaging our own self-governance and sovereignty, And making these big corporations rich on the backs of surf labor abroad. And they’re both supportive of NAFTA and WTO and other trade agreements. And finally, And that’s not the end of list, both parties are very similar on campaign-finance now. One may talk reform it doesn’t matter because they never do anything about it, because they are all dialing for the same corporate dollars. The same political action committees the same super PACs the same multimillionaires in New York and Southern California. So they are both invested in this corruption of the sister where are candidates for public office are put up for sale, Or for rent to the highest bidder. Now those are enough similarities to warrant the phrase tweedledum and Tweedledee.

Jesse Ickler

I’ve also heard the difference between Coke and Pepsi when there’s other flavors like orange juice and water for not soda at all.

Ralph Nader

Or Guarana in Brazil.
Professor Martin Saiz

Most people tend to be pretty moderate they don’t tend to be very ideological one way or the other. And so to appeal to as many voters as possible, and win elections you need to appeal to as many voters as possible. You try to moderate these positions as best you can. This moderation if both parties are doing it, means that both parties are going to essentially appear to be Tweedledee and Tweedledum, or essentially the same.

Cindy Sheehan

You don’t have to choose between the lesser of two evils. You can choose between two badass, wonderful candidates.

Luis Rodriguez

The power is really in your hands. It’s important that you recognize that neither me nor her are going to represent you, we are going to be with you. That if I get to be governor I would bring you right to that governor’s office. I would bring all of you there. If you go on the Internet can you look at some of the discussions young people are having, they got answers. You don’t need Gov. Brown. You don’t need these people, because they don’t got no answers, they are not solving anything. Democrats and Republicans are not going to do anything for us. They’ve proven it. And now we have to show them that we are not going to give them one vote we are not going to give them one support. We are not going to do anything to ensure that two party corporate system continues. Thank you all very much.
Ralph

Alright everybody give it up for Luis J. Rodriguez. Before we get going Cindy can you come back up here Luis please stay up here real quick. As I said we have an alternative. We have a chance to make history, California history.

Cindy Sheehan

We really need to re-institute the fairness doctrine where everybody gets equal time. I was just invited to interview at the Los Angeles times and they said for their endorsement, I don’t think I’m going to get it, but I was invited, he said if you qualify for the ballot we are going to give you a chance to be heard. But that’s not saying that they don’t overwhelmingly have articles about Jerry Brown, Tim Donley, and the establishment candidates and stuff like that. So we need to reinstitute the fairness doctrine. There’s all kinds of campaign forms but in relation to the media that’s the most important thing.

Noam Chomsky

The concentrations of private power decide what you going to see what you can hear and who your candidates are going to be in so on. We kind of ridicule Iran because candidates are vetted by the clerics, the guardian council of clerics. You can’t get through unless they approve of you. Which is correct they should be ridiculed. It’s not all that different here. Here they’re vetted by concentrations of private capital. In the same is true for news and information. Now the fairness
doctrine was an effort to try to get around that to an extent and that comes from the 1940s debates but it’s not implemented. This system here has evolved towards protection a private commercial enterprise from government intrusion. Notice that it is a very narrow conception of freedom of speech.

00:32:28

PIERCE COLLEGE

Denise Robb

We are about to have a debate on California’s gubernatorial race the race for governor. Representing Gov. Jerry Brown is Eric Bauman of the California Democratic Party.

Eric Bauman

Good afternoon students. I’m proud to be here to represent Gov. Jerry Brown who four years ago ran for office Saying he would fix the six $60 billion deficit that republican Arnold Schwarzenegger led our state to. California has moved forward in more ways then any other state imaginable. And when you just look around you can see the golden state in the golden dream restored. Not only do we have a four and a half billion dollar surplus today but just did this year’s budget alone we added $450 million for community colleges up-and-down the state. We implemented the affordable care act and 3.1 million Californians now have health insurance and the unemployment rate has dropped from 12.4% to 8.1%. Governor Jerry Brown will be reelected, He will be overwhelmingly reelected and it’s
because he stands were the people of California stand. For fairness and equality for all for a livable wage for all for reasonable benefits for all. So I thank you for having me here, and I look forward to this conversation.

Luis J Rodriguez

Thank you very much I’m honored to be here. I am actually a San Fernando residence in my dad actually retired from Pierce College as a laboratory custodian so I have a little history here. What I really want to see is three pillars of the healthy driving society stay strong. One is the environment. Californians breathe bad air. We have some of the most polluted lands the most polluted communities and generally in working class poor black and brown communities. I would do everything I can to make sure we don’t poison our air, our ground, and our water. Second is the economy. We have not only 9 million people in poverty, Almost 3,000,000 since Gov. Brown has been governor. People are not taking care of jobs. They are not taking care of livable income, or a possible minimum wage. I’m the one candidate that will say we should have a minimum wage at 15 and a livable wage beyond that because I don’t think that’s even enough to live on. We can end in the state of California. That is my goal, and that’s what I will go to Sacramento for. And the third one is social justice. Those are the three pillars. We need social justice for everybody. Everybody has to be hard. Everybody issues has to be clarified, And we got to make sure that nobody feels that they are not part of the state, that California takes care of everyone, not just people with money, not just the corporations, not just people with power. Thank you.
Glen champ

Now look at there’s only one solid foundation in education and I think most of people up here on this panel would agree with me that starts with Jesus Christ. Period. And that goes from K through 12. Now, now you need additional technical schools, trades. We start in about eighth grade, you can start teaching trades in schools. We are not doing that. We’re not teaching anybody anything. It is not the Golden State anymore. It’s become brown, and it’s time for them to be flushed on down.

Our elected officials are not accountable to the constitution, or the US Constitution, or the Bible.

Cindy Sheehan

Again thank you for inviting us. It’s been a very lively discussion. If I thought that Edmund G Brown Junior was doing a good job I wouldn’t be running for governor of California.

What’s not true? What did he just say about me?

Off-camera

That you’re doing it for your own self-interest.

Cindy Sheehan
Yeah sure, that’s what I’m doing for. Because look at me I’m really rich and really famous.

Dare to dream but there to work with us to make those dreams come true, thank you.

Denise Robb

Thank you all very much please give them all a big hand.

Mike Powelson

We live in a politically bankrupt culture, and one of the principal themes of my campaign is to emphasize the extent to which young people have been systematically lied to and betrayed by the older generation, my generation. My generation went to community colleges and they didn’t have to pay tuition. Now you guys are made to pay tuition. My generation was the ones that marched civil rights movements.

Listening to these libertarians only affirms my suspicion that they are just Republicans who want to smoke pot.

Denise Robb

Talia wanted to know, are you able to make a difference? That’s something a lot of people ask third party candidates. Why are you running, why do you run? You
know you can’t win. In the last debate, we were told that Jerry Brown is going to be governor, which it seems pretty likely that he will. Why do third parties run when you know you’re not going to win and what are the institutional bureaucratic obstacles?

Luis J Rodriguez

I do want to win, and I’m going to fight to win. Regardless of what people say this is an important part of it. We do want to win and here’s the other thing, we are going to win whether we don’t win. Because you know why? The issues are not only going to be raised, we are going to build a movement. What I’m saying is this. I got 200 volunteers now in the state of California. We are going to have a conference soon after the June 3 primary of all these young people, Mostly young mostly students, come together and say, “how can we build a movement, how can we keep campaigning?” Because the issues that I’m campaigning on are going to be on-going, No more poverty.

Professor Martin Saiz

I suspect that Rodriguez is as interested in the issue platforms as he is in winning. And probably realistically he doesn’t think he has a good chance of winning. At least he can get his issues out. He’s got to build a career and he can build it slowly.

Amy Goodman
He has been fighting to have a voice and it’s not just him. It’s the people he represents, and the people who don’t know he represents them because he’s given so little media coverage. It is absolutely critical that his voice be heard.

Ralph Nader

They want to be able to build from one election to another, which often occurs in other Western democracies. But because we have a winner take all system and we don’t have instant runoff voting, if you don’t make it through a first try, if the seed doesn’t become an oak tree on the first try, they say, “look, why should we cover you?” The whole thing is totally absurd. The media bears a serious responsibility here. I went out to meet with the editor of the Washington Post in 2008 when I was running for president and I said, “Fred”, his name is Fred Hyatt. I said,” Fred why aren’t you covering me? I’ve been around here for over 40 years. I have a record of victorious support of legislation. We’ve put out all kinds of groundbreaking reports. I didn’t come down here on UFO.” And he said, “well do you want to know why Ralph? Because you can’t win.” And I said to him,” why are you covering the Washington Nationals, they are in the cellar.” In short, it’s okay for the Press to cover 64 contestants for the NCAA basketball tournament. It’s okay for the press to cover dozens of contestants at the beginning of the Wimbledon tennis champions in England, but heaven forbid that you cover one or two or three small party candidates that are advancing agendas that are often majoritarian supported and are in conflict with the agendas of the Democratic and Republican parties which don’t have a majority support.
Noam Chomsky

Corporate censorship is what you see allover the media System but it’s considered freedom of speech because the way that’s interpreted today, Freedom of speech means the right of the New York Times and CBS to censor anything they don’t like.

00:41:17

LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA

Andy Hsia-Coron

Jerry Brown is a friend of the frackers that’s obvious; and more than just a friend of the frackers, the recipient of a tremendous amount of oil and gas drilling money from these companies. He basically is what I would call an honest politician. He stays bought. Because were really talking about the F- word to be honest it’s going to frack our future. I tell some kids don’t let the mother frackers, don’t let the petro-files frack our children.

Surgeon

We are a state of minorities and yet we’re saying you get preferential treatment if you’re white and insured. That’s crazy. And you’re wasting…

Ankur Patel

Is it specifically on people of European descent, Or is it just the insurance focus?
Surgeon

Do you think for one second if she was white, she would not have been taken back to the operating room for bleeding hemorrhaging and operated on again? They let her bleed out in the intensive care unit until her heart stopped. I am a surgeon, I’m telling you…

Ankur Patel

They could’ve stopped it.

Surgeon

They could of stopped it immediately. If you’re bleeding in the recovery room you don’t take them to the ICU, you take them back to the operating room to stop the bleeding. There is no reason why she had to die, that little girl. And there’s another case of a four-year-old, again represented by the same Christopher Dolan in Northern California, She was a Filipina and she waited four and half hours to be seen, Because they didn’t even take her back until she was unresponsive. And you know what she had? Flesh eating bacteria, and she had all four limbs amputated because of that. These people because of the color of their skin and because they’re uninsured are waiting and dying to be seen in the emergency waiting rooms. This is the message we need to bring. That’s my opinion.

Ankur Patel
Part of the whole idea is to connect to experts in their respective fields.

Rosalio Urias Munoz

Luis has been doing this for decades he’s going to continue doing it, but now he’s going to have votes. The more votes that he has, if he can get through into the final election then it’ll be all that much more and I think he has the best ideas.

Andy Hsia-Coron

We want to draw as many votes away from this governor as possible, And if he can pull 15% for November, For one thing he’s going to go ape-shit in six months over it and he’s going to do a lot more wack things between then that we will be able to recall him shortly after the election.

Luis J. Rodriguez

The one that second-highest now is Tim Donnelly. You know who he is? But he is bad. Even the Republicans don’t want him.

Rosalio Urias Munoz

Let’s get Luis on the ballot so he can be there in November. He’ll tell you more about what he’s about, Luis.

Luis J. Rodriguez
Get involved and make this a state as an example to the world that we can make it work. 80% of the prisoners in the state of California are people of color and the rest are poor white people. It takes a lot of money to keep us poor. Do you understand? I’m convinced of that. If people are given the chance to work, given skills, given tools, they will break through the poverty. You don’t do that, You make them dependent and then you make them go and do criminal acts and then you have a whole prison system is set up for it, this is what we’ve done. If you don’t do rehabilitation, You don’t teach them how to heal, If you don’t teach them how to restore, I have seen this, they become better criminals, and guess what, we are paying for this out of tax dollars. I have seen kids go into the prison system, come out the heavy duty Mafioso, tattooed everywhere. That’s what we do when we don’t do nothing. We’ve created a monster, because even in the games 40 years ago there was still hope for the gang kids, I know, I was one of them.

People mentored me. It was a brown beret that got me out of the gangs. Why did that change for you? We should have had a better world for you. You know what I’m saying? I’m saying for the young people, we should’ve created a better world. Imagine the best State possible and then do everything you can make that real.

Thank you all very much.

William Gonzales

For us to have all these resources in our country, California and our country and not to give a voice to the people who make America what it is…it’s a disgrace.
Jeffery Martin

I call them the invisible people because that’s what they are. People that clean these hotels nobody knows their names, people that clean the streets nobody knows their names, people to clean our schools and our campuses, people on the Yale’s and the USC’s and UCLA, nobody knows these folks. These are the invisible people, and these are the people he speaks for.

00:45:47

NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

Ankur Patel

Luis Rodriguez for governor. You gonna vote tomorrow?

You know we don’t take any money from corporations. That’s like a big stance.

Voter

So you guys don’t do the super PACs?

Ankur Patel

Nope. No super packs, no corporate money. McDonald’s ain’t giving us shit. No Wall Street bankers, none of that. We don’t take any money for that and that allows us to criticize them more forcefully.

Voter
You guys purposely don’t take money? Or is it that people won’t give you money?

Ankur Patel

We take money from people but not from corporations even if they were in a position to... I mean it’s kind of a chicken or the egg. Right? We put the stance out that we’re against corporations in the corporate-ocracy and all those sorts of things. So of course they’re not going to give us money and that’s a good thing because we’re saying we won’t take it either way. That’s a stance, That’s a philosophy, That’s an ideology that we strongly believe and I think a lot of people do.

Elections tomorrow. Talking about ending the prison system, as we know it. Luis Rodriguez for governor

There’s other candidates. There’s other people that come up out of the community. If you knew Luis Rodriguez...

Non-voter

I already know he’s been in jail for a long time.

Ankur Patel
He hasn’t been in jail for a long time. He got beat up by sheriffs. He used to be the homicide reporter for the San Bernardino sun. He was reporting on how the police killed a homeless person, covered it up, and that’s why he got fired, and that’s why he got blacklisted. He’s been doing that since, He’s about 60 now. He’s been doing this kind work since the 60s. They don’t want you to vote, The Sheriff, They don’t want black and brown people to vote.

Non-voter

I’m not voting for nobody.

Ankur Patel

Luis Rodriguez for governor.

Have a good day ma’am.

Election’s tomorrow, Luis Rodriguez for governor. You gonna to vote?

Non-voter

No.

Ankur Patel

No?
Jesse Ickler

What does it take for someone like him to win, to even get in the race?

Ralph Nader

To try to get a third party candidate connected to a mass movement with no money, No media, and all sorts of ballot access obstacles, is a very difficult task. It’s like trying to climb a mountain with a slippery rope. No other western country obstructs candidates for local office and national office, multi-party candidates, like we do in the United States. And no other western country makes it so hard to vote and so many trapdoors for voters, and so many procedural obstacles. So we call ourselves the world’s greatest democracy? But is it really a democracy when the forces of dissent and the forces of challenge don’t have a level playing field? By contrast, they are fighting the two parties on a level playing field and they are trying to climb up and icy cliff just to get to the playing field.

Amy Goodman

Nothing ever changes without a groundswell of grassroots support. We are talking in this 50th anniversary of the voting rights act 1965. It’s now 2015. How did Martin Luther King, how did the student nonviolent coordinating committee and the Southern Christian leadership conference and Malcolm X. How did all of the people gathering together fight for representation? It didn’t come from the politicians on top. It came from a push on the bottom.
Noam Chomsky

As long as you have massive inequality in this society nothing much is going to change. There are going to be various ways for concentrations of private power to get around almost any laws you can think up. Politics will be the shadow cast by big business over society. So until you have Full democracy meaning industrial democracy, worker ownership of plants and so on and so forth, you’re always going to have this. It’s extreme in the United States, but it’s not a radically different then other industrial democracies

00:52:11

PRIMARY ELECTION DAY

Jesse Ickler (VO)

As the final day of the June primary arrived, the Luis J. Rodriguez campaign was still hopeful despite the odds. Even though the numbers weren’t looking good it didn’t seem to faze them. To them this was not a loss; somehow it was still a win.

Karina Ceja

I want to say thank you to Louis for really stepping up and I feel like for a really long time I had no faith in the system. For a long time I said, “this is never going to work in our favor”. So when I heard about his vision and I heard about what he wanted to do, I said I’m down. You know I had my own goals for this year I had
other things I wanted to do, but as he says, “it’s not a sacrifice we stretched ourselves”.

Luis J Rodriguez

The mass media, most of it, did not cover us. They only cover the people that got the money, but in spite of all that, as people know we made some tremendous end-roads. We spoke to hundreds and thousands of people. We went up and down the state seven times. And I will have to say that it was quite exciting an interesting. Someone asked me if I was tired, I’m not tired. I didn’t even get tired this whole time. I will have to say that most of it was my best friend Tony, hanging with him for so much time. And it’s a miracle that we didn’t kill each other. I think maybe the 12th time we might’ve done it, but I think we hit just before.

Tony Prince

The person who actually approached me, and Luis early at the outset, and said hey why don’t you think about running for governor on the Green Party ticket, was Eddie Alvarez. Eddie is over here; brother I’m putting you in the spotlight, literally. No one collected more signatures to put Luis on the ballot then Eddie Alvarez, Eddie Alvarez without there every day and turned in 400 signatures. It was a tremendous undertaking by Eddie. It is been a real pleasure and a real honor to be a part of the campaign to let Luis J Rodriguez be the governor of California.
Thank you all so much for your time and attention and contribution. Love everybody.

Ralph Nader

If your two parties exist on being paid by the plutocracy by the superrich and you spend endless time asking Rich people and corporations and trade associations and PACs for money, they are going to want something in return and year after year they’ve been getting it. It’s a pretty good deal. Congress is the best money can buy Will Rogers once said in the 1930s and he was right.

Amy Goodman

You can’t have a democracy when you have so many people who gain nothing from the system that you have and only a few people who are profiting immensely. That does not lead to a democratic society.

Jesse Ickler

Great thank you. That’s all the questions I have unless there’s something more you like to add.

Amy Goodman

No, just good luck with your project and I think it’s very important.

Noam Chomsky
John J, One of the leading founding fathers and president of the Constitutional convention once said that, “the country should be governed by those who own it.” That’s pretty much the way it is.

Jesse Ickler (VO)

On my way home I thought about the campaign, all intellectuals I spoke to, and the future. I thought about Luis and his dream of a new California. Some people might look at this film and think that Luis was crazy for his imaginative hopeful ideas of the world. But which is crazier wanting to make a better world for the children or selling out that world to big corporations that destroy the environment and devastate our children’s future just to balance a budget. I wanted to believe that there was hope. But I had fear that there was no hope for democracy in America. In the future this country will have to take a good look in the mirror and ask ourselves where do we go from here. How do we start to build a democracy that we all thought we had? These problems wont be solved overnight. Increasing problems of poverty, incarceration, depletion of natural resources, can’t be solved until we have a real discussion in the public sphere. My hope is that my film will help continue that discussion for this generation and generations to come.

Ankur Patel

So right now we are at the campaign headquarters, the garage. We got volunteers in here writing envelopes, stuffing them, folding letters, trying to get the message out to likely voters. Being very targeted and specific. Trying to get the message
out to where matters the most so that we can win power. So that we can run a
series campaign and become a force in politics outside the money interests.

Glenn Champ
I’d like to start off by saying my name is Glenn champ and I’m a candidate for
governor of California on the Republican ticket. I’m the only candidate it’s going
to go up to Sacramento and clean up that mess by cutting out that cancer, by
holding those elected officials accountable to the constitution. Now, my position
on what was that now?

Luis J. Rodriguez
I have like seven books of poetry now. So I’m actually well-known in the poetry
community even though I do all this other stuff I have a really good place in the
poetry community, They are very supportive of what I do. I will probably keep
doing poetry to the day I die even if there is no money because to me at
something that you love and care about. I think we need more poetry in this
country. More poetry everywhere I really believe that.
CONCLUSION

I started this project with an idea in mind of following a candidate running for office who I knew couldn’t win. I wanted to discover democracy for myself and in doing so reveal it to my viewers. In doing so, I had not considered the possibility that American didn’t actually have the democracy I thought it had. I knew it was broken, so for me to follow a marginalized candidate, with no chance of winning, opened my eyes to the attention that needs to be paid to our political institutions.

By following Luis J. Rodriguez, I wanted to find out why third-party candidates run. After his campaign came to a close I thought long and hard on this. It wasn’t until after I spoke to Noam Chomsky, Amy Goodman, and Ralph Nader that I came to understand that they run because someone has to. Despite the odds, and despite the obstacles, many of these candidates seemed to delude themselves into thinking they had a chance to win. Through my research, I found out that third-parties are labeled all kinds of things, but I didn’t find much of the labels to be true. The only candidate I came across that seemed “crazy” to me was Glenn Champ, and he was running as republican.

Instead, what I discovered was a broken democracy filled with corporate traps and enforced by the manufactured consent of American citizens. The minor-party candidates I spoke to were very sincere, thoughtful, and even brave for facing a system stacked against them. These were people who could not ignore the problems they understood, and passionately wanted to share this knowledge with everyone. These candidates came out to the community and participated in the protests to listen to the plights of everyday people. With the cooperation of the media, name recognition, a long political history, and lots of money, Jerry Brown won the race without even campaigning.
The process that journalists use to generate news, including, objectivity, and profits and audience considerations, result in subtle rules of political coverage. These rules include indexing, following the trail of power, adjudication, and news icons, lead to a general pattern of horse-race themed political coverage. In the context of this media process, third-party candidates are marginalized through journalistic mechanisms of exclusion, prominence of coverage, and labeling. Journalists are often oblivious to their individual roles in this automation of news coverage because of the corporate influence over media.

It’s no secret, that the two-party system marginalizes the majority of people in this country. The average American knows this as common sense. So they say they are voting for the “lesser of two evils” as a justification. The likeliness of a third-party candidate winning with so many challenges and obstacles stacked against them is so small that most people consider it a wasted vote. It is my hope that this thesis will further the discussion of possibilities to remove these obstacles. Potential solutions include fusion candidates, legislative reform, ballot access, limits on corporate spending in politics, and the removal of commercial interests in the news media. Fortunately, the evolving nature of America tends to flow in the direction of progress.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


