

Suffering Suffrage: US Electoral Fraud

In the South, democratic processes are often dictated and supervised by the North, even in partial satisfaction of conditions for political and economic cooperation. Failure to comply with Northern norms is seen as a justification for interventions. The following widely circulated message, by an anonymous author, reminds us that election fraud is not only a Third World occurrence and invites us to question the media portrayal of electoral processes everywhere.

1. Imagine that we read of an election occurring anywhere in the Third World in which the self-declared winner was the son of the former President and that former President was himself the former head of that nation's secret police (the CIA).
2. Imagine that the self-declared winner lost the popular vote but won based on some old colonial hold over (electoral college) from the nation's pre-democracy past
3. Imagine that the self-declared winner's "victory" turned on disputed votes cast in a province governed by his brother!
4. Imagine the poorly drafted ballots of one district, a district heavily favouring the self-declared winner's opponent, led thousands of voters to vote for the wrong candidate.
5. Imagine that the members of that nation's most despised caste, fearing for their lives/livelihoods, turned out in record numbers to vote in near-universal opposition to the self-declared winner's candidacy.
6. Imagine that hundreds of members of that most-despised caste were intercepted on their way to the polls by state police operating under the authority of the self-declared winner's brother.
7. Imagine that six million people voted in the disputed province and that the self-declared winner's "lead" was only 327 votes. Fewer, certainly than the vote counting machines' margin of error.
8. Imagine that the self-declared winner and his political party opposed a more careful by-hand inspection and re-counting of the ballots in the disputed province or in its most hotly disputed district.
9. Imagine that the self-declared winner, himself a governor of a major province, had the worst human rights record of any province in his nation and actually led the nation in executions.
10. Imagine that a major campaign promise of the self-declared winner was to appoint like-minded human rights violators to lifetime positions on the high court of that nation.

None of us would deem such an election to be representative of any thing other than the self-declared winner's will-to-power. All of us, I imagine, would wearily turn the page thinking that it was another sad tale of pitiful pre- or anti-democracy people in some strange elsewhere.