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## The tip of the 'berg

**A Boston filmmaker descends on South Florida to help document its greatest electoral failure.**

by T.M. Shine



When the fiasco of the 2000 election in Palm Beach County began, the first thing Laurel Greenberg did was call her retired parents in South Florida.

"I said, 'This is incredible. Can you believe this is going on in your backyard?' " Greenberg says. And what does a documentary filmmaker living in Boston do in a situation like this?

"I immediately sent my dad out with a camera," Greenberg says. Dad would be Marvin Greenberg. "He's not bad," Laurel Greenberg asserts. "And my mother, Dottie, she started clipping out articles from The Palm Beach Post and sending them right away." Thus began a film in progress, titled Trouble in Paradise.

Using Election 2000 and Election 2002 as its bookends, the documentary chronicles the lives of a handful of people who were dramatically affected by what happened in 2000. "Other films are being done about the actual nuts and bolts of the election," Greenberg says. "But I've been following stories of individual characters who decide to take extraordinary action in order to bring about change."

One of those characters is Miami's eccentric but unflappable Bob Kunst, who based the bulk of his campaign for governor on the stolen election and received more than 40,000 votes. "He truly is a character, but when you take out the derogatory statements, a lot of what he says makes sense."

Another key figure is Deidre Newton, a Lake Worth real-estate broker who was elected supervisor of the Palm Beach Soil and Water Conservation District. She calls herself "the reluctant activist," because she had planned to work on then-Vice President Al Gore's campaign for only a single day. But being a volunteer on that infamous day has driven her to protest in Washington, D.C.

Another one of the principal figures in the film is Larry Winawer, a 33-year-old former minor-league baseball player and current teacher who threw himself into politics for the first time in 2002, running for Palm Beach County Commissioner. Winawer was cut down in the primary. "But sitting there in some bar as the returns come in and knowing the energy and enthusiasm he put into it, it's really something to marvel about," Greenberg says. "Every night at midnight, he'd be out replacing campaign signs that people had ripped down, ... standing in supermarkets shaking hands with strangers. We forget about the pedestrian part of it."

A graduate of Brown University, Greenberg is best known for the award-winning documentary *94 Years and One Nursing Home Later*, which gave audiences an intimate glimpse into the difficulties of old age. But her interest in the voting process was piqued by a short she did for PBS about 10 years ago.

Titled *No Vote, No Voice*, the film questioned why people don't vote. "It's embarrassing how low voter turnout is in this country, and that's always stayed with me," she says. "Now, with this project, I've entered this world where everyone is so consumed by politics. But then, outside of it, there's still everyone who doesn't think about it all."

Being a documentary filmmaker, Greenberg knows her own work is a constant struggle — and not always lucrative. So don't think she overlooked convenience when choosing this subject. "Definitely, a place to sleep ... food," she says, acknowledging the benefit of having parents who live on location. "We're still trying to get funding to finish this project."

With the exception of *Election Day*, when she enlisted a few other cameras, Greenberg has shot the film on her own. "So the whole voting process has become very personal to me," she says. When Greenberg's co-producer, Jane Newman, came down to help with filming, the woman made a point of asking all the clerks she met — from the rent-a-car place to convenience stores — one question: Are you going to vote?

"And every one said no," Greenberg declares. "She decided our next project should be on why convenience clerks don't vote. But I don't know, with all the problems we have dealing with voter turnout as it is, what if everyone actually did vote?"