

The Man Who Bought Washington, DC

From deep inside the Republican elite, Jack Abramoff brought new excesses to the lobbying game. Who is he, and how did he get away with it for so long?

By **KAREN TUMULTY**/WASHINGTON

THERE WERE TWO QUALITIES THAT JACK Abramoff looked for in a prospective lobbying client: naiveté and a willingness to part with a lot of money. In early 2001 he found both in an obscure Indian tribe called the Louisiana Coushattas. Thanks to the thriving casino that the tribe had erected on farmland between New Orleans and Houston, a tribe that had subsisted in part on pine-needle basket weaving was doling out stipends of \$40,000 a year to every one of its 800-plus men, women and children. But the Coushattas were also \$30 million in debt and worried that renewal of their gambling compact would be blocked by hostile local authorities and that their casino business would be eaten away by others looking to get a piece of the action. So tribal leaders were eager to hear from the handsome, well-dressed visitor who had flown in from Washington with his partner on a private jet, shared some of their fried chicken in the council hall, then waited for them to turn off the tape recorder that they used for official business.

William Worfel, then a member of the council, recalls Abramoff saying if the Coushattas gave him enough money, he could make their problems go away. He and his partner Michael Scanlon, a onetime press secretary for congressional leader Tom DeLay who ran his own public relations firm, came through, attacking the tribe's political opponents, blitzing the state with television ads

and tapping a grassroots operation of Christian conservatives to help stop any rival casinos. And by the next year, with elections rolling around, Abramoff had the Coushattas dreaming even bigger. "You can control Louisiana," Worfel recalls



Abramoff telling the tribal leaders. "You could help elect Senators and Representatives and attorney generals in the state of Louisiana, and then they're going to remember that the Coushattas helped them. And they know that if you helped them, well, they know that you can come after them down the road if they don't help you, see?" The Coushattas went for it. On election night, they watched their chosen candidates with excitement and discovered that the \$9.3 million they had given Scanlon had produced ... nothing.

That's probably because much of the \$32 million that the Coushattas paid Abramoff and Scanlon over two years went not toward increasing the tribe's influence but toward lining the two partners' pockets. Nearly \$11.5 million in secret kickbacks was funneled by Scanlon back to Abramoff, according to court papers filed in early January, as the man who was once one of Washington's highest-paid lobbyists pleaded guilty to fraud, tax evasion and a conspiracy to bribe public officials. Abramoff's plea agreement admits to expansive schemes to defraud not just the Coushattas but also three other tribes and the lobbying firm Abramoff worked for, and it acknowledges buying off public officials, in part by laundering his clients' funds through legitimate-sounding think tanks and

public-policy groups, some of which Abramoff and Scanlon themselves set up. The stocky figure in the black fedora who left the federal courthouse after telling Judge Ellen Huvelle of his “tremendous sadness and regret for my conduct” was barely recognizable as the flamboyant power broker who used to send lawmakers and their staffs on junkets around the world and entertain them back in Washington with golf outings, free meals at his expensive restaurant, and concerts and games enjoyed from the luxury skyboxes he maintained at nearly every arena and stadium in town.

The Abramoff scandal has already taken down the political player who invented the system that has helped keep Republicans in power for more than a decade. The once-feared DeLay, whose office had been Abramoff’s biggest claim to access and influence on Capitol Hill, announced he would resign as House majority leader. Because of DeLay’s tightfisted regime that rewarded loyalists and punished detractors, his departure is sure to set off not just a fight for his old job but also some ugly score settling.

The Coughattas’ tale is only a small piece of an investigation that, with the 46-year-old Abramoff’s agreement to cooperate with federal prosecutors, could become one of the biggest corruption probes in U.S. history, possibly putting dozens of lawmakers in legal or political jeopardy. It has already netted Scanlon, 35, who pleaded guilty to similar charges in November and is also cooperating. In an internal e-mail obtained by TIME,

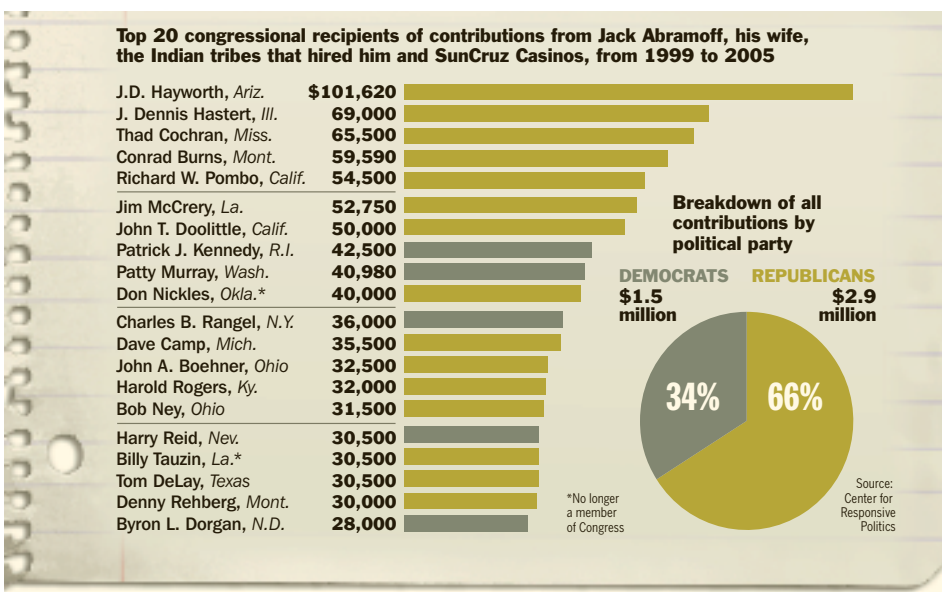
the director of the FBI’s Washington field office, Michael Mason, congratulated some 15 agents and 15 support staff members under him on the case for “a huge accomplishment” in squeezing Abramoff to make a deal after 18 months of investigation and negotiation, one that made “a huge contribution to ensuring the very integrity of our government.” But he added that “the case is far from over.”

Another official involved with the probe told TIME that investigators are viewing Abramoff as “the middle guy” suggesting there are bigger targets in their sights. The FBI has 13 field offices across the country working on the case, with two dozen agents assigned to it full time and roughly the same number working part time. “We are going to chase down every lead,” Chris Swecker, head of the FBI’s criminal division, told TIME.

Just following the money that Abramoff spread across Washington should give them plenty to do. So toxic are any campaign donations tied to him that panicked lawmakers from House Speaker Dennis Hastert (\$69,000) to Republican Senator Conrad Burns (\$150,000) to Democratic Senator Max Baucus (\$18,892) can’t give it away to charities fast enough. Even President Bush is giving the American Heart Association the \$6,000 that he received from Abramoff, his wife and one of the Indian tribes he represented.

The fact that the scandal is breaking at the beginning of midterm-election season promises that it will be amplified in political ads and coverage around the country. Even though he gave away

the contributions he took from Abramoff and his clients, Montana Senator Burns will continue to face questions about every move he made that helped the lobbyist. “I hope,” said Burns, “he goes to jail and we never see him again.” ■



Questions

1. What did Abramoff admit in his plea agreement?
2. How has this scandal affected Tom DeLay?

When George Met Jack

White House aides deny Bush knew Abramoff, but photos suggest there's more to the story

By **ADAM ZAGORIN** and **MIKE ALLEN**

AS DETAILS POURED OUT ABOUT THE ILLEGAL and unseemly activities of Republican lobbyist Jack Abramoff, White House officials sought to portray the scandal as a Capitol Hill affair with little relevance to them. Peppered for days with questions about Abramoff's visits to the White House, press secretary Scott McClellan said the now disgraced lobbyist had attended two huge holiday receptions and a few "staff-level meetings" that were not worth describing further. "The President does not know him, nor does the President recall ever meeting him," McClellan said.

The President's memory may soon be unhappily refreshed. TIME has seen five photographs of Abramoff and the President that suggest a level of contact between them that Bush's aides have downplayed. While TIME's source refused to provide the pictures for publication, they are likely to see the light of day eventually because celebrity tabloids are on the prowl for them. And that has been a fear of the Bush team's for the past several months: that a picture of the President with the admitted felon could become the iconic image of direct presidential involvement in a burgeoning corruption scandal.

In one shot that TIME saw, Bush appears with Abramoff, several unidentified people and Raul Garza Sr., a Texan Abramoff represented who was then chairman of the Kickapoo Indians, which owned a casino in southern Texas. Another photo shows Bush shaking hands with Abramoff in front of a window and a blue drape. Three other photos are of Bush, Abramoff and, in each view, one of the lobbyist's sons. A sixth picture shows several

Abramoff children with Bush and House Speaker Dennis Hastert, who is now pushing to tighten lobbying laws after declining to do so last year when the scandal was in its early stages.

Most of the pictures have the formal look of photos taken at presidential receptions. The images of Bush, Abramoff and one of his sons appear to be the rapid-fire shots—known in White House parlance as "clicks"—that the President snaps with top supporters before taking the podium at fund-raising receptions. Over five years, Bush has posed for tens of thousands of such shots—many with people he does not know.

Abramoff knew the game. In a 2001 e-mail to a lawyer for tribal leader Lovelin Poncho, he crowds about an upcoming White House meeting he had arranged for Poncho and says it should be a priceless asset in his client's upcoming re-election campaign as chief of Louisiana's Coushatta Indians. The e-mail, now part of a wide-ranging federal investigation into lobbyists' relationships with members of Congress, offers a window into Abramoff's willingness to invoke Bush's name to impress clients.

Abramoff was once in better graces at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, having raised at least \$100,000 for the President's re-election campaign. During 2001 and 2002, connections to the White House won him invitations to Hanukkah receptions, each attended by 400 to 500 people.

The White House describes the number of Abramoff's meetings with staff members as "a few," even though Bush aides have precise data about them. Pressed for particulars, McClellan said with brio, "People are insinuating things based on no evidence whatsoever." Senate minority leader Harry Reid of Nevada has demanded details, saying in a letter to Bush that Abramoff "may have had undue and improper influence within your Administration." ■

"The President does not know [Jack Abramoff]...."

—Scott McClellan,
White House
press secretary

Questions

1. Describe the photos of Abramoff and Bush.
2. How much money did Abramoff raise for President Bush's re-election campaign?

Did Libby Lie?

How a smart and loyal aide to Vice President Dick Cheney got indicted for allegedly lying about his role in defending the Iraq war

By **JEFF CHU**

THE CHIEF OF STAFF TO VICE PRESIDENT DICK Cheney, I. Lewis Libby, has been indicted on charges of obstruction of justice, perjury and making false statements. The indictment was handed down by a federal grand jury investigating the leak of the identity of a covert CIA operative. Special counsel Patrick Fitzgerald, who heads the two-year-old investigation, believes that Libby lied about how he learned—then shared with reporters—the identity of Valerie Plame, a covert CIA operative who is married to Joseph Wilson, a former diplomat who has been fiercely critical of the Bush Administration’s claims about weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq. “Mr. Libby gave the FBI a compelling story,” Fitzgerald said in a press conference. But that story “was not true. It was false ... and he lied about it afterwards, under oath and repeatedly.”

Karl Rove, President George W. Bush’s senior advisor and deputy chief of staff, was not indicted, but in a sign that Fitzgerald’s two-year investigation is not yet over, Rove remains under investigation. Libby submitted his resignation shortly after the indictment was announced but denies any wrongdoing; the case is expected to go to trial in 2007.

The indictment contains five counts against Libby—two for perjury, for allegedly lying to the grand jury; two for making false statements to FBI investigators; and one for obstruction of justice, for allegedly impeding the grand jury’s investigation. If found guilty, Libby could face 30 years in prison and a fine of \$1.25 million.

The indictment alleges that Libby made a “false, fictitious and fraudulent statement” when he was questioned by the FBI. It also says that he lied in his

testimony to the grand jury. Specifically, he misrepresented his conversations with NBC’s Tim Russert, TIME’s Matt Cooper, and Judith Miller of the *New York Times*. He told the grand jury that Russert had asked him whether he knew Wilson’s wife worked for the CIA and that he was surprised to learn this from Russert. But according to the indictment, Libby did not in fact discuss this with Russert, and he already knew about the identity of Wilson’s wife. The indictment also alleges that Libby lied in testifying that he told both Cooper and Miller that he had learned about Wilson’s wife from other reporters. Miller served 85 days in jail for refusing to reveal her source, and, earlier this month, testified to the grand jury about her conversations with Libby only after he granted her a personal waiver. Plame’s identity was first revealed to the public in July 2003, by Robert Novak, a syndicated columnist who referred to her as “an Agency operative on weapons of mass destruction.”

Tensions between the Administration and the CIA grew in mid-2003 along with doubts over the Administration’s claims that Iraq was seeking nuclear weapons.

Wilson went public with the news that, more than a year earlier, he had privately refuted, on behalf of the CIA, claims about an African connection to Saddam Hussein’s alleged WMD arsenal. Wilson suggested that Cheney knew before the war that the claims were bogus. People who worked with Libby tell TIME that he regarded Wilson’s criticisms as part of a wider effort by the CIA to shift blame to the White House for the faulty pre-war claims about Iraq’s WMD.

Libby served as the right-hand man to one of the most powerful Vice Presidents in U.S. history. For the moment, Libby has been thrust into the spotlight. In that glare, prosecutors hope to find answers. “As soon as we can get it done, we will,” said Fitzgerald. “We need to know the truth.” ■

“Mr. Libby gave the FBI a compelling story,” Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald said in a press conference. But that story “was not true. It was false....”

Questions

1. Who is Valerie Plame?
2. On what grounds was Libby indicted?

Has Bush Gone Too Far?

The President's secret directive to let the National Security Agency snoop on American citizens without warrants sets off a furor

By RICHARD LACAYO

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE SEPTEMBER 11 attacks, White House officials were haunted by two questions. Were there other terrorists lying in wait within the U.S.? And, given how freely the 19 hijackers had been able to operate before they acted, how would we know where to find them? It didn't take long before an aggressive idea emerged from the circle of Administration hawks. Liberalize the rules for domestic spying, they urged. Free the National Security Agency (NSA) to use its powerful listening technology to eavesdrop on terrorist suspects on U.S. soil without having to seek a warrant for every phone number it tracked. But because of a 1978 law that forbids the NSA to conduct no-warrant surveillance inside the U.S., the new policy would require one of two steps. The first was to revise the law. The other was to ignore it.

In the end, George Bush tried the first. When that failed, he opted for the second. In 2002 he issued a secret Executive Order to allow the NSA to eavesdrop without a warrant on phone calls, e-mail and other electronic communications, even

when at least one party to the exchange was in the U.S.—the circumstance that would ordinarily trigger the warrant requirement. For four years, Bush's decision remained a closely guarded secret. In the weeks since December 16, 2005, when the program was disclosed by the *New York Times*, it has set off a ferocious debate in Washington and around the country about how the rule of law should constrain the war on terrorism. That development ensures that the President will start the new year preoccupied for a while with a fight over whether his responsibility to prevent another attack gave him the power to push aside an act of Congress—or, to use the terms of his harshest critics, to break the law.

The NSA intercepts are just one instance of the Bush Administration's effort to pursue the war on terrorism unhindered by some long-established legal norms. In the White House version of how that struggle must be conducted, it's acceptable to hold captured suspects indefinitely without trial, hand them over for questioning to nations known to torture prisoners, define American citizens as enemy combatants who can be detained without charges, resist efforts by Congress to put limits

on the rough interrogation of detainees and allow the CIA to establish secret prisons abroad. Any and all of those things may be necessary, but this is shaping up as the year when we take a long, hard look.

Because they required the President to plainly bypass an act of Congress, the no-warrant wiretaps may be the sharpest expression yet of the Administration's willingness to expand the scope of Executive power. When the NSA was established, in 1952, there were few legal limits on its power to spy within the U.S. Then came the intelligence-gathering abuses of the Nixon years, when the NSA as well as the



FBI were used by the White House to spy on civil rights and anti-Vietnam War activists. In 1978 Congress passed the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), which required the NSA to obtain a warrant any time it wanted to monitor communications within the U.S. (Outside the U.S., it still enjoys a free hand.) The new law created the FISA court, an 11-member secret panel whose job it is to hear the NSA requests and issue—or deny—the warrants. In the event that the NSA comes upon a situation that seems to require immediate action, the law permits the agency to eavesdrop without a warrant so long as it applies for one within 72 hours.

But the Administration says that advances in technology since FISA was passed make the court's procedures too slow to contend with the immense flood of electronic chatter that now passes in and out of the U.S. and which the agency has much improved means of capturing and analyzing. Justice Department officials say a FISA surveillance request can take up to a week to prepare, even for seasoned lawyers. "When you get a terrorist's cell phone and there are 20 numbers in it," a former Administration official says, "you can't fill out one of these for every one of them."

The White House insists that the NSA is looking into only the communications of people who have known links to al-Qaeda. If that's so, the program's critics ask, then why not just apply to the FISA court first for a warrant, especially when the court has rarely stood in the way of any warrant request? According to the Justice Department, from 1979 to 2004 the court approved 18,724 wiretaps and denied only three, all in 2003. (Despite the 2002 presidential order allowing the

NSA to work without a warrant when it chooses to, the agency has continued in many cases to apply for them. Last year it sought 1,754.) But the court has been subjecting the applications to closer examination. It substantially modified 94 of last year's requests—reducing the scope, timing or targets in the original application.

The White House says Congress implicitly gave Bush the power to approve the no-warrant wiretaps in a resolution it passed on September 14, 2001. That measure authorized the President to use "all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons" involved in the 9/11 attacks. Tom Daschle, then the Senate Democratic majority leader, says the Administration knows it did not have that implicit authority because White House officials had sought unsuccessfully to get congressional leaders to include explicit language approving no-warrant wiretaps in the resolution. Attorney General Gonzales says the Administration decided to go forward with the program anyway because it was convinced that the President possessed the inherent power to act.

When we talk about trade-offs between freedom and security, it's a mistake to assume they will be short-term adjustments. The emergency powers that we agree to now may well become the American way for years. We may still agree to them, but it is essential to know

exactly what costs they come with. ■

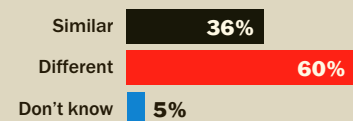
Questions

1. When and why was FISA passed?
2. What two options did the Bush Administration have for expanding surveillance in the U.S.?

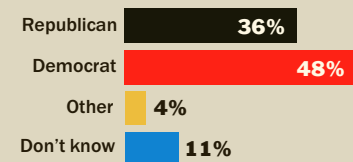
TIME POLL

Looking For Change

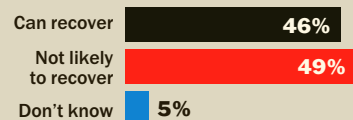
■ Would you like the next President to be similar to **George W. Bush** in terms of policies and programs or completely different?



■ There will be elections for the U.S. House of Representatives next year. If the elections were held today, would you be more likely to vote for the **Republican** or the **Democratic** candidate in your district?



■ President Bush's approval ratings in the past few months have been among the lowest of his presidency. Do you think the President can **recover from recent setbacks** and regain his higher approval ratings in the final three years of his presidency?



■ Have any of the following had a **negative impact** on how you rate President Bush's job performance?

Percentage saying "very negative":

Policies in Iraq	45%
Higher gas/energy prices	45%
Federal budget deficit	39%
Putting people close to him in high places in the government regardless of their experience	39%
Handling of hurricane-recovery efforts	37%
Handling of economy	35%
Failure of Social Security initiative	32%
Investigations and indictment surrounding outing of CIA agent	26%
Proposals dealing with illegal immigrants	24%

This TIME poll was conducted by telephone Nov. 29-Dec. 1 among 1,004 adult Americans by SRBI Public Affairs. The margin of error for the entire sample is ±3 percentage points

Judging Mr. Right

An inside look at a judge who walked a careful path to the top

By NANCY GIBBS

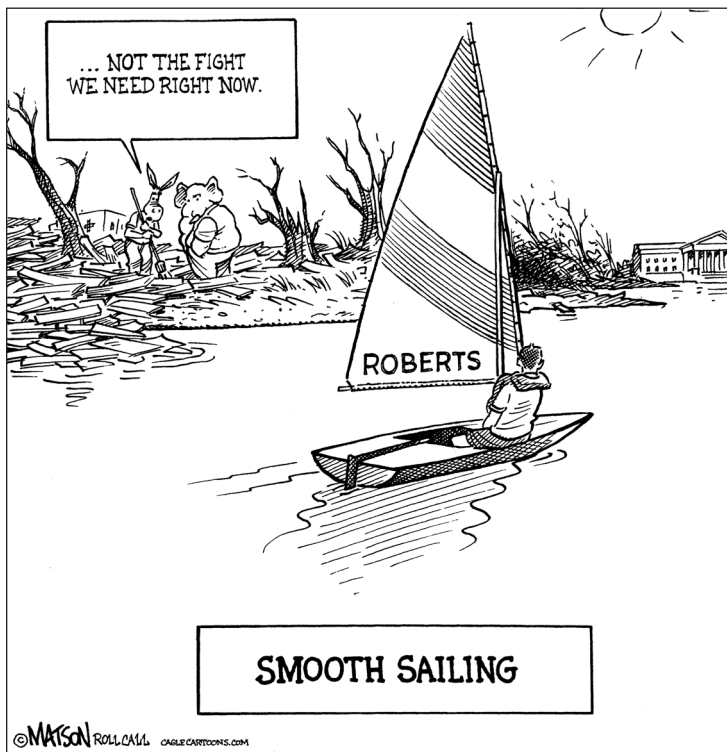
TO LISTEN TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE KNOWN him longest, what sets John Roberts apart is not so much his individual virtues but how they fit together: a great talker who listens well, a natural talent who works unnaturally hard, a regular guy who moonlights as a legal star. He was originally nominated to fill the vacancy created by the pending retirement of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. But following the death of Chief Justice William Rehnquist, President Bush quickly named Roberts to take over the court's top spot. The Senate confirmed him as Chief Justice on September 29, in a 78-22 vote.

Roberts' resume reads so perfectly that it is easy to find the little flakes of destiny littered through his storybook life. Born in Buffalo, New York, he was raised in Long Beach, Indiana, a small town on the southeastern edge of Lake Michigan. He was the

kind of boy whose eighth-grade math teacher kept his birthday in her birthday book all these years, alone among her generations of students. "I like to think that was an omen for wonderful things to come," says Dorothea Liddell. He was way clever, she recalls, so much so that if he didn't get a concept she knew she had to teach it again, but "he never flaunted his intelligence over the other kids." For high school, Roberts applied to La Lumiere, a competitive Catholic boarding school about 12 miles away in La Porte, Indiana. "I won't be content to get a good job by getting a good education," he wrote at age 13 in an application letter. "I want to get the best job by getting the best education."

Roberts made it through Harvard in three years, summa cum laude, on his way to Harvard Law School. Cambridge in the mid-1970s was a less unruly place than it had been during the height of the war protests, and while Roberts was known for being personally conservative right down to his unvarying choice of chocolate-chip ice cream, he was never rigid or doctrinaire.

He rose to become the managing editor of the *Law Review*, sometimes sleeping overnight in the office. "There were a few people on the *Law Review* that were social conservatives, [with] very strong views about abortion and separation of church and state. John was not one of them," recalls classmate Steve Glover. "John's approach, as I recall it, was very lawyerly, in the sense that he was very much focused on case law and the precedent that courts had set before." That mind-set prepared him well for the apprenticeship that followed Harvard and that he cherished above all: his clerkship with Judge Henry Friendly, a Second Circuit judge known for his careful, almost handcrafted, opinions and for being mindful of what his legal forebears had laid out. In some ways



that training was even more informative than the clerkship that followed, with Justice William Rehnquist.

Those poring over the Roberts record will have a tough time finding an ideology. Law professors can afford to offer grand theories; practicing lawyers want to win. The very best players—and Roberts is unquestionably one—can argue all sides of any issue, because that is what they get paid to do. So all the selective readings of his case file obscured the point that he argued for and against affirmative action, for and against environmental regulations, argued that *Roe v. Wade* should be overturned when he was representing a Republican President and then described it as settled law when speaking as a nominee to become an appellate judge.

Roberts seemed on a fast track to judicial glory in 1992, when George H.W. Bush tapped him for the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals at the age of 36. But he encountered his first setback when the bid died in the Senate with Bill Clinton's victory. Then George W. Bush tried in 2001 and finally succeeded in 2003. In the meantime, Roberts spent most of the 1990s biding his time, getting rich as a corporate lawyer at Hogan & Hartson, one of Washington's largest firms, where he quickly emerged as the supreme commander of Supreme Court battles. Between his government and corporate jobs, he argued 39 cases before the high court and won 25 of them.

At 50, Roberts is by far the youngest member of the court. Only Clarence Thomas, 57, is close, while all the rest are over 65, and John Paul Stevens is 85. The burning question now, with O'Connor and Rehnquist gone, is, How will the court rebalance?

When Roberts spoke during the confirmation process of the lump in his throat whenever he climbed the marble stairs of the Supreme Court building, it rang true to anyone who had ever watched him in action. And it would match the history and mystery of the court if it turned out that Roberts ultimately alienates conservatives and not those who fear any Republican appointee. Roberts may agree in spirit with those who see the past 50 years of jurisprudence as too expansive and too intrusive but respect too much the way

ALITO SWORN IN AS 110TH SUPREME COURT JUSTICE

Samuel Alito was sworn in as the nation's 110th Supreme Court justice on January 31 after being confirmed by the Senate by a vote of 58–42. The vote was the closest confirmation for a nominee since Justice Clarence Thomas was confirmed 52–48 in 1991. Alito, 55, replaces retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, a moderate swing vote and the first woman appointed to the high court.

The confirmation vote came a day after an attempt by some Democratic senators to filibuster his nomination fizzled. In the end, only 24 of the chamber's 44 Democrats went along with the filibuster, a maneuver allowed under Senate rules to block a vote by extending debate indefinitely. Sixty votes are needed to pass a motion to end debate, called a *cloture motion*; the Senate voted 72–25 to cut off debate, thereby killing the filibuster.

Arguing against cutting off debate, Sen. John Kerry—who spearheaded the filibuster effort with his fellow Massachusetts Democrat, Sen. Ted Kennedy—said Alito's record during his 15 years on the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has given “the extreme right wing unbelievable public cause for celebration. That just about tells you what you need to know,” Kerry said. “The vote today is whether or not we will take a stand against ideological court packing.”

But Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist said the move to cut off debate fulfilled a “very straightforward principle—a nominee with the support of a majority of senators deserves a fair up-or-down vote.”

—From CNN.com, February 1, 2006

the law is shaped to ride in and blowtorch it. He may just prove willing to conserve even opinions he faults. If that is so, then it will not be the liberals who come to wonder at George Bush's choice. ■

Questions

1. For what judges has John Roberts clerked?
2. Why is Roberts' ideology hard to pin down?

An American Tragedy

How the U.S. failed the city of New Orleans in its greatest hour of need

By **NANCY GIBBS**

NEW ORLEANS LIVES BY THE WATER AND fights it, a sand castle set on a sponge nine feet below sea level, where people made music from heartache, named their drinks for hurricanes and joked that one day you'd be able to tour the city by gondola.

A city built by rumrunners and slave traders and pirates was never going to play by anyone's rules or plan for the future. So as Katrina, wicked and flirtatious, lingered in the Gulf with her eye on the town, many citizens decided they would stay, stubborn or stoic or too poor to have much choice. As for the ones packing up to go, officials told them to take a look around before leaving, because it might never be the same again.

By the time President Bush touched down in the tormented region, more than just the topography had changed. Shattered too was a hope that four years after the greatest man-made disaster in our history, we had got smarter about catastrophe. Is it really possible, after so many commissions and commitments, bureaucracies scrambled and rewired, emergency supplies stockpiled and prepositioned, that when disaster strikes, the whole newfangled system just seizes up and can't move?

It may be weeks before the lights come back on and months before New Orleans is mopped out, a year before the refugees resettle in whatever will come to function as home, even without anything precious from the days before the flood. But it may take even longer than that before the nature of this American tragedy is clear: whether the storm of 2005 is remembered mainly as the worst natural disaster in our history or as the worst response to a disaster in our history. Or both.

Watching helpless New Orleans suffering day by day left people everywhere stunned and angry and in ever greater pain. These things happened in Haiti, they said, but not here. "Baghdad under water" is how former Louisiana Senator John Breaux described his beloved city, as state officials told him they feared the death toll could reach as high as 10,000, spread across Louisiana, Missis-

issippi and Alabama. No matter what the final tally, the treatment of the living, black and poor and old and sick, was a disgrace. The problem with putting it all into numbers is that they stop speaking clearly once they get too big: an estimated half a million refugees, a million people without power, 30,000 soldiers, up to \$100 billion in damage. "This is our tsunami," said Mayor A.J. Holloway of Biloxi, Mississippi.

Around the country, people watched the scene in growing horror, as babies and old people and diabetics and those worn out surviving the storm died on live television for all to see. Churches started assembling comfort kits; Red Cross volunteers prepared 500,000 hot meals a day.

The private response was all the more urgent because the public one seemed so inept. Somehow Harry Connick Jr. could get to the New Orleans Convention Center and offer help, but not the National Guard. Bush praised the "good work" on Thursday, then called the results "not acceptable" on Friday. By then, 55 nations had offered to pitch in—including Sri Lanka, whose disaster scars are still fresh.

But it was in New Orleans where the cameras converged, a city that had braced for the worst, then briefly exhaled when it looked as if the threat had passed. Several hours after the storm moved through on Monday, August 29, some streets were



essentially dry. Then shortly after midnight, a section almost as long as a football field in a main levee near the 17th Street Canal ruptured, letting Lake Pontchartrain pour in. The city itself turned into a superbowl, roadways crumbled like soup crackers as the levees designed to protect them were now holding the water in. Engineers tried dropping 3,000-pound sandbags, but the water just swallowed the bags.

The levee breach left 80% of the city immediately submerged and 100,000 people stranded. Canal Street lived up to its name. As the temperature rose, the whole city was poached in a vile stew of melted landfill, chemicals, corpses, gasoline, snakes, canal rats; many could not escape their flooded homes without help. Among those who could, only a final act of desperation would drive them into the streets, where the caramel waters stank of sewage and glittered with the gaudy swirls of oil spills. A New Orleans TV station reported that a woman waded down to Charity Hospital, floating her husband's body along on a door.

For the first time ever, a major U.S. city was simply taken offline, closed down. Food and water and power and phones were gone; authority was all but absent. Most of the people left to cope were least equipped: the ones whose Social Security checks were just about due, or those who made for the Greyhound station only to find it already closed, or those confined to bed or who used a wheelchair. "We're seeing people that we didn't know exist," declared Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) director Michael Brown in a moment of hideous accidental honesty. Rescue workers could hear people pounding on roofs from the inside, trapped in attics as the waters rose. The lucky ones were able to cut holes with knives and axes to reach the open air. Emergency workers hovered from house to house, plucking out the living, leaving bodies behind.

The seething center of the angry Crescent City was the Superdome, refuge of utterly last resort for 25,000 people who had waited out the worst of the storm while the sheet-metal roof peeled like fruit, letting the rains pour in. Soon there was no light, no

air, no working toilets. Reports came that four of the weakest died that first night. Members of the city's EMS team made their way there only to find anarchy. "We tried to start triaging and getting the special needs in one section," a technician recalls, but his team was overwhelmed by the hungry crowd and retreated with armed guards to Army trucks.

Only by Friday did some palpable help arrive, in the form of thousands of National Guard troops and lumbering convoys of supplies. Virtually alone, Lieutenant General Russel Honore, commanding Joint Task Force Katrina, seemed to be moving pieces into place. He was out in the streets with his troops, directing convoys and telling anxious Guardsmen to keep their weapons pointed down.

Americans sometimes ask what the government does and where their tax money goes. Among other things, it pays for all kinds of invisible but essential safety nets and life belts and guardrails that are useless right up until the day they are priceless. Following Katrina, furious critics charged that the government had not heard the warnings. Instead, it cut the funds for flood control and storm preparations and mangled the chain of command. An angry debate opened about how much the demands of the Iraq war, on both the budget and the National Guard, were eating into the country's ability to protect itself at home. Just one month after Katrina struck, Hurricane Rita devastated portions of Louisiana and Texas, causing an estimated \$9 billion in damage. (*Read more about Rita and hurricanes on pages 26 and 27.*) Republican Congressman Jim McCrery of Louisiana argues that Katrina and Rita have revealed how much doesn't work. "Clearly," said McCrery, "with all the money we've spent, all the focus we have put on homeland security, we are not prepared for a disaster of this proportion whether it's induced by nature or man." ■

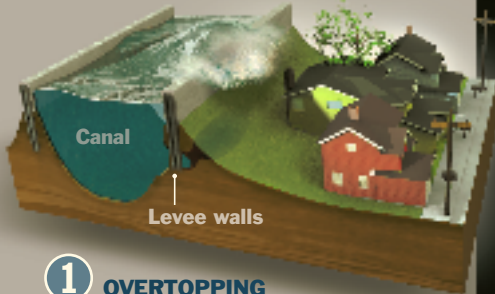
Was Katrina the worst natural disaster in U.S. history—or the worst response to a disaster? Or both?

Questions

1. What event caused by Hurricane Katrina led to the massive flooding in New Orleans?
2. According to critics, what did Katrina reveal about decisions made by the government?

WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS

New Orleans is surrounded by a 350-mile (563 km) system of levees that hold back the waters of the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain. When three levees failed, the city filled like a bathtub



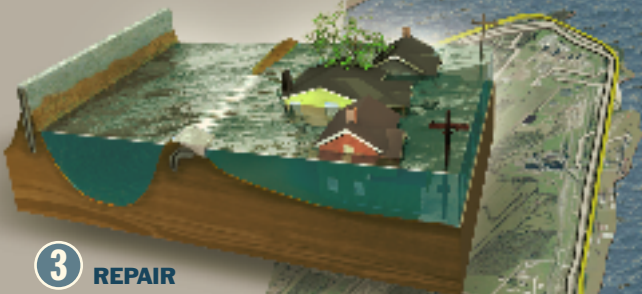
1 OVERTOPPING

Floodwaters may have risen past the tops of the levees. The city's pumping system, designed to handle smaller storms, lost power and failed



2 BREACHING

Because the flooding didn't begin until after the hurricane, some suspect the levees may have leaked from within. The water pressure would have turned tiny cracks into gaping holes



3 REPAIR

Crews have been trying to plug the collapsed levees with giant sandbags and concrete barriers. Once the levees are sealed, the challenge of draining the city begins. That job could take months

TIME Graphic by Ed Gabel and Lon Tweeten; text by Kristina Dell

Sources: Dean Gesch, U.S. Geological Survey; Army Corps of Engineers; Digital Globe; New Orleans Times-Picayune. Inset model of downtown New Orleans "Intelligent 3D Map" provided by ITspatial, imagery provided by Sanborn Mapping

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY

New Orleans Under

17th STREET CANAL

Helicopters dropped giant sandbags in an effort to seal the initial breach



TRAVIS HEYING—KRT/ABC



LOUISIANA SUPERDOME

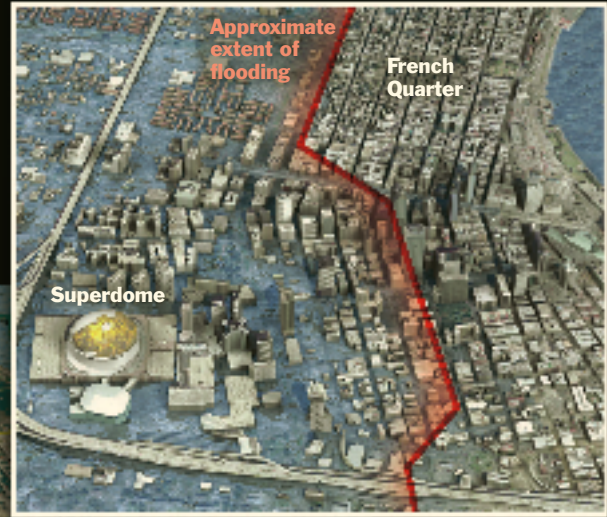
As aid began to trickle into the city, thousands waited for evacuation



JAMES NIELSEN—AP/GETTY IMAGES

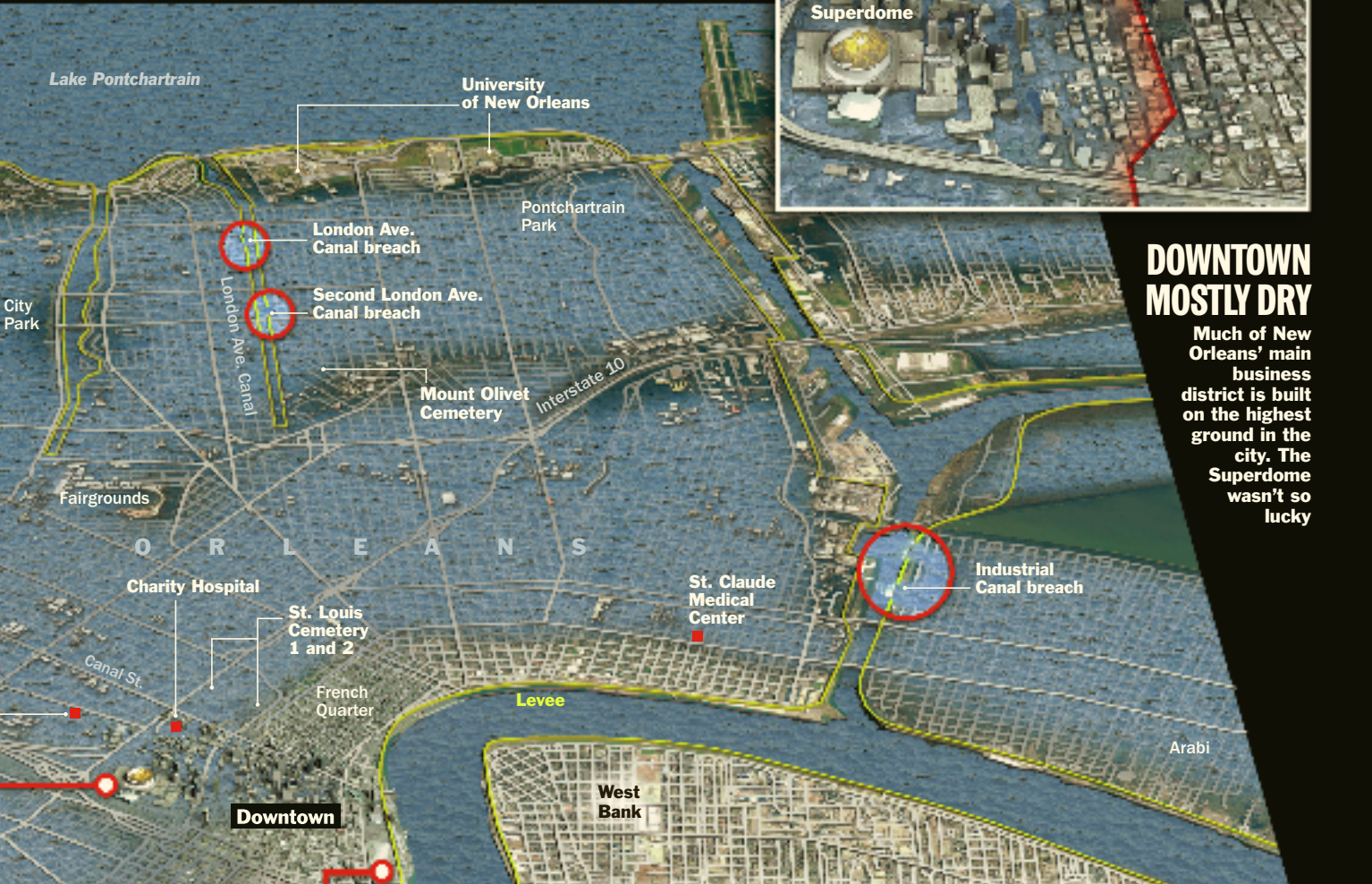
Water

The storm passed, and the city had survived. Then a levee broke. The worst-case scenario had arrived



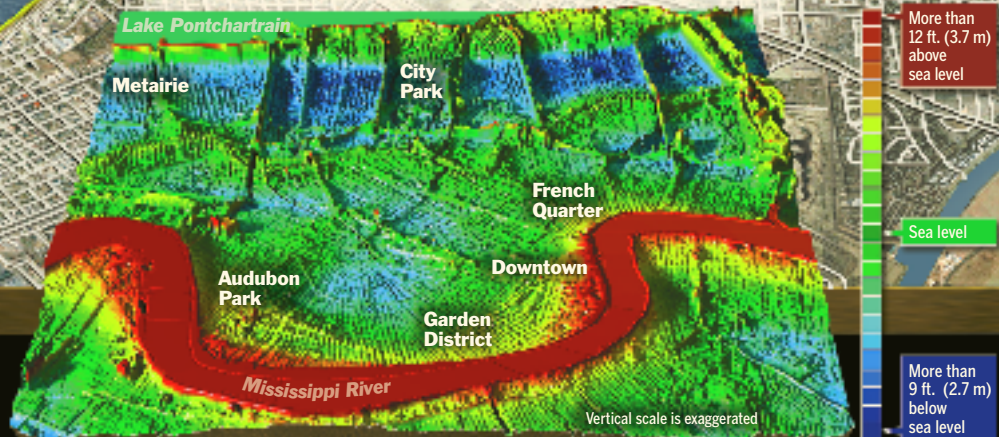
DOWNTOWN MOSTLY DRY

Much of New Orleans' main business district is built on the highest ground in the city. The Superdome wasn't so lucky



WHERE WATER IS HIGHER THAN LAND

New Orleans sits in a wide, shallow bowl, with the levees of the Mississippi as one rim and the levees of Lake Pontchartrain as the other. The bottom of the bowl is filled with small ridges, which created small islands when the city flooded



CONVENTION CENTER

Lynn Jackson, 46, hugs her daughter after being rescued from her home



JOHN PENNINGTON/ST. PETERSBURG TIMES



The Impact of Hurricane Katrina

In “An American Tragedy” on pages 10 and 11, Nancy Gibbs presents evidence from a variety of sources to help readers understand Hurricane Katrina’s impact on New Orleans. Take a closer look at the piece and use the questions below to see how Gibbs uses statistics, quotes and anecdotes to tell the story.

Statistics: The Power of Numbers

1. As you read “An American Tragedy,” underline each sentence in which writer Nancy Gibbs includes statistics. Then look back at the sentences you have underlined. In your opinion, which sentence presents the most powerful and dramatic numbers? Write it here:

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.....

Quotations: The Power of Voices

2. Now circle all the sentences in the article in which Gibbs incorporates quotations. If you were trying to tell a friend about Katrina’s impact and had to choose one quotation to convey the storm’s devastating force, which quote would you select? Write it here:

.....
.....
.....

3. Why did you select this quotation? Consider the role of the person being quoted, as well as the content of his or her statement. Is this person an expert? An eyewitness? An ordinary citizen? A government official?

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Anecdotes: The Power of Personal Stories

4. What is an anecdote? Using a dictionary, look up *anecdote* and write the definition here:

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.....

5. Now put a box around all the anecdotes that appear in “An American Tragedy.” Select one anecdote that particularly stands out to you and describe it here:

.....
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.....

6. Why do you think Gibbs chose to include this anecdote in her article?

.....
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.....

7. Share your work. Exchange worksheets with a classmate and read your partner’s choice of statistics, quotations and anecdotes. Then discuss: What does each of these elements add to “An American Tragedy”? Working together, select the one sentence from the article that you think best encapsulates the impact of Katrina. Write it here and be prepared to defend your choice:

.....
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.....

An Unlikely Alliance

Bill and Melinda Gates have teamed up with Bono, the world's most famous rock star, to launch a global crusade against poverty

By **NANCY GIBBS**

THESE ARE NOT THE PEOPLE YOU EXPECT TO come to the rescue. Rock stars are designed to be shiny, shallow creatures, furloughed from reality for all time. Billionaires are even more removed, nestled atop fantastic wealth where they never again have to place their own calls or defrost dinner or fly on commercial jets. So Bono spends several thousand dollars at a restaurant for a nice dinner, and Bill Gates, the great predator of the Internet age, has a trampoline room in his \$100 million house. It makes you think that if these guys can decide to make it their mission to save the world, partner with people they would never otherwise meet, care about causes that are not flashy or dignified

in the ways that celebrities normally require, then no one really has a good excuse anymore for just staying on the sidelines and watching.

Such is the nature of Bono's fame that just about everyone in the world wants to meet him—except for the richest man in the world, who thought it would be a waste of time. It took about three minutes with Bono for Gates to change his mind. Bill and his wife Melinda, another computer nerd turned poverty warrior, love facts and data with a tenderness most people reserve for their children, and Bono was hurling metrics across the table as fast as they could keep up. “He was every bit the geek that we are,” says Gates Foundation chief Patty Stonesifer, who

helped broker that first summit. “He just happens to be a geek who is a fantastic musician.”

And so another alliance was born: unlikely, unsentimental, hard nosed, clear eyed and dead set on driving poverty into history. The rocker's job is to be raucous, grab our attention. The engi-

neers' job is to make things work. 2005 is the year they turned the corner, when Bono charmed and bullied and morally blackmailed the leaders of the world's richest countries into forgiving \$40 billion in debt owed by the poorest; now those countries can spend the money on health and schools rather than interest payments—and have no more excuses for not doing so. The Gateses, having built the world's biggest charity, with a \$29 billion endowment, spent the year giving more money away faster than anyone ever

has, including nearly half a billion dollars for the Grand Challenges, in which they asked the very best brains in the world how they would solve a huge problem, like inventing a vaccine that needs no needles and no refrigeration, if they had the money to do it.

For being shrewd about doing good, for rewiring politics and re-engineering justice, for making mercy smarter and hope strategic and then daring the rest of us to follow, Bill and Melinda Gates and Bono are TIME's Persons of the Year.

“Katrina created one tragedy and revealed another,” Melinda Gates said in a speech after the hurricane. “We have to address the inequities that were not created by the hurricanes but ex-



posed by them. We have to ensure that people have the opportunity to make the most of their lives.” That just about captures the larger mission she and her husband have embraced. In the poorest countries, every day is as deadly as a hurricane. Malaria kills two African children a minute, round the clock. In that minute a woman dies from complications during pregnancy, nine people get infected with HIV, three people die of TB. A vast host of aid workers and agencies and national governments and international organizations have struggled for years to get ahead of the problem but often fell behind. The task was too big, too complicated. There is no one solution to fit all countries, and so the model the Gates Foundation and Bono have embraced pulls in everyone, at every level. Think globally. Act carefully. Prove what works. Then use whatever levers you have to get it done.

The challenge of “stupid poverty”—the people who die for want of a \$2 pill because they live on \$1 a day—was

enough to draw Gates away from Microsoft years before he intended to shift his focus from making money to giving it away. He and Melinda looked around and recognized a systems failure. “Those lives were being treated as if they weren’t valuable,” Gates told *FORTUNE* in 2002. “Well, when you have the resources that could make a very big impact, you can’t just say to yourself, ‘O.K., when I’m 60, I’ll get around to that. Stand by.’”

There have always been rich and famous people who feel the call to “give back,” which is where big marble buildings and opera houses come from. But Bill and Melinda didn’t set out to win any prizes—or friends. “They’ve gone into international health,” says Paul Farmer, a public-health pioneer, “and said, ‘What, are you guys kidding? Is this the best you can do?’” Gates’ standards are shaping the charitable marketplace as he has the software universe. “He wants to know where every penny goes,” says Bono, the Irish-born singer whose organization DATA (debt, AIDS, trade, Africa) got off the ground with a Gates Foundation grant. “Not because those pennies mean so much to him, but because he’s demanding efficiency.”

His rigor has been a blessing to everyone—not least of all Bono, who was at particular risk of not being taken seriously, just another guilty white guy pestering people for more money without focusing on where it goes.

The Gates commitment acts as a catalyst. They needed the drug companies to come on board, and the major health agencies, the churches, the universities and a whole generation of politicians who were raised to believe that foreign aid was about as politically appealing as postal reform. And that is where Bono’s campaign comes in. He goes to churches and talks of Christ and the lepers, citing exactly how many passages of Scripture (“2,103”) deal with taking care of the poor; he sits in a corporate boardroom and talks about the role of aid in reviving the U.S. brand. He gets Pat Robertson and Susan Sarandon to do a commercial together for his ONE campaign to “Make Poverty History.”

Bono grasps that politicians don’t much like being yelled at by activists

who tell them no matter what they do, it’s not enough. Bono knows it’s never enough, but he also knows how to say so in a way that doesn’t leave his audience feeling helpless. He invites everyone into the game, in a way that makes them think that they are missing something if they hold back.

This is not about pity. It’s more about passion. Pity sees suffering and wants to ease the pain; passion sees injustice and wants to settle the score. Pity implores the powerful to pay attention; passion warns them about what will happen if they don’t. The risk of pity is that it kills with kindness; the promise of passion is that it builds on the hope that the poor are fully capable of helping themselves if given the chance. In 2005, the world’s poor needed no more condolences; they needed people to get interested, get angry and then get to work. ■

For rewiring politics and re-engineering justice, Bill and Melinda Gates and Bono are TIME’s Persons of the Year.

Questions

1. What is the aim of the alliance between Bono and the Gates?
2. According to the writer, what makes Bono a particularly effective activist?