

**ACTIONS SPEAK  
LOUDER THAN BUMPER STICKERS**



EDITED BY  
Olivia Greer &  
Aaron Rudenstine

## INTRODUCTION

**These bumper stickers make us laugh...**and then they make us wince. Each one pokes fun at deeper truths with real implications for our lives and our society.

From Bush bashing to economics, abortion to the military, creationism to the environment, these bumper stickers speak to today's hot button issues, making fun of just about everything. And when the laughter peaks, it's compounded by a tidbit of truth appearing next to it – a “factoid” that grounds the joke in reality.

Humor offers a removed observation on sometimes-painful truths, and lets us stroll around reality a bit before we move in for a closer look. In high school, when our friends were making fun of each other, they used to say, “it's funny cuz it's true.” Similarly, these bumper stickers take their humor from the truths they mock, and as we began to compile them, we saw that they might inspire not just laughter, but also reflection and engagement.

We envision this book sitting on any coffee table, kitchen table, or dorm room desk, and acting as a catalyst for participation. This is hilarious political commentary that encourages laughter and thought, the combination of which we believe invites action – from conversation to provocation.

When we began, in a pretty somber – perhaps even dire – political climate, we wanted to laugh, and we wanted to make other people laugh. As we proceeded, our desire for laughter developed into a desire for action. Actions do speak louder than bumper stickers, and as the humor keeps us human, the action keeps our society humane.

We're New York City progressives, born and raised. We're in our twenties. We have jobs and dreams that don't always intersect as we'd like them to. Clearly, we have a specific worldview. We struggle to digest the realities of today's political climate, and we work to figure out how to live with it and how to make a difference. We talk with our friends, our families, our co-workers and our mentors. At times we feel hopeless and at times we feel tremendously empowered.

We harbor no illusions that this book will change the course of America. But we do intend it to keep us wincing, and we intend it to spark conversations, debates, and even arguments. Above all, we hope it will inspire readers to laugh their way into action.

**Olivia Greer & Aaron Rudenstine**

New York City, October 2005

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**Evidence suggests that during the 2000 Presidential election,** electronic voting machines in Florida awarded George W. Bush up to 260,000 more votes than he should have received. In Palm Beach County, due to defects in the ballot form, at least 2,000 people who intended to vote for Al Gore actually voted for Pat Buchanan, while virtually no votes intended for Bush went to another candidate.

**Bush won Florida by 537 votes.**

**One Person, One Vote**  
(offer not valid in Florida)

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**“There are things we know we know,** and that’s helpful to know you know something. There are things we know we don’t know. And that’s really important to know, and not think you know them, when you don’t. But the tricky ones are the ones - the unknown unknowns - the things we don’t know we don’t know. They’re the ones that can get you in a bucket of trouble.”

*(Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, December 2003)*

The Nixon Tapes capture a number of talks between President Richard Nixon and Donald Rumsfeld, then Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity. In one conversation, Nixon muses that the only cabinet position Rumsfeld would not be fit for is Secretary of Defense.



**There are known knowns.  
There are known unknowns.  
There are unknown knowns.  
There are unknown unknowns.  
As we know.**

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**- Rumsfeldian Mantra**

**In 1990**, Kentucky extended a 1976 law allowing public schools to teach creationism in the classroom.

**In 1996**, Alabama added a disclaimer to biology textbooks, describing evolution as a “controversial theory.”

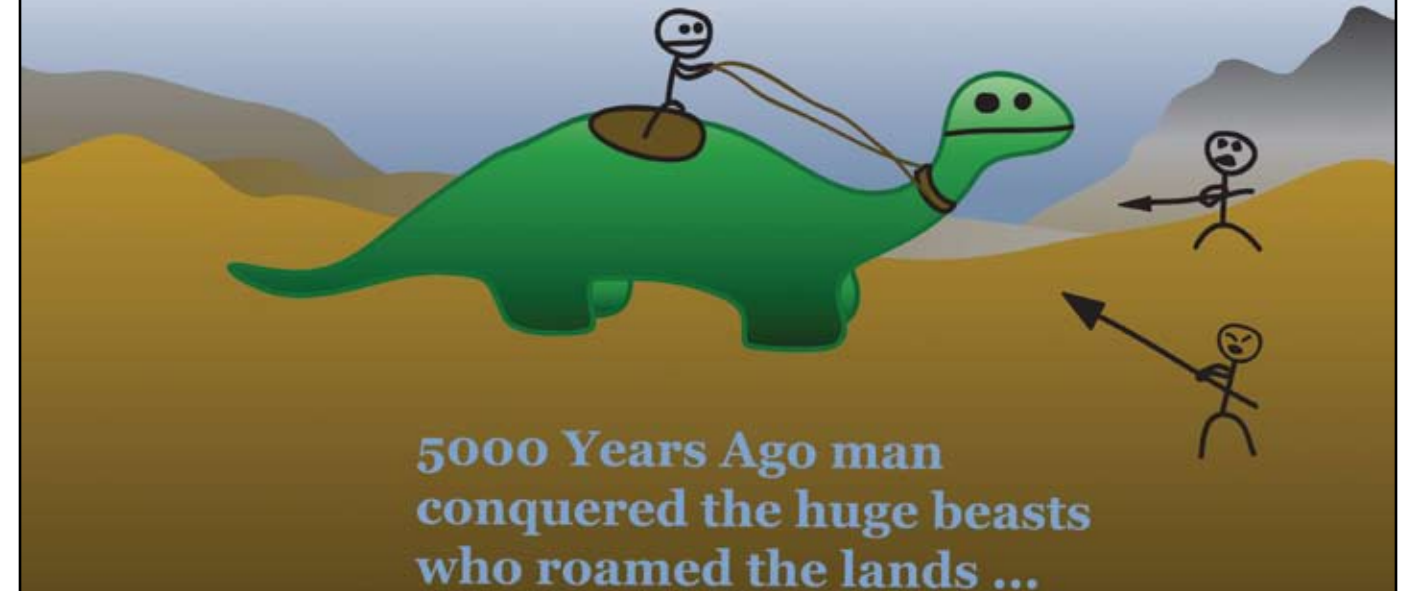
**In 1999**, the Kansas Board of Education removed most references to evolution from its curriculum.

**In 2002**, biology textbooks in Cobb County, Georgia, were labeled with a disclaimer stating that evolution is “a theory, not a fact.”

**In 2005**, school officials in Beebe, Arkansas, placed a sticker in high school textbooks questioning the theory of evolution.

**In 2005**, the Dover School Board in Pennsylvania mandated that the school library carry “Of Pandas and People,” a book that introduces intelligent design as a valid alternative to evolution.

# KANSAS MUSEUM OF SCIENCE



**Between 2000 and 2004**, the number of uninsured Americans grew by 6 million.

**In 2004**, 45.8 million Americans lived without health insurance.

**Since 2000**, health insurance premiums for insured Americans have risen by an average rate of 12.5% each year.

**Between 2000 and 2005**, due to rising costs, the number of working Americans with job-based insurance dropped from 63.6% to 59.8%.

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**Each year in the United States:**

- 9.1 million 15-24 year olds are infected with a sexually transmitted disease.
- More than 800,000 15-19 year old girls become pregnant.

Studies show that most abstinence-only-until-marriage programs fail to prevent teens from having sex before marriage, and actually deter teens from using condoms and getting tested for STDs once they start having sex.

Since President Bush took office, he has increased annual funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs from \$97.5 million to \$270 million.



An elephant's trunk contains more than 40,000 muscles, and can weigh up to 400 lbs.



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**“Freedom of speech is a hallmark of American democracy, and in the twentieth century that speech took new forms— even on bumper stickers. Greer and Rudenstine chronicle some of the most important policy discussions of our time in an interesting and engaging format.”**

**—ANTHONY ROMERO, Director of the American Civil Liberties Union**

**F**rom Bush bashing to economics, abortion to the military, creationism to the environment, these bumper stickers speak to today’s hot button issues, making fun of just about everything. Each sticker appears with a “factoid” – a tidbit of real information that highlights the truth behind the bumper sticker, and grounds the joke in reality.

Humor offers a removed observation on sometimes-painful truths, and lets us stroll around reality a bit before we move in for a closer look. Olivia Greer and Aaron Rudenstine have designed a book that can sit on any coffee table, kitchen table, or dorm room desk, and act as a catalyst for participation. This is hilarious political commentary that encourages laughter and thought, the combination of which invites action – from conversation to provocation.

**Olivia Greer and Aaron Rudenstine** were both born on Manhattan’s Upper West Side. They met in high school and, although they harbored secret crushes (or so they claim now), few words were exchanged. Luckily, they reconnected six years later. Aaron graduated from Harvard University and spent eighteen months on John Kerry’s 2004 presidential campaign. He currently works at CashEdge, a startup technology company in New York. A rising entrepreneur, Aaron is looking to apply innovative business models to social justice work. Olivia graduated from Skidmore College. She is a singer and a songwriter, and performs with her “4 Songs Band.” Olivia also works as a freelance writer with activist and arts organizations. Like Aaron, Olivia looks to tie her career to social justice work. Both Olivia and Aaron see *Actions Speak Louder Than Bumper Stickers* as a step in that direction.



**ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER**

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