

## A Simple Plan

by Suzy Coffee



A friend of mine told me recently that she and her husband were starting up a group to take action against corporate domination. *How can we have democracy*

*when corporations are in control of our government?*

But my friend said she wanted only simple solutions.

Simple solutions require getting down to the basics. So in response to my friend's call for simplicity, I have come up with a simple plan to neutralize corporate power. It is the "basics" that my straightforward twofold plan of anti-corporate action is based on. And here it is:

American citizens must target today's toxic corporation by going after: (1) Its personhood, and (2) Its pocketbook.

The false, but legally sanctioned corporate claim to personhood has not only made a corporation like Monsanto a natural American citizen, but a highly privileged one.

Let's first examine the claim of personhood itself. According to a one hundred and twenty year old Supreme Court ruling, under the 14th Amendment, Monsanto Corporation is a living, breathing American citizen, a ruling that endows the corporation with every right that you and I have granted to us in the Constitution. And corporations have had a lot of time to use this to their advantage.

As a private American citizen, Monsanto, or any other corporate body, has free speech, it has rights to privacy, it can vote and influence government through the democratic process. The corporate citizen has the whole array of inalienable rights that real American citizens used to possess before George W. Bush and his "war on terror". This fake personhood opened the door for the ultimate corporate interference in hu-

man society that we are suffering under today; all based on a *legal lie*. This is a huge vulnerability for today's corporation, the missing chink in the seemingly impenetrable corporate armor, the one that real citizens must target first.

How are American corporate citizens more privileged than "in the flesh" people? A corporate citizen avoids taxes, for one thing. It has immediate access to government and law makers, which real people don't have. Through the undemocratic practice of lobbying, wealthy corporate citizens like Halliburton have invaded and influenced the lawmaking process to the point that today American government has evolved into a stinking, fetid cesspool of corporate corruption that no longer even remotely belongs to "we the people".

Corporations enjoy continual government subsidies and grants, at taxpayers' expense. I would like to know if the recent loss of rights suffered by *real* people from the so-called Patriot Act, also applies to corporations? Is Monsanto now more accessible to government spying and intrusion into its private life? No. Because of corporate privilege "authorities" are not interested in the goings-on of American corporate citizens. It is *you and I* who they want to keep track of.

Let's put this lawful ruling of corporate personhood to the test.

Does Monsanto get up in the morning and have a cup of jav? Does Monsanto take a shower, drive to work and stress out in gridlock traffic? Does Monsanto eat, sleep and dream? Does Monsanto breathe air? Does it watch movies, eat Sushi, go disco dancing? Does Monsanto laugh or cry; does Monsanto make love? *No!* But the CEOs that are pulling the invisible strings of their phantom corporate puppets do all of these things, and these are the *real privileged citizens* of America today.

Monsanto, the American corporate citizen, does however, have a persona that strongly impacts its fellow citizens and world. Right now Monsanto, the American citizen, is busy establishing its right to gain absolute control of the human food chain, forcing the planet to buy its products based on its right to free market. In the near future I may be prohibited to grow

a garden because my seeds might threaten the privileged corporate citizen's right to profit.

Which leads us to the second part of my plan to stop corporate despotism in its tracks.

*Get 'em in the pocketbook*. Sadly, in the end, this is all about money, which equals power, which equals control. It is money, plain greenbacks, when it comes right down to it, that has greased the way for the great corporate rise to power. The profit motive dominates all corporate action. But remember, corporations are the producers, and *we the people*, are the consumers. Our commerce is a two way street. *Large scale organized boycott* is the action to take if we are to hit these monsters of profit where they will be finally rendered powerless.

Hitting our phantom fellow corporate citizen in its personhood and pocketbook requires an educational program. How many people are even aware of corporations' 14th Amendment claims? Most people view corporations like Pepsi or Wal Mart as being *like* a person, but not really a person at all, so how can corporations be held responsible for the terrible things they do? Today's corporate citizens enjoy the best of both worlds: they are real people (legally) but yet they are not *really* people. They are as slippery as fish. Yet if the public were informed of the truth about corporations and what they are doing, it would vote *en masse* to remove corporate personhood immediately.

The alternative is to spend our energies eternally fighting against a corrupt system to try to legally force corporations into acting like human beings, which a corporation can never do.

Admittedly, my plan to disable the corporate citizen is simple, but not necessarily easy. In which case it might be good to keep in mind that we are the many, and they are the few, and at this point, that counts for plenty.

## Reporting from Venezuela

by Paul Findlay

I first took notice of Hugo Chavez and Venezuela in 2002. At the time, it was two years into Chavez' administration. There was a coup, and President Chavez was kidnapped and taken to a United States-registered plane, which transported him out of the country. This event was not that remarkable, but what was to come later surely was.

With the new neo-liberal regime and high-ranking officials from the army, navy and unions in control of the *Melaflores* (or Presidential Palace), word started to spread among the *Chavistas*; the poor and lower classes, who had elected Chavez by a 60% margin two years earlier.

As word spread of Chavez's kidnapping, throngs of Bolivarian citizens descended from their barrios perched high in the hills of Caracas. Soon, a million people surrounded the palace, demanding their president back. As word spread to the lower ranks of the military, the palace guard went into action, restoring the regime as the invaders scurried out the back door, before

they could be captured. Chavez was returned to the Palace, surrounded by a million of his supporters.

For the last four years, this story has piqued my interest, and culminated in my trip to Venezuela. Upon returning to the U.S., I realized that I was given information that could not be found in the mainstream. And if I were to have a part in this revolution, this message of hope and options for a better world needed to find a home in the psyche of North America, so I will tell you my story.

I was welcomed warmly in Venezuela, and through contacts of the Feminist Women's Health Center ([www.womenshealthspecialists.org](http://www.womenshealthspecialists.org)) I was introduced to the people and programs that are lifting the poor, and revitalizing the economy of Venezuela.

Hugo Chavez is a much misunderstood world leader, and forces at work inside and outside of Venezuela are skewing the perception of his presidency.

The media, owned by large corporate interests in the U.S. and Venezuela, paint a far different picture than the one I saw with my own eyes. The gracious people that I met were kind enough to show me where the work of Venezuela's new participatory democracy was happening.

I stayed in Western Caracas, at the El Condé Hotel, located between the Plaza de Bolivar and the Presidential Palace, three blocks away.

Through the hotel window I could see the dome of the General Assembly building. To me, this was the seat of the revolution, and a very exciting place to be.

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Paul and Mercedes in the barrio, Caracas, Venezuela