

Hunter Thompson: ' We're the Nazis in This Game'

(continued)

by DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG

Thompson. He shot himself Sunday night at his home in Woody Creek Colorado. He was 67 years old.

He first became well known during the late 1960s and early 1970s while working for Rolling Stone where his drug-induced books *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail* were first serialized. Thompson once said, "I hate to advocate weird chemicals, alcohol, violence or insanity to anyone ... but they've always worked for me."

Thompson identified the death of the American Dream as his reporter's beat. He called his style of writing "gonzo" journalism. He said, "Objective journalism is one of the main reasons that American politics has been allowed to be so corrupt for so long."

Hunter S. Thompson was born in Louisville, Kentucky in 1937. He served two years in the Air Force where he was a newspaper sports editor. He later wrote unpublished fiction and made his name after publishing an article in Harper's magazine about the Hell's Angels who he had rode with for a year.

In 1970, he ran unsuccessfully for sheriff of Pitkin County, Colorado, on the "Freak Power" ticket. His platform included changing the name of Aspen to "Fat City" and decriminalizing drugs. During his campaign, Thompson shaved his head and denounced his Republican rival who sported a crew cut as "my long-haired opponent." He lost by a handful of votes.

He is the author of a dozen books, his latest was titled "Hey Rube: Blood Sport, The Bush Doctrine and the Downward Spiral of Dumbness." He once said "By any accepted standard, I have had more than nine lives. I counted them up once and there were 13 times I almost and maybe should have died."

Thompson killed himself this past Sunday. He reportedly stuck a .45 caliber handgun in his mouth and shot himself while his wife listened on the phone and his son and daughter-in-law were in another room of his house. His lawyer for the past 15 years told the Boston Globe that he wanted to be cremated and his ashes to be blown out of a cannon across his ranch.

Today, we hear Hunter S Thompson in his own words talking about President Bush, Iraq and much more. He was interviewed on community radio station KDNK in the Roaring Fork Valley in Colorado. Former KDNK station manager, Mary Suma, began by asking Thompson about him saying that "the idea of war is not just wrong but borders on insanity." This is Hunter S. Thompson.

RUSH TRANSCRIPT

AMY GOODMAN: Today we hear Hunter S. Thompson in his own words talking about President Bush, Iraq, and much more. He was interviewed on community radio station KDNK in Roaring Fork Valley in Colorado in January 2003. Former KDNK Station Manager Mary Suma began by asking Thompson, saying the idea of war is not just wrong, but borders on insanity, a comment of Hunter Thompson's, he responded.



HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Of course, it depends on which vantage point you look at the war from. If you are the president of a huge oil company, no, it's not insane at all. The war would be quite justified.

MARY SUMA: How do you feel -- I've read that you were in the streets in the Chicago riots back at that convention? Do you think that we can elicit that sort of passion as it builds? I mean, it really seems to be building up there, the anti-war faction.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Yeah, it does. But look at this. I don't recall, anyway, a massive depression, economic collapse, at that time, 1968. I was going to say, "Do you?" but, uh... What we have now is a collapse of the economy and a totally unjustifiable war, irrational really, except from the point of view of the oil industry.

MARY SUMA: Did you watch the State of the Union the other evening?

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Oh, boy, I did.

MARY SUMA: What did you think?

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: I was horrified. It was a nightmare of a thing to go through. You know, he rattled off all these "pie in the sky" ideas in the beginning, none of which are going to either work or be funded. He knows that. As a matter of fact, the New York Times today said that already they see that even republicans are admitting that the Medicare -- he was talking about the Medicare plan, the \$400 billion plan --

MARY SUMA: Right.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Is impossible. Members of both parties expressed doubts about its feasibility today, forcing the administration officials to reconsider important elements of the package. So, none of the domestic issues he talked about are feasible. I don't even think he can get the tax cut through, which is insane. Cut taxes in a time when the country is going broke. So over the line, I mean, it's not just the war that's wrong. I can't imagine any justification for just going over to Iraq and bombing the place back to the Stone Age like we did before.

MARY SUMA: Why does it seem a good portion of the country is buying into this?

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: That is a really -- that's a disturbing aspect of it.

MARY SUMA: Can we believe the polls? I mean, certainly the applause the other evening, they always say that you can sort of gauge the popularity of a president by the applause at the State of the Union. I don't know if that's true or not. But it seems like we're living in two separate countries.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Well, remember, that Bush's popularity and the popularity -- or the support for the war and two months ago when it was much higher. But these are just daily. These are things that change every day. But I remember writing in -- I don't know, it might have been at least five years ago -- it was a, I think, ABC, some serious poll, several of them came up with the findings that the American people, overall, favor giving up some of their freedoms in exchange for more security.

MARY SUMA: Mm-hmm.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: They would rather be secure than free, in other words.

MARY SUMA: Right.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: That really is shocking.

MARY SUMA: It is shocking, and more so today, maybe.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: That's the answer, I think, for your question is why is the public buying into it. Another reason is that the fear which I -- that's why I tried to address or at least rave about in the book. Fear is an unhealthy condition, living in fear. And as we clearly have been for two years now, it makes the population more obedient, particularly if they're willing to give up their freedom for security. More obedient, more easier to control, and it's, well, it is very much like Nazi Germany.

MARY SUMA: Mm-hmm.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Remember the old good German syndrome.

MARY SUMA: Mm-hmm.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: We used to ridicule it, the good Germans who just went along with it because that's what the Fuehrer wanted.

MARY SUMA: You've said the president has destroyed the country, the economy and our relationship with the rest of the world.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Well, I believe that's true and even the countries that allegedly go along or support us, our allies going into this war, popular opinion in most of those countries, I can't say this for sure, but in England, certainly, the English people, as a whole, are strongly opposed to the war and to going along with whatever George Bush says. Democracy is on its last legs in this country, and freedom, you know, the Free World?

MARY SUMA: Mm-hmm.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: We're defending freedom? We'll fight to the death for freedom? That's absurd. This country is no more a capital or bastion of freedom now than Nazi Germany was in the 1940s. This country is a rogue nation in a way, but worse than a rogue nation. We're a war-crazy, war-dependent, really, nation and that leads right to the oil industry. It is ridiculous. And particularly in the media; with the media I noticed. To not discuss the connection between oil and bombs in Iraq is disgraceful. Winston Churchill said, "In times of war, the first casualty is always the truth." Truth is the first casualty of any war.

MARY SUMA: In lieu of fear.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: You see, I'm a little bit cranked up and fanatical about it.

MARY SUMA: That's the age group, isn't it, Hunter, that we want to really --

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Yeah. This is -- I mean, if you want to live in a Nazi nation, I wouldn't want to be 20 years old now.

MARY SUMA: I wouldn't either.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: I fear for what's coming and for the welcoming committee of kids that's going to meet it, saying come on in. No, it's just ignorance, and well, the media, we're being deprived of the real news. I'm not going to try to say I have the real news, but just what you said. That's exactly right.

MARY SUMA: Again, you're going to be at Pepkey Park on Saturday afternoon. Do you know

what your topic is yet? We know the topic, but do you know what -- can you give us any preview of what's going to be said, or do you just stand up there and let it --

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Yeah. I usually just take a -- just wing it, freefall, just like I did today. I had no idea what I was going to say today. This is really a disgraceful moment in history and just thinking about the war, or attending the peace rallies, going out in the street, voting with your feet, as they say.

AMY GOODMAN: Hunter S. Thompson speaking with KDNK's Mary Suma in January of 2003. She then asked him about his book *Kingdom of Fear: Loathesome Secrets of a Star-Crossed Child in the Final Days of the American Century*.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: It started off -- it's supposed to be a memoir; I think it started off as memoirs. You know, it just sort of -- a very quick and active story about how I got to be what I am today, you know, different key adventures in my life. Mainly it is fun. Yeah, I could use a little bit more editing, but everything could. It's a fun read. It's a very -- pretty savage one. And it's clearly, not anti-Bush, but anti-war. See, I don't hate Bush personally. I used to know him. I used to do some drugs here and there.

MARY SUMA: Is that true, Hunter? What about, I didn't know that you were an unofficial adviser to Jimmy Carter.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Yeah. Weird things happen here and there. I got to know him early, two years before he ran, and he just looked like a pretty good bet to me, because I was a gambler, and I wanted to win. It was important to win at that time.

ANITA THOMPSON: Evan Dohelle, who was, among other things, Carter's Secretary of Protocol, he held a dinner in Hawaii about two months ago and Hunter was a guest of honor and he stood up to say and thank Hunter because Jimmy Carter would not be president if it wasn't for Hunter Thompson.

MARY SUMA: Really?

ANITA THOMPSON: Yeah. Isn't that cool?

AMY GOODMAN: Anita and Hunter Thompson. Anita, Hunter Thompson's wife, again, speaking with Mary Suma of KDNK in January of 2003. Finally, Mary Suma asked Hunter Thompson about his upcoming trip to New York.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: What I'm going to New York to do is stir up trouble. I'm not going to change hats, yeah, Saturday in the park, Sunday in New York City, Monday night, Conan O'Brian, or something like that. I just believe in this. I'm offended and insulted by the slope of the American people, and that means us. That means these bastards who just sit around --

ANITA THOMPSON: We're getting there.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Let's keep hitting on this because I doubt that George Bush is going to go away before the next two years anyway. He should be run out of office. He should resign right now, in my opinion. I did call for his resignation, but I don't think we would have a groundswell immediately for that. There will be a lot of people who agree with me.

MARY SUMA: Down the road?

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Well, no, in a year. I mean, the --

MARY SUMA: Will we be at war in a year, Hunter?

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: I think so, without a doubt. Like I said, we've been at war for 13 years. We've been bombing that country that long and we've cut off everything, all their food, books, you know, close -- cut off all imports of books over there.

MARY SUMA: Have you ever been there?

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Excuse me?

MARY SUMA: Have you ever been over there?

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: I don't think so. Not in any way that I was impressed by. I probably have gone through it or stopped there. I don't really know Iraq. I made a point of getting to know it a lot better. It was a very advanced, progressive country, had, what, 90% literacy, health care for the whole entire population. They were doing well, prosperous, high literacy. Many more book stores per capita in Iraq than there are in this country. Many. No more. We bombed their children. We killed their husbands and wives and we bombed them, and we saw her, and we're going to do it again. Just random killing like that, mass killing to force a population to get rid of Saddam so we can move in and take over and control the oil, God damn it, if that's not evil, I don't know what would be. You know, Bush, he's really the evil one in here. Well, more than just him. We're the Nazis in this game, and I don't like it. I'm embarrassed and I'm pissed off. Yeah. I mean to say something and I think a lot of people in this country agree with me. A lot more never say anything. We'll see what happens to me if I get my head cut off in the next week by -- it's always unknown Bush [inaudible] strangers who commit suicide right afterward. No witnesses. They have a new kind of crime.

MARY SUMA: Is that the CIA kind of crime?

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: Oh, absolutely. Anyone who's a successful criminal has got a crime. Absolutely no witnesses, no records. We can go on and on. I have to be restrained on the subject.

AMY GOODMAN: The late Hunter S. Thompson, speaking two years ago in an interview on community radio station KDNK in the Roaring Fork Valley in Colorado, speaking with then-Station Manager Mary Suma. Hunter S. Thompson died of an apparent suicide this weekend; shot himself Sunday night at his home in Woody Creek, Colorado. His latest book, a collection of his essays called *Hey Rube: Bloodsport, the Bush Doctrine, and the Downward Spiral of Dumbness*.

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