

# MOVE ON

THE NEW YORK TIMES



BY [Name]

# **MoveOn.ORG**

## **DEMOCRACY IN ACTION**

***“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”***

**Margaret Mead.**

### **A POLITICAL SUCCESS STORY**

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Barack Obama’s election marks the end of the Bush era. He leaves behind a nation divided, in debt, and locked in a terrible war.

For months, Republicans and Democrats squared up for the main event. Alongside the candidates, the parties, the powerful business lobbies, the religious groups and the unions, a relative newcomer was part of the battle:

**MoveOn.org.**

MoveOn has rocked the foundations of the American political system: in a span of just nine years, they have become a force to be reckoned with in America, empowering long-disenchanted citizens, building the ultimate fundraising machine, fighting conservative domination of the national debate and, laptop in hand, rewriting the playbook for politics in the 21st century.

## SYNOPSIS

*“During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act.”*  
George Orwell



A feature-length documentary examining **MoveOn.Org**, the biggest progressive grass-roots movement since the 1960s, that was one of the major players in the 2008 U.S. Presidential election.

**MoveOn.Org** is a new force in politics. A child of the internet age, it was born in Silicon Valley, and has spread through the Net to become one of the most powerful, liberal, powers in American politics.

unemployed 50-year-old Virginia woman, cleaning yards to be able to give money to **MoveOn.Org**. The Boston social worker dismayed at how America treats its sick. And up the chain all the way to its vociferous and indefatigable leaders.

Using the new and revolutionary economies of the internet, **MoveOn.Org** combines the drip-drip donations of these individuals into a flood that is shaking the traditional foundations of power in Washington.

With a mailing list of over 5 million people, it is a movement built on the strength of its members, and is best understood through their individual stories. The reverend who doesn't want to bury another 19-year-old killed in Iraq. The

It is a tiny organization, but their liberal politics and promotional chutzpah have earned them some influential friends: some famous, like Matt Damon, Moby, Oliver Stone; some political, like Howard Dean; and some controversial, like George Soros. Their visceral tactics and aggressive style have also made them enemies, on both left and right.

By following the growth of **MoveOn.Org**, this film traces an historical journey through one of the most tumultuous decades in American history – the past ten years of all our lives.

Constructed from years of intimate behind-the-scenes footage, members' home movies, archive film, and interviews with political figures and celebrities both in support and opposition of the group, the film stands as a vivid testimony to our times.

# MOVEON.ORG

## Start a Revolution

**MoveOn.Org** was born ten years ago in the midst of the Clinton/Lewinsky affair, when two Internet entrepreneurs started an email petition against the impeachment campaign, calling on government to “Move On to Pressing Issues Facing the Nation.”

The response was huge and unprecedented. It was time to Move On.

The movement grew, emboldened by a fierce rejection of George W. Bush, his administration and its policies. Propelled by the backlash against the Iraq war, **MoveOn.Org** is now on newspapers’ front pages and the political front lines.

## Grassroots Cyberpolitics

Much of their work seems like traditional activism: petitions, placard-waving get-togethers, bake sales.

But **MoveOn.Org** has a new tool at its disposal, with an incredible egalitarian value: the Internet.

Its streamlined efficiency allows **MoveOn.Org** to communicate directly with the five million plus people on its mailing list. It has used the Net to orga-

nize direct action, calling campaigns and political video competitions, but on a massive scale.

When **MoveOn.Org** organized a bake sale in 2004, the power of the net helped them bring together over 14,000 bakers, working right across America to raise over \$750,000.

**MoveOn.Org**’s formidable fundraising machine turns small, individual donations, averaging just \$35, into a bankroll of many millions.



*“The Democratic party? We bought it, we own it, we’re going to take it back”.*  
**Eli Pariser**  
Director of MoveOn.org

**CONGRESS:**  
No More Empty Promises  
HELP THE GULF COAST RECOVER!

**WANTED**  
George W. Bush  
FOR CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY AND THE PLANET

**IT TAKES A NATION**  
HOW STRANGERS BECAME FAMILY IN THE WAKE OF HURRICANE KATRINA  
The Story of MoveOn.Org Civic Action’s HurricaneHousing.org

## Power with the Click of a Mouse!

The simple tool of internet donations has revolutionized the power of the individual in politics. Politicians need money. American politicians need a lot of money – TV ads, armies of activists, telephone campaigns, it’s an extremely expensive business. Before, it was simply too expensive to collect large numbers of small donations. Paper and ink alone cost more than the

entire income. But now, with online transactions and paperless promotion, single people can group together into one voice, one influential lobby.

Before, wealthy interest groups gave campaign contributions, and expected

political favors in return. Now, the voters themselves are pounding on doors, small checks in hand, expecting to be heard. Favored candidates have been given millions in campaign donations. Those Democrats deemed too right-wing, too pro-war, have had biting campaigns waged against them. **MoveOn.Org**'s support is strong, its attacks tenacious.



### David vs. Goliath

Despite its huge volunteer membership, this conflict often feels like a David and Goliath opposition.

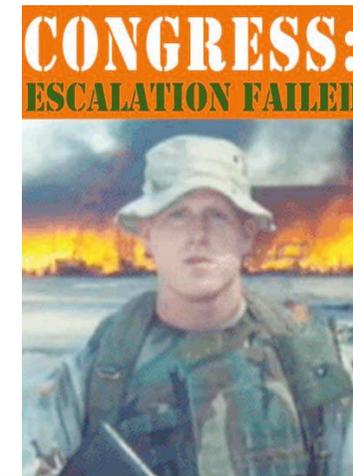
In one corner, **MoveOn.Org**, with a tiny full-time staff of just 17. On the other, the tightly-run machine of the Bush administration, backed by neo-conservative think tanks, supported by groups like the National Rifle Association, Christian organizations, and powerful big business.

And so **MoveOn.Org** has learned to fight the establishment. Often controversially, and almost always spectacularly. **MoveOn.Org** dared to face down the enemy in a way the Democrats seemed to have given up on.

However, as **MoveOn.Org** has grown ever more self-assured, even some friendly forces have complained of growing arrogance.

As they attempt to push, persuade and cajole Middle America to follow their lead, accusations of manipulation and coercion have grown.

Politics is a dirty game, in which only the strong survive.



BRING OUR TROOPS HOME



*"Why would you give money to [MoveOn.Org]? Why don't you give it to the Nazi Party? You know, these people are so extreme, it's ridiculous."*  
**Bill O'Reilly**, Fox News  
 (Oct 21, 2005)



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**MoveOn.Org**

**Ten Years Of**



### 1998 - Monicagate - MoveOn.Org is Born

After six years in power, Bill Clinton again comes under attack by the Right.

A case of marital infidelity becomes a national crisis, as details of the affair roll out across the airways: a semen-stained blue dress kept in the freezer; news that he had 'sexual relations' while on the phone to a congressman. The Republicans try to impeach the President. Wes Boyd and Joan Blades, a couple of dot-com entrepreneurs, grow tired of this partisan squabbling. They start a petition, calling on Congress to drop their infighting and 'move on' to the pressing issues of the day. Within months, half a million people have signed up. A public dismayed by the questionable priorities of Washington politics has found its voice. **MoveOn.Org** is born.



### 2000 - Presidential Election - Bush Comes to Power

After weeks of judicial and political wrangling that have left the nation exhausted and faith in democracy damaged, George W. Bush is finally declared President of the United States.

He does not win the popular vote, there are cries of voter fraud and electioneering, but still his opponent Al Gore concedes defeat.

Meanwhile, **MoveOn.Org** builds on its foundations. Wes Boyd and Joan Blades link up with Zack Exley, founder of satirical anti-Bush web site, gwobush.com.

The movement continues to innovate via the Internet: first came the petition, now comes the creation of a fast, simple and cheap fund-raising system. Zack also organizes demonstrations after Bush's election, via e-mail.



### 2001 - September 11th

The nation is in a state of shock, stunned by the violence of the first attack on US soil since Pearl Harbor. Bush sends US troops to Afghanistan, and Congress endorses the Patriot Act.

After watching the horrific images of 9/11, a 20-year-old recent college graduate struggles to find the best way to help, as a lone individual in a time of crisis.

He promotes a petition calling for a humane and measured response to the attacks. Within two weeks, 515,000 people from 192 countries sign the petition. Eli Pariser, Wes Boyd and Joan Blades decide to join forces at **MoveOn.Org**.



### 2003 - War In Iraq

'Weapons of Mass Destruction' - 'Hussein Harbors Terrorists' - 'Axis of Evil' - after months of saber-rattling, the Bush Administration sends American troops into Iraq. Opposition voices, backed by massive demonstrations both in the US and abroad, are ignored. Mainstream media and US congress play 'follow the leader'.

Singer and political activist Moby, along with new **MoveOn.Org** Cultural Director Laura Dawn, conceives an open contest: who can create the best TV ad to criticize the Bush administration and its policies? "Bush in 30 Seconds" is born. It aims to get people back into the political process, to bring to the forefront issues being ignored in the mainstream press.

One hundred entries are hoped for, but thousands pour in. **MoveOn.Org** sets up a celebrity panel, including actor Jack Black, directors Michael Mann, Gus Van Sant and Michael Moore, to judge the films. A gala evening in New York hosts the prize-giving ceremony. Eli announces an even bigger idea: **MoveOn.Org** is going to put the winning ad on television during the Super Bowl, the most-watched event of the year... But CBS refuses to play the prize-winning ad, "Child's Play". **MoveOn.Org** turns this into a major media coup, with hours of free publicity, as news programs play and replay the films, interview the leadership, and put dissenting voices back into the national debate. **MoveOn.Org** membership swells, and donations pour in.



### 2004 - Presidential Elections - Bush Wins Second Term

John Kerry rides the groundswell of opposition anger. There is much to be angry about: Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, as well as continued violence and the absence of Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq. After his military record and patriotism are questioned, Kerry ends up in a tight-fought race with President Bush. **MoveOn.Org** jumps back in the fray, and raises a colossal \$60 million, but its support is more than just financial. A concert tour is dreamed up, to take a collection of top-name musicians and groups into several swing states to convince the public to "Vote for Change."

A list of artists with political crossover appeal is put together: The Dixie Chicks, Dave Matthews, R.E.M., Ben Harper, Pearl Jam... and Bruce Springsteen. Concerts are given in Florida, Ohio, Michigan and other key states in the six weeks prior to the election.

Passion and fever reach a climax, and **MoveOn.Org** members believe they will finally get their way... But they don't. The American people make their choice, and the progressive left, the Democrats, and **MoveOn.Org** loses again.



### 2005 - Hurricane Katrina

President Bush's second term continues where the first one left off: a quagmire in Iraq, a conservative domestic agenda, a consolidation of presidential powers. The nation continues its political polarization.

In August, a catastrophe of biblical proportions hits the country: Hurricane Katrina devastates New Orleans and the adjoining coastline. The slow reaction time of both the president and governmental agencies provokes an outcry. The city known as 'The Big Easy' slips into chaos.

**MoveOn.Org** rejects the political implications of the event, and instead focuses on the humanitarian needs of its victims. It establishes an on-line service to enable concerned citizens to open up their homes to the displaced thousands from New Orleans. "HurricaneHousing.org" is up and running within 24 hours; up to 30,000 people are given temporary lodging, and helped to get back on their feet.

### 2006 - Mid-Term Elections

The congressional mid-term elections approach. President Bush's popularity hits new lows. The Democrats are given the chance to take back at least some parts of Washington.

**MoveOn.Org** finds its political footing once again, and attacks on all fronts. It doles out generous donations to Democrats who defend its views, mounts ad campaigns against vulnerable Republicans, and even pursues Democratic Senator and former Vice-Presidential candidate Joe Lieberman, considered too conservative and especially too pro-war.

**MoveOn.Org** also undertakes a massive grass-roots action: "Call for Change" aims to mobilize the progressive vote on Election Day, by having its members call and encourage as many people as possible to get out and make their voices heard. Calling parties are organized around the country; scripts are prepared. **MoveOn.Org** makes 7 million phone calls, and raises \$27 million in total donations. The vote is tight, but this time the results come out differently: with many races won by the slimmest of margins, the Democrats become the majority party in both houses of Congress. New House Speaker Nancy Pelosi thanks **MoveOn.Org** specifically. Republicans claim **MoveOn.Org** has taken the Democratic Party hostage. The people at **MoveOn.Org** are euphoric: has a new age begun?



### September 2007 - The Petraeus Affair

**MoveOn.Org** makes the headlines again. Its full-page ad in the New York Times questioning the honesty and integrity of General Petraeus, the head of US armed forces in Iraq, creates a national uproar.

The Republicans denounce the ad, and their members in the Senate push through a resolution officially condemning both the piece and what they call the "radical left-wing interest group" that produced it. President Bush calls the ad "disgusting", and implies that criticizing Petraeus is tantamount to attacking the entire US military.

Democratic leaders (including Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama) are quickly cornered into the no-win choice of either appearing "unpatriotic" by supporting **MoveOn.Org**, or risking estranging their more militant constituencies by opposing the group's actions.

Political pundits across the country question **MoveOn.Org's** tactics, wondering aloud whether its attack actually helped the anti-war movement, or just gave the Republicans a way to divert public attention.

**MoveOn.Org** Executive Director Eli Pariser holds his ground, reiterating his group's charge that General



some might think the language went too far" but "make no mistake: this is much bigger than one ad." The debate over the attack rages for weeks, on television, in the printed press, in the blogosphere... Eli Pariser and **MoveOn.Org** are everywhere.

Hate mail and death threats pour in to the **MoveOn.Org** offices... as well as money. \$500,000 comes in on one day alone, from 12,000 different contributors.



### 2008 - Barack To The Future

**MoveOn.Org** swings its full weight behind its chosen candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, Barack Obama. A candidate with a hugely charismatic presence, and a new call for change that inspires fervent support across the country.

**MoveOn.Org** reprises its earlier TV ad competition, but now turns it to positive support of its chosen man: Obama in 30 Seconds.

A hugely impressive panel is assembled to select the winners, including Ben Affleck, Steve Buscemi, Matt Damon, Ted Hope (This Is That), Tom Ortenberg (Lionsgate), James Schamus (Focus Features), and Oliver Stone.

A project that captures perfectly the democratic and creative nature of the group, amplifying the voices of its supporters, converting their collective effort and money into a loud call for change.

# MoveOn.ORG

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION



## Wes Boyd and Joan Blades

### The Last Hippies

Husband and wife entre-preneurs, Wes Boyd and Joan Blades made their fortune in Silicon Valley. The founders of **MoveOn.Org**, their role is now more in to spiritual leadership.

## Zack Exley

### The Web-Spinner

Zack Exley made his name with a satirical website, lampooning George Bush. After running website election campaigns around the world, he became **MoveOn.Org**'s webmaster.

He is the master of the viral video, the guru of cyber-politics.



## Eli Pariser

### The Young Maverick



Just 21 years old at the time of the 9/11 attacks, Eli Pariser co-wrote a petition for a humane response to the atrocity. Stunningly, it was signed by half a million people from 192 countries. After that success he joined **MoveOn.Org**, where he is now Executive Director. Young, dynamic, eloquent, he is the public face of the organization.

## Laura Dawn

### The Singer

Recording artist and activist, she is cultural and artistic director of the group. She has organized political collaborations with a host of Hollywood musicians and filmmakers.



# WHO'S AFRAID OF MOVEON.ORG?

In the words of the candidates for Republican Presidential nomination in 2008



## Hillary Clinton

*"I don't agree with them. They know I don't agree with them. So they flood into these caucuses and dominate them, and really intimidate people who actually show up to support me."*

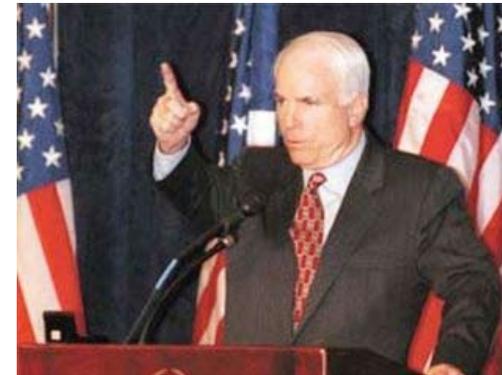
HUFFINGTON POST - February 2008



## Mitt Romney

*"MoveOn.Org has purchased the Democratic Party."*

MSNBC - September 2007



## John McCain

*"MoveOn.Org ought to be thrown out of this country."*

CBS NEWS - September 2007

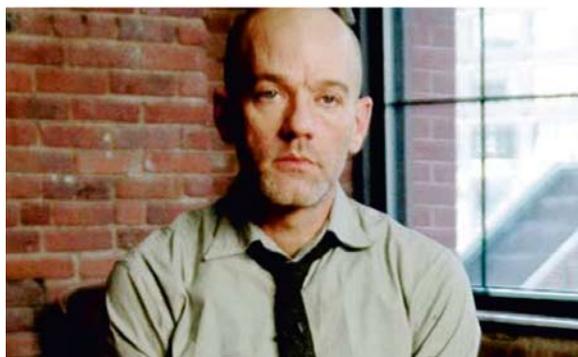


## Jon Henke

Conservative strategist

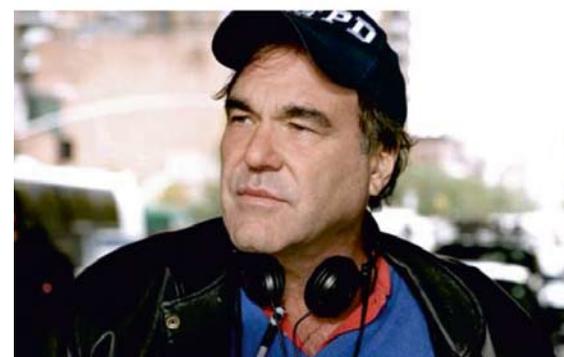
*"MoveOn.Org... and the leftroots can deliver message, money and mobilization... they have sufficient power to move politicians to their ideas. The Right does not."*

# SELECTIVE LIST OF INTERVIEWS



## MoveOn.Org

**Wes Boyd** and **Joan Blades**, Founders  
**Eli Pariser**, Executive Director  
**Zack Exley**, Internet Strategist  
**Laura Dawn**, Cultural Director  
**David Fenton**, Communications Consultant  
and dozens of **MoveOn.Org** members from across the U.S.



## Politics

**John Kerry**, US Senator and Democratic candidate for President in 2004  
**Al Gore**, Bill Clinton's vice-president, and recipient of Nobel Peace Prize  
**Joe Lieberman**, US Senator and Al Gore's running mate in 2000 election  
**Henry Waxman**, prominent Democrat in the House of Representatives  
**Thelma Drake**, prominent Republican in the House of Representatives

## Artists

**Moby**, American musician  
**Michael Stipe**, lead singer of R.E.M.

## Media

**Byron York**, journalist and author of *The Vast Left-Wing Conspiracy*

## Political Analysts

**Michael Cornfield**, lecturer on **MoveOn.Org** at George Washington University  
**Mark Crispin Miller**, Professor of Media Studies at New York University



## THE DIRECTORS

### ALEX JORDANOV

**1962** - Born in Sofia, Bulgaria.

**1982** - After studying Mathematics and Fine Arts, Jordanov moves to the US, and embarks on a career as a Television journalist. He works as a political analyst on the controversial CNN show Crossfire, and produces articles for a variety of newspapers, including New York's Paper Magazine.

**1999** - After returning to France, Jordanov works for seven years as a journalist for Envoyé Spécial on national TV channel France 2, and as lead reporter on the hit Canal+ show Le Vrai Journal (The Real News).

In **2004**, Jordanov is kidnapped while videotaping an Iraqi insurgent attack on a US military convoy. Convinced he is an Israeli spy, his captors only release him four days later, when he proves his French nationality by drawing a map of France.

Jordanov is also a recognized painter, exhibited internationally.

### SCOTT STEVENSON

**1961** - Born in California, USA

After studying at UCLA Film & TV school, he completes his studies of cinema at the Sorbonne in Paris.

**1984-1990** - He works as an **assistant editor** on American feature films.

**1990** - He pursues his career as an **editor** in France, working on a number of French and European features, including:

1995 - **LA HAINE** - Matthieu Kassovitz - Best Director at Cannes, as well as Best Picture and Best Editing at the César

1997 - **SERIAL LOVER** - James Huth

1998 - **LE CRÉATEUR** - Albert Dupontel

2002 - **ENTRUSTED** - Giacomo Battiato

Scott Stevenson has also edited a number of documentaries, including:

1996 - **SONGS OF SAND AND STARS** (Prix Italia, Best Documentary on music and the arts)

2004 - **JUST FOR KICKS** (official entry Tribeca Film Festival)

2004 - **THE STAIRCASE**, by Oscar-winning director Jean-Xavier De Lestrade (winner of Peabody, Columbia/DuPont and Int'l Doc. Ass'n awards).

2008 - **SIN CITY LAW** - produced by De Lestrade's Maha Productions for the Sundance Channel & Arte

## THE PRODUCER

### RITA DAGHER - YALLA FILMS

Yalla Films' productions include:

**MY ENEMY'S ENEMY** - Kevin Macdonald, feature documentary

**THE TERROR'S ADVOCATE** - Barbet Schroeder, feature documentary (winner of Best Documentary, Césars 2008)

Prior to setting up Yalla, Rita Dagher was Associate Producer of Michael Moore's **FAHRENHEIT 9/11**, the highest grossing documentary ever.

In 2002, she co-produced Oliver Stone's **PERSONA NON GRATA** (Venice Film Festival). Dagher was also involved in the production of **COMMANDANTE**, Stone's documentary about Fidel Castro.

Dagher made her debut in feature film production with Larry Clark's **BULLY**. She was also Associate Producer of **LOVE LIZA**, directed by Todd Louiso (Best Screenplay, Sundance Film Festival 2002).

## INTERNATIONAL SALES

wildbunch

**VINCENT MARAVAL**

cell: +33 6 11 91 23 93

vmaraval@wildbunch.eu

**GAEL NOUAILLE**

cell: +33 6 21 23 04 72

gnouaille@wildbunch.eu

**LAURENT BAUDENS / CAROLE BARATON**

cell: + 33 6 70 79 05 17

cbaraton@wildbunch.eu

**SILVIA SIMONUTTI**

cell: +33 6 20 74 95 08

ssimonutti@wildbunch.eu

www.wildbunch.biz



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