

## There May Be Order in Florida Court, But Outside It's a Zoo

By PATTY REINERT

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**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** -- It's been a long two weeks without a president-elect, and every Floridian has his or her own way of coping. Some go to court. Some make posters. Some even eat chad.

But for Angela Woodhull, there's really only one thing to do: That's right – polka.

"I'm Angelina, the Polka Queeeeee!" the fur-coated, ruby-slippered, tiara-crowned accordion player yelled above the din of protesters outside the Florida Supreme Court on Monday. "Whoo-hoo!" Sing along now, everybody!"

The show got off to a decent start, with a little pro-George W. Bush ditty that passers-by could join in on, thanks to cue cards turned by Woodhull's sidekick, "King Ira" Philpot. But before the red-, white-, and blue-haired duo could get to the second verse, the squeezebox abruptly slammed closed and they were off.

The queen's car was being towed.

Folk singer immediately filled the void: "The answer, my friend, may be on CNN," they sang to the tune of *Blowin' in the Wind*. "The answer may be on CNN."

Of course, not everyone was singing Monday. Inside the historic courthouse, the mood was somber, as about 150 lawyers, reporters, and other spectators waited for an hour and a half to hear arguments before the state's highest court. The seven justices might announce their decision as early as today on whether manual recounts of the ballots in three counties must be considered in Florida's final tally in the presidential race.

Outside, before a bank of television cameras and a street full of honking cars, about 75 demonstrators, most in favor of Bush, were yelling. A few were praying. One was doing both as he roller-skated through the crowd waving an American flag. Police stood by to keep the relatively even-tempered crowd on the sidewalk, out of traffic.

"I trust the vote, said Bush supporter Gary Hamaker, a 45-year-old systems engineer from Tampa. "He was elected and that's it. I trust the machine count much more than I trust the manual count."

Willie Utley, a retired school administrator from Benavides, Texas, disagreed.

"I think (Vice President Al) Gore should win," said the 61-year-old who came to Tallahassee to spend Thanksgiving with his sister and showed up at the courthouse with a small sign reading "Texans for Gore."

"I think he actually won," he said quietly, realizing he was out-numbered. "He has the popular vote on his side, and when they finish counting those votes, I'm sure he's going to win."

But Utley and his grown son William didn't stay long as more Bush supporters arrived, carrying posters reading "Al Gore, commander in thief." "Stop the recount. This whole think stinks," and "Enough is Enough."

Later in the day, as the TV cameras crowded around lawyers leaving the courthouse, a group of Gore supporters chanted: "Every vote counts. Count every vote," and "President Al Gore – Get used to it!" Bush supporters countered, shouting "No more Gore. No more Gore!"

A couple of blocks away, Shannon Sullivan was doing a brisk business, selling T-shirts at 15 bucks a pop to passing motorists.

"We do a lot of drive-bys," he said. "People honk and say, 'Whatcha got?' or 'How much?' and we run out there and sell."

Sullivan, the 46-year-old owner of a nearby sporting goods store, Sports Beat, has been set up on the corner from noon to dusk for the past 10 days. He estimates he's sold about a thousand shirts.

"This was our first shirt," he said, holding up a T-shirt that says "Stop Electoral Dysfunction!" on the front and lists the "Top Ten Better Ways to Choose a President" on the back. Among them: "Eeny meeny, miney, mo; Paper, rock, scissors; Thumb War; Why I want to be president essay; and Presidential Wrestle-off 2000."

"But this one is our best seller," Sullivan said, pointing to the "I THOUGHT I Voted" T-shirt. On the back: "It's not your vote that counts ... It's how your vote is counted."

*First published in the Houston Chronicle November 21, 2000*