

ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: Tie-Dyed Candidate: The Rupert for Governor Campaign 2012

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This creative project provides a long-form narrative of key events in, and the repercussions of, the 2012 gubernatorial campaign of third-party candidate Rupert Boneham. The candidate is well-known in the state as a star of the reality TV show *Survivor*, and for running a mentoring program, Rupert's Kids, for at-risk teens and young adults. The candidate's celebrity status was not always a positive asset in the campaign process, and he often had to overcome others' perception of him as a non-serious candidate. The researcher builds on previous class work of ethnographic investigation of the campaign, as well as additional participant-journalism based experiences on the campaign trail to investigate the impact of a non-political celebrity running for office. Primary and secondary investigation into the candidate's quest for the nomination to run for office, and the campaign's impact on the candidate was conducted. In addition, the researcher examined the events following the failed election bid, including personal and financial effects on the candidate.