# Man commits suicide at World Trade Center site to protest Iraq war and Bush reelection

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A twenty-five year-old man, Andrew Veal, killed himself with a shotgun November 6 on the site where the World Trade Center stood before September 11, 2001. No suicide note was found, but the choice of the location was presumed to be a protest against the Iraq war and President Bush's reelection days earlier.

Veal's supervisor at the University of Georgia research center, where he managed the call center, told the press, "I'm absolutely sure it's a protest. I don't know what made him commit suicide, but where he did it was symbolic."

Another co-worker, Stacey Sutherland, agreed, "I see it as a political statement. He was so opposed to the war."

Veal's body was spotted by a hotel worker in a fenced-in area at the World Trade Center site, which has long since been cleared and awaits new construction. Authorities are puzzled how the victim was able to climb a 15-foot perimeter fence in an area that is constantly under guard.

Besides being an ardent opponent of the Iraq war, Veal opposed Bush's overall policies, especially on the environment. His friends and coworkers knew him as an easy-going person not prone to bouts of depression.

He was engaged to be married in June to 21-year-old Audrey Grieme, a senior studying opera at Simpson College in Iowa. He was reportedly offered a promotion at the research center, where he had worked for six years, but wished to attend a culinary school to pursue a career as a cook. Besides his full-time job, he worked part-time at a local restaurant.

When Veal failed to show up at work on Wednesday, his friends and coworkers assumed he was upset that George Bush had defeated the Democratic candidate, John Kerry. Over the next several days, he failed to return repeated phone calls from his parents and his fiancée, raising the alarm.

Whatever the specific thought processes that led this young man to end his life tragically, the significance of the action cannot be ignored. Veal's feelings of shock and despair over the war, the state of the country, and the prospects of a second Bush administration, elevated in his case to extreme and irrational proportions, are shared by millions of Americans in the aftermath of the elections.

The Bush camp cynically exploited images of the World Trade Center in the course of its campaign. Its resort to fear-mongering, compounded by Kerry's support of Bush's "war on terror," was the centerpiece of a campaign that set out to whip up confusion, prejudice and backward religious sentiments. The Democrats offered no genuine alternative to the extreme right-wing program of Bush and the Republicans.

Veal's suicide echoes an earlier symbolic statement against war. In 1965, as the US intervention in Vietnam was escalating sharply, Norman Morrison, a devout Quaker and father of three, set himself on fire in front of the Pentagon office of Lyndon Johnson's secretary of defense, Robert McNamara. McNamara watched the entire gruesome episode from his window.

Morrison's suicide-protest against the napalm bombing of Vietnamese villages presaged a mass movement against the imperialist war that encompassed tens of millions in the United States, and hundreds of millions around the world.

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