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Breaking the Sound Barrier

Amy Goodman
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Anyone frustrated by the influence of conservative media outlets on American political life will be heartened by Amy Goodmans new book based on the last two years of broadcasts from her internationally-known radio show *Democracy Now!* The book addresses a wide range of topical issues: elections and voting rights climate change the Obama campaign health care and global warfare. Wide-ranging and well-documented it emphasizes how seemingly disparate issues connect within a comprehensive progressive agenda.

Each short essay stands alone but there are recurring themes like voter disenfranchisement. Goodmans criticism of what she considers right-wing political tactics continues in her account of the 2008 Republican National Convention. She and other journalists were caught in a massive police sweep of protestors outside the convention in a shocking violation of First Amendment rights. In a connected essay Poverty is the Real Scandal she reminds readers about Wal-Marts anti-union stance and its policy of requiring management to attend meetings about the downside of unionization in which they were illegally told not to vote for Barack Obama.

Turning to global matters Goodman commemorates the 1975 massacre of Timorese protestors by occupying Indonesian forces describing how a group of soldiers slammed me to the ground with their rifle butts and kicked me with their boots. Another reporter who tried to shield her with his body suffered a fractured skull. Goodman also documents the public murder of a reporter in Oaxaca and the high number of journalists who have lost their lives in Iraq. These essays serve as an important reminder of how precious freedom of speech is and how easily it can be taken away.

Both fans of Goodmans radio show and readers who are first encountering her in this volume will be impressed with the range and depth of her news coverage as well as her willingness to take personal risks. In a society that too soon forgets her work grounded in the global struggle for democracy and expressing new hope in the Obama era shines renewed light.

Goodman co-authored *Static Standing Up to the Madness* and *The Exception to the Rulers* with her brother David Goodman. Both books were *New York Times* bestsellers.

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