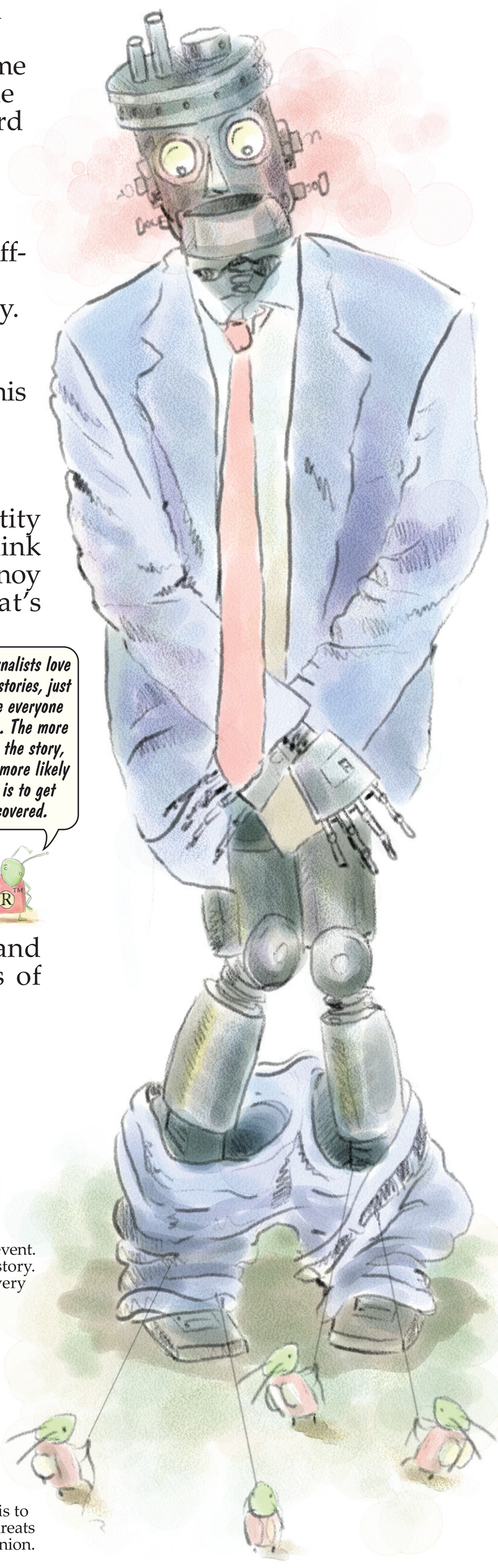
TACTICAL EMBARRASSMENT

HOW IT WORKS

When trying to understand how a machine works, it helps to expose its guts. The same can be said of powerful people or corporations who work hard to make themselves richer—regardless of consequence for everyone else.

By catching powerful entities off-guard, you can momentarily expose them to public scrutiny. This way, everyone sees how they work and can figure out how to control them. We call this *tactical embarrassment*.



In a Nutshell:

Find a target (some entity running amok) and think of something sure to annoy them—something that's also lots of fun.

If you're stumped, imagine the target losing control and acting stupidly. What would it take to make them do that?

Capitalize on the target's reaction. Write a press release and e-mail it to hundreds of journalists.

Preparing the Press Release

Imagine an "objective" newspaper story about the event. How would it read? Be realistic. Then write that story. (Got qualms? This is just what corporations do every day to sell products or candidates.)

Fishing for Cease and Desist Letters

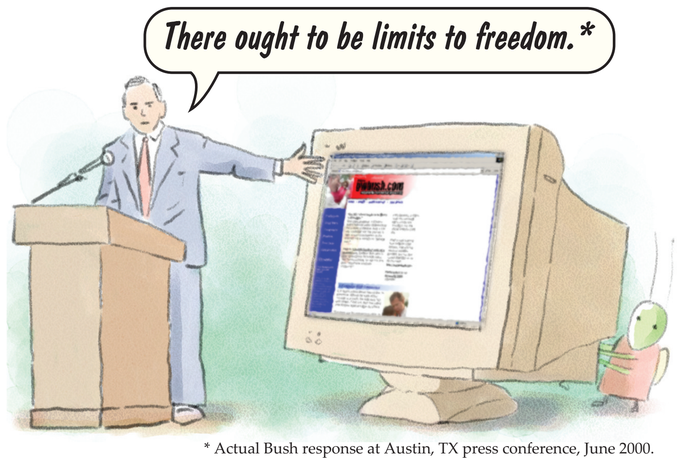
The easiest way to embarrass someone powerful is to show how petty they are. Learn to embrace legal threats and use them as evidence in the court of public opinion.

A Few Highlights in Embarrassment History:

In 1967, Yippies threw a hundred one-dollar bills from a balcony onto the New York Stock Exchange floor. The journalists they'd brought along told the world how the brokers, consumed with greed, dropped their trading and scrambled around for the money.

Cost to Yippies: $100. Loss to NYSE due to shutdown: millions of dollars—not to mention their image.

http://gatt.org/yippies



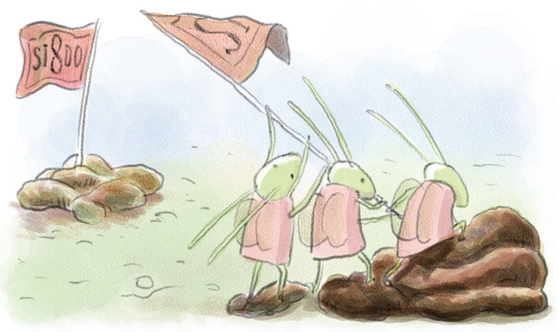
* Actual Bush response at Austin, TX press conference, June 2000.

During George W. Bush's run for President, ®™ark put up a website at GWBush.com that looked just like Bush's campaign site, but that poked fun of Bush and criticized the corporate funding of elections. When Bush saw the fake website, he got very angry and said some really stupid things on TV.

®™ark e-mailed press releases about Bush's behavior to thousands of journalists. The resulting press embarrassed the Bush campaign into withdrawing their legal threats as well as their complaint to the Federal Elections Commission.

Cost to ®™ark: $0. Bush was shown to be unbelievably whiny and capable of stooping very low when annoyed.

http://rtmark.com/bush



To highlight the Seville city government's "planned abandonment" of a centuries-old working-class neighborhood—a plan whose aim was to lower property values and make residents leave, thus paving the way for gentrification—activists planted thousands of altered city logos in the dog droppings that were filling their neighborhood. Visitors to an important conference on "sustainable cities" could not help wondering why the city was sponsoring dog shit.

REAL CITY LOGO

"No me ha dejado."
You've never abandoned me.

ALTERED LOGO

"Si me ha dejado."
You have abandoned me.

Cost to dogs: minor. Shortly afterwards, sanitation services resumed in the Alameda. More importantly, the gentrification plan was made more visible to all residents, and was shown to be everyone's problem.

http://www.sindominio.net/fiambrera