

Much of the climate of media misinformation and prejudice against Suva's gay community was exposed four years later in the book by Scott's younger brother, Owen, in his family history, *Deep Beyond the Reef*. So when Auckland film maker and media academic associate professor Annie Goldson took on the task of developing this story for the screen, she faced a huge challenge.

Confronting this complex Fiji tragedy could have been a trap. Instead, Goldson has woven a compelling and poignant tale of racial intrigue, sexual politics and the coup culture.

John Scott won the heartfelt admiration of many Fiji Islanders for his courageous and humanitarian daily visits to the Chaudhry government captives who were held at gunpoint by George Speight's renegades for 56 days.

He deserved a lasting tribute. The Goldson film negotiates the conflict and contradictions to do just that.—*DAVID ROBIE is director of the Pacific Media Centre.*

References

Scott, O. (2005). *Deep beyond the reef*. Auckland: Penguin Books.
Tapueluelu, 'A. (2001). Reporters and the police—too close? *Pacific Journalism Review*, 7(1): 159-163.
The Fiji Times. (2001, July 28). Editorial.



Words that move public opinion

Words That Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear, by Frank Luntz. New York: Hyperion Bookstions, 2007, 324 pp. ISBN 1401302599

FRANK LUNTZ is the propagandist who sold Republicanism and Bush to the United States. He prepares congress leaders for televised debates and advises senators on how to employ language to their advantage. In *Words That Work* he tells us how he uses words to move public opinion.

Not surprisingly, *Words That Work* has ignited controversy. Even

people who haven't read the book are writing reviews of it, and the word 'Luntz-speak' has become synonymous with lying. Last year, the *US News and World Report* created the 'Pimp my candidate' project to get advice from Luntz for current political candidates (Bedard, Gilgoff & Marek, 2007).

I am not a supporter of right wing politics, however, there is something about this book that is seductive. Luntz is intelligent—he has a doctorate from Oxford University and lectured at prestigious universities. His style is straightforward, elegant and witty.

To be sure, his opening advice on the 10 characteristics of effective communication repeats information that writers may already know. Yet Luntz drives his points home with fascinating examples, such as the language used by the defence pathologist in the O. J. Simpson trial, and insightful conversations with screen writer Aaron Sorkin.

He also provides new material, including his market research on words and phrases that powerfully affect people. Luntz uses dial sessions to get participants' moment-by-moment, visceral responses to words. Top of the list for a favourable effect on listeners is 'imagine', followed by 'hassle-free'. 'Re-words'

also score highly, especially 'renew', 'revitalise', and 'rejuvenate'.

Luntz's most controversial material is about how he helped Republicans sell unpopular policies by altering their language. He is responsible for changing the phrase 'drilling for oil' into 'energy exploration' and for advising those wanting to abolish the 'inheritance tax' to call it the 'death tax'.

Repeated throughout the book is the refrain, 'It's not what you say, it's what people hear'. Luntz notes that, once words leave politicians' mouths, they are interpreted by listeners' imaginations—especially by journalists who translate them into stories. 'The act of speaking,' he concludes, 'is not a conquest but a surrender' (p. xiv).

Towards the end of the book Luntz comes across as slightly dislikeable, as he advises us on how we can use language manipulatively: to board an aeroplane after the door has closed, and get a table at a packed restaurant.

Not everyone will like this book. Feminists may feel tight around the collar while reading Luntz's advice to men on how to apologise to a woman by giving flowers, and New Zealanders—steeped in a tradition of modesty—may squirm at his frequent name dropping. Also, Luntz's wit can

be scathing, such as his criticism of earlier Republicans for looking like morticians ('people that my mother wishes I dressed like' [p. 94]).

Wordsmith or huckster, scholar or manipulator, Luntz emerges in this book as a more fascinating figure than the politicians he advises. Perhaps that was his purpose all along.—*DR HEATHER KAVAN*, communication lecturer, Massey University.

Reference

Bedard, P., Gilgoff, D. & Marek, A. (2007). Obama-rama: A mix of hope and change. *US News and World Report*, 142(4), 14.



Is NZ's news media really so poor at reporting diversity?

When the NZ Press Council made it's first anti-discrimination finding last year, people may have wondered whether the "Asian Angst" article was typical of the way editors and journalists report ethnic minorities and diverse community groups in this country.

We'd like to think not.

Let's find out. If your news organisation has published or broadcast excellent diversity journalism in the last year or so, please send it to us.

Producers of the best examples will be invited to a two-day workshop in Wellington led by Columbia Journalism School associate dean Arlene Morgan of New York.

Producer of the best work will win an Asia New Zealand Foundation scholarship.

NZ Journalists Training Organisation, Whitireia Journalism School, AUT's Pacific Media Centre, Canterbury University Journalism Programme, Asia:NZ Foundation and the Human Rights Commission.

Deadline: 5pm, 15 August 2008
Info: Jim.tucker@whitireia.ac.nz