

NEWS

Chad Vader meets Mayor Dave and Maya Cole*Kristian Knutsen on Wednesday 03/28/2007 04:03:15,*

"Hi, I'm Mayor Dave Cieslewicz. Some people say I'm not mean enough. I don't think the guy next to me agrees." So says the current mayor of Madison (running, of course, for re-election) in a short video shot by Matt Sloan and Aaron Yonda, creators of [Chad Vader](#). This is, of course, the guy standing next to Cieslewicz, who replies, "Mayor Dave and I will destroy the city council, I mean work with the city council."

This very brief vignette is one of two produced outtakes from the series featuring the mayor, who made a cameo appearance in its [sixth episode](#) as one in a string of bosses for the frustrated title character. Though Cieslewicz contacted [Vader](#) creators long before the episode was produced in January and released just before the spring primary, it was [clearly enjoyed](#) by the [candidate](#) as an example of his connection to the local cultural zeitgeist.

This is confirmed in the second vignette, which provides an explicit endorsement for the candidate, who is running against [Ray Allen](#) for the seat. With Cieslewicz and the stumbling Sith standing next to one another, the latter states: "Hello, this is Chad Vader and I support Mayor Dave Cieslewicz for Mayor," clearly mispronouncing his endorsee's name. "Chess-Lev-Itch," responds the mayor, who repeats his cameo dialogue, "You have failed me for the last time." Vader responds, enunciating clearly this time: "Cieslewicz. I'm sorry, it's a hard name to pronounce."

Neither video is available online for viewing, though. They have only been shown at a Blame Society Productions screening at Indie Coffee and as subsequently broadcast on local TV news.

Cieslewicz also attended a shoot for [Chad Vader](#) last Friday night, the first of two late nights (and early mornings) at the Willy Street Co-op. (I attended on Saturday to assist with the crew.) This episode, though, is not scheduled for release before Election Day.

"I don't know if it was so much of a campaign thing, as much as that Dave is a really big fan," says Cieslewicz campaign manager Meg McGrorty. Hmm... what about the ad published in this week's edition of [The Onion](#) featuring the mayor and Vader beneath the slogan "Madison's Winning Team"?

"It's an extra, just for fun," says McGrorty. "Chad Vader is popular, the mayor is popular, why not put the two together?"

Cieslewicz has built a history of making company with artists popular in Madison. He's formed a relationship with the Blueheels, a country rock band that just played a fundraiser for him and appears conspicuously in the banner image at the top of his [campaign blog](#). This follows the original Cieslewicz bid in 2002-03, during which he held campaign fundraisers featuring The Kissers and The Junkers.

"I think it's pretty smart, and I think it's something politicians have done for years," says series co-creator Matt Sloan of the mayor's interest in connecting with Madison's biggest celebrity of the moment.

How did they decide upon the endorsement? "We just do what we do," says Sloan. "We're politically minded, but politics is not our game. We wouldn't collaborate with someone running for office if we found their politics objectionable."

Indeed, Dave Cieslewicz wasn't the only candidate in this spring's elections who made a connection with Chad Vader.

Madison school board candidate [Maya Cole](#), who is facing off against [Marj Passman](#) in a very hotly-contested race for a swing seat on the body, organized a campaign volunteer meet-up at Indie Coffee last week featuring a screening of [Chad Vader Episode 7](#) with an introduction from Sloan.

Cole says she originally saw [Vader](#) during a screening at the Regent Street coffee shop and subsequently became a fan of the series. "I just really appreciate what these guys did," she says. Cole compares Blame Society's achievements to what she wants to accomplish on the school board. "They created this series for very little money, yet have been wildly successful," she says.

"Now I'm the first candidate to have a video for my campaign on YouTube," Cole continues, "I hope Marj Passman can keep up with me." She is referring to a brief photo and video montage from the event at Indie Coffee, which was created by [School Information System](#) proprietor [Jim Zellmer](#). This video follows:

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"I think it will help me," Cole says. "Anything to reach out to the community," she continues. "I don't want to run a boring campaign, I believe you have to have fun."

Sloan says Cole and Cieslewicz are the only two candidates running this spring who have contacted them. Their interest, though, attests to the impact of *Vader*, both as a cultural creation and as an example of an entrepreneurial success story that both seek to promote in office.

"I think it does confirm our work," says Sloan. "It shows that Chad has been accepted in a lot of different spheres. It's not just nerds on the Internet talking about it, it's people from all realms and professional areas," he continues. "Even people running for office are realizing online video is a powerful way to speak to people."

