

## THE EMPEROR HAS NO CLOTHES

*Who is the real George W. Bush? Is he the compassionate conservative, policy-involved politician, and world leader he plays on TV? Or behind the benevolent smile, is he an ignoramus just as cold-blooded, ruthless and paranoid as his personal political Machiavelli Karl Rove?*

Bush is an illegitimate president. Although his father may acknowledge paternity, a majority of the American voters rejected him, and by his actions, he has proved our instincts were right. Although outwardly likeable, he is a deeply flawed individual, uncaring, devious, and lacking in moral character. But other presidents may have shared some of these traits. What is most troubling is that he just doesn't seem very smart, and worst of all, he tells lies constantly. This trait makes him doubly dangerous. To us, and to the world.

Bush makes poor decisions with little thought. He is easily manipulated by the mega-rich, who seek greater wealth, and by his own staff, who seek personal and political advantages. Worst of all, he uses lies as a weapon, easily and cunningly, with no regard for the truth or the irreparable harm he may cause, to us and to world civilization.

Although Bush has exhibited all the outward symptoms of alcoholism and other personality defects such as compulsive lying,\* he has never, to public knowledge, sought professional

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\* In his book, *Lies! Lies!! Lies!!! The Psychology of Deceit*, Charles Ford, a professor of psychiatry, tells us that "words seem to flow out of [the] mouths [of pathological liars] without them thinking about it," and that they go from believing a falsehood could be true to believing that it is in fact true. Robert Reich, M.D., an expert in psychopathology, tells us that compulsive lying has no official diagnosis. It is associated with a number of different personality disorders. (Jozefowicz, Chris, "Understanding Compulsive Liars," *Psychology Today*, October 23, 2003, [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com).) One writer suggested that Bush might suffer from a narcissistic personality disorder: arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes; inability to recognize or identify with feelings of

treatment. He views politics as a game to be played, with no real consequence for losing; however, the game he is playing involves millions of lives, perhaps even the future of humanity. We need to better understand what makes him tick so we can better evaluate his effectiveness as the leader of the most powerful nation on earth.

Bush can't remember any book that he ever read as a child.<sup>791</sup> He was a lazy student, preferring to collect baseball cards instead of reading and thinking about life and events beyond his comfortable surroundings.<sup>792</sup> It is not surprising that he has grown up to be intellectually lazy, refusing to read newspapers or briefing papers, or to spend more than 30 minutes considering any problem, irrespective of its complexity.<sup>793</sup>

Bush was a hyperactive child, throwing a football through his classroom window and riding around Midland, Texas, on his bicycle, stealing bags of drilling samples from the front porches of geologists to use in mock battles with playmates.<sup>794</sup> Is it any surprise that he spends hours each day jogging, working out and playing video games?<sup>795</sup>

Bush played cruel games as a child, blowing up frogs with firecrackers and shooting at his younger brothers with a BB gun as they ran away; he teased his mother about the death of her favorite dog, and he saw his father chastise his mother for allowing their African-American maid to get off work an hour early, even though she had nothing to do. Is it any surprise that he grew up to have little empathy for others?

Bush worked on his father's political campaigns as the "Roman candle," a temperamental "enforcer,"<sup>796</sup> and he saw Bush Sr. defeated for reelection because Bush *perceived* that his father was *perceived* as too wimpy and too preppy.<sup>797</sup> Is it any surprise that he grew up to be a governor who executed more prisoners than most of the rest of the other states combined, that he parodied one prisoner's plea for clemency as he was about to execute her, and chuckled when asked during a debate about

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others; and exploitation of others. (Parry, Sam, "The Bush Exit Ramp, January 22, 2003, <http://www.consortiumnews.com>.)

lawyers sleeping during their client's death-penalty trials in his state?<sup>798</sup>

Although Bush challenged his own father to go "mano a mano," and although he is verbally nasty, it doesn't appear that he has ever actually been in a real fight; therefore is it any wonder that his challenge to the Iraqi resistance, "Bring 'em on," sounds more like an insecure cheerleader than a confident fighter?

Bush's world is a dark place, and he thinks dark thoughts. Although he professes a religion based upon the teachings of the Prince of Peace, his speeches are obsessed with evil and threats of danger. Rather than comfort us, he makes us fearful. Instead of creating hope, he drives us to despair. He feeds upon his own insecurities and strives to impose them on us. He cannot lead us to the mountaintop; he can only drive us into the pit.

Bush does not accept he can do wrong or that there are limits on his power, because he deeply believes "he was called by God to lead the nation" and that he is "an instrument of Providence." Bush says, "Events aren't moved by blind change and chance ... [but] by the hand of a just and faithful God." Bush believes that "heaven is open only to those who accept Jesus Christ."<sup>799</sup> There is no salvation for Jews, Muslims, or Buddhists. David Frum, his faithful former speechwriter reports that while he served in the White House "attendance at Bible study was, if not compulsory, not quite un compulsory."

Another Bush admirer, Richard Brookhiser, believes that "Bush's faith means that he does not tolerate, or even recognize, ambiguity; there is an all-knowing God who decrees certain behaviors, and leaders must obey." Bush is reported to have told Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, "God told me to strike at al Qaeda and I struck them, and then he instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did."<sup>800</sup>

Perception is everything for George W. Bush. He once said, "I don't care what anyone says, politics is all about perception."<sup>801</sup> On becoming president, he said, "I hope I'm viewed as a humble person."<sup>802</sup> However, once he was in office, he said, "I'm the commander-see, I don't need to explain why I

say things. That's the interesting thing about being the president. Maybe somebody needs to explain to me why they say something, but I don't feel like I owe anybody an explanation."<sup>803</sup> These are opposite attributes, and only an extremely arrogant or defective personality would fail to *perceive* the inconsistency—and the contradiction with America's Constitution and democratic way of life.

It is only important to Bush that he is *perceived* as having compassion or as being a leader, when in fact he has no feelings of truly caring for other people or any *vision* of what could be. Instead of imagining a rich scholarly educational environment for all of our children, he seeks to test and categorize them and to punish their teachers for failing to whip them into shape. Instead of imagining that it is the destiny of our children to fly to the stars, to carry forth a message of gentle cooperation and caring, he seeks to militarize space and the moon to benefit his wealthy corporate contributors. Instead of imagining new and innovative sources of energy and conservation programs, he seeks to conquer other nations and peoples to exploit the world's finite oil supplies for the benefit of his rich friends.

Bush once defined intelligence: "Intelligence is can you think logically. Intelligence is do you have a basis from which to make decisions. Intelligence in politics is do you have good instincts."<sup>804</sup> What more can be said? The leadership of the most powerful nation on earth requires a bit more insight than that.

Whether a consequence of having been a lazy student and/or because of excessive alcoholism or drug use into his 40s, Bush has made hundreds and hundreds of really stupid public statements. We keep overlooking them, hoping that he really doesn't mean it when he says things like, "We are resolved to rout out terror wherever it exists to save the world from freedom." Or, "We're freeing women and children from incredible impression!"<sup>805</sup> The frightening thing is that whenever he forcefully delivers one of these dumb lines during a speech, the audience applauds! It must be said. The Emperor has no clothes.

## **A Reflection of Our Self-Image?**

Bush strives to create the *perception* that he is an ordinary guy, but no matter how hard he tries, he remains a rich spoiled brat at heart, one who has never earned anything on his own in his life, including the presidency. And when he's with his peers, he doesn't try to hide it.

On October 19, 2000, Bush addressed the Al Smith Memorial Dinner in New York City, and some of his remarks are telling: "This is an impressive crowd, the haves, and the have-mores. Some people call you the elite. I call you my base." [laughter] He joked, "[M]y opponent keeps saying I gave too much tax relief to the top one percent. But he hadn't heard my latest proposal. The bottom 99 percent will do well when they get to split Dick Cheney's stock options." [laughter]<sup>806</sup> Not funny, at least not to the hard-working, ordinary people who carry the burden of supporting the government and economy that provide Bush and his base with the lifestyle of the rich and famous.

Immediately after taking office, Bush demonstrated his true sympathies. In March 2001, legislation written by bank and credit company lawyers and lobbyists was quickly enacted by his Republican-controlled Congress and was signed by Bush to make it difficult or impossible for working families to discharge their overwhelming personal debts in bankruptcy and to get a "fresh start."

The biggest beneficiary of the legislation was MBNA Corporation of Delaware, the world's largest independent credit card company. Unsurprisingly, ranked by employee donations, MBNA was the greatest corporate contributor to the Bush campaign, having handed him \$240,000, plus \$100,000 for his inaugural parties.<sup>807</sup>

In April 2001, Bush visited the Wilmington, Delaware, Boys and Girls Club to show off his gift of royalties from his book, *A Charge to Keep*, to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. He said he was making the gift because "I believe so profoundly, I believe so strongly in mentoring. And I believe so strongly in helping children understand somebody loves them." What he did not reveal during the photo opportunity was that the budget

he had already submitted entirely eliminated the government's \$60 million in funding for the organization.<sup>808</sup>

Needless to say, his royalties did not make up the deficit in funding. If Bush had truly loved poor children and cared about keeping the Boys and Girls Clubs open, he would have ensured adequate funding. What he cared about most was creating a *perception* that he cared, therefore the photo op and chump change.

During his State of the Union address in January 2002, Bush asked for an increase in the AmeriCorps program, saying, "Americans are doing the work of compassion every day—visiting prisoners, providing shelter for battered women, bringing companionship to lonely seniors, ... These good works deserve our praise; they deserve our personal support; and when appropriate, they deserve the assistance of the federal government." Are you surprised that a year later he proposed an 80 percent cut in the program?<sup>809</sup> Were you one of the 50 million Americans who viewed his well-scripted performance that evening? Did you form a perception that he cared about battered women or lonely seniors? Listen not to what Bush says! Rather, look to his deeds to measure his compassion.

In April 2002, Bush traveled to Albuquerque for a photo op with Lucy Salazar, who collects books for Project Even Start and tutors pre-kindergarten children in reading. Bush praised Salazar; but failed to mention that his 2003 budget effectively cut the Project's funding by 20 percent.<sup>810</sup> That night on the evening news, it probably appeared that Bush cared about giving poor children an even start in reading skills, but do you believe it? Would it make you nervous to have the President praise something you believed in, and which required his budgetary support?

A few days after the 9/11 attacks, Bush went to Ground Zero in New York City. As the workers cheered him, Bush yelled, "I can hear you, and the rest of the world hears you, and the people who—and the people [who] knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon." Bush wanted to project a perception of strength and comradeship with the brave firefighters. However, after he rejected a bill that contained \$340 million to fund fire

departments, the International Association of Fire Fighters boycotted a national tribute to firefighters who died on 9/11, and its general president, Harold Schaitberger, told Bush, "Don't lionize our fallen brothers in one breath and then stab us in the back."<sup>811</sup>

Moreover, Bush exposed the rescue workers and others employed in lower Manhattan to dangerous health risks when the White House instructed the EPA to say it was safe to return to work and breathe the air, a deliberate misrepresentation.<sup>812</sup>

On August 5, 2002, Bush went to Somerset County, Pennsylvania, to be photographed with nine coal miners who had escaped after being trapped for three days in a flooded coal mine. Bush threw his arms around them, smiled for the cameras, and praised them and their rescuers for "showing our fellow citizens that by serving something greater than yourself is an important part of being an American." He said their ordeal and rescue "really defines kind of a new spirit that's prevalent in our country, that when one of us suffer, all of us suffer."

The miners' rescue had depended upon technical assistance provided by the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration; however, Bush had already proposed a cut in the agency's existing inadequate budget, and he had appointed an administrator, dedicated to reducing or eliminating mine safety regulations, to emasculate the agency. Bush had proposed a six-percent reduction in the agency's budget, even though 42 miners had been killed on the job during 2001, up from 29 in 2000.

If Bush had truly cared about miners and the dangers under which they earn a living, he would not have cut the budget of the agency that protects their safety, nor would he have appointed someone dedicated to the elimination of mine safety regulations.<sup>813</sup> Rather, he cared only for the *perception* of concern, thus the photo op and his somewhat mangled words of cheer.

On December 19, 2002, Bush visited the Capitol Area Food Bank in Washington, D.C. for another staged event. He said, "Those who are poor, those who suffer, those who have lost hope are not strangers in our midst; they're our fellow citizens. ... And in this time of joy, in the time of blessing, we've got to

remember that. To make the season complete and the season whole, we must help those who are in need." A *perception* of caring? Just words. Only days before Bush had proposed elimination of meal assistance for 36,000 seniors, after-school program slots for 50,000 children, child care benefits for 33,000 families, and the termination of heating assistance for 532,000 families during the winter Christmas season.<sup>814</sup>

On February 17, 2004, Bush addressed military personnel and their families at Fort Polk, Louisiana. He stated, "In the war, America depends on our military to meet the dangers abroad and to keep our country safe. The American people appreciate this sacrifice."<sup>815</sup> Bush wanted to create a *perception* that he cared about the soldiers he was sending off to be killed in his war; however, Bush doesn't appreciate their sacrifice enough to adequately fund programs that benefit them and their families. He has attempted to "roll back recent modest increase" in combat imminent-danger pay, and refused to extend the child tax credit to one million poor children living in military and veteran families as a part of his tax cut package for the wealthy.<sup>816</sup> In reviewing Bush's 2005 budget, The Veterans of Foreign Wars stated, "This funding package is a disgrace and a sham."<sup>817</sup>

Any doubts as to Bush's empathy or lack thereof for those who serve and who are dying in his war were laid to rest by his performance at the Radio and Television Correspondents' Association Dinner on March 24, 2004. Although in these appearances the president is expected to be funny in his remarks, Bush choose to narrate a slide show of himself on the telephone with a finger in his ear while listening to his European allies and searching under his office furniture for missing weapons of mass destruction. Bush sought to convey a *perception* that he is just a regular guy, without understanding that his antics made fun of his justification for sending over 750 of our sons and daughters to their deaths in Iraq.<sup>818</sup>

Bush says that he cares for the poor, those who suffer, and those who have lost hope, but does he really do anything about it? In 2002, the number of people living in poverty rose by 1.7

million to a total of 34.6 million.<sup>819</sup> What did he do? Bush cut taxes on the wealthy and axed benefits for the poor.

Do you believe that Bush feels your pain and shares your losses? Does he really care what happens to the rest of us? You're not stupid! Get the truth.

### **The Image We Present to the World**

Bush is the President of the United States of America. As such, he is the political image we project to the rest of the world. He is our most visible representative. Knowing what you know now, would you buy a used car from him? Perhaps a better question is, would you choose this man as your lawyer to represent you in court and present your case to the jury, particularly if you were falsely accused of murder and the consequences were truly life or death? Would you trust his devotion to your welfare, his intellect, his knowledge of the law, his intuitive grasp of issues, his ability to formulate and ask logical questions? Do you believe he could draw out favorable testimony, ascertain subtle distinctions and explain them plainly to the jury? Could he sense your motivations and fears, and could he sympathetically convey them to the jury? Would you trust him to stay awake and focused during your trial? Would you trust him with your life, or the life of someone you love? Aren't these the very questions we should be asking about our president?

At his inauguration, Bush was introduced to teenage soprano Charlotte Church, who had sung in the ceremony. Bush asked "where does this lovely lil' lady hail from?" She answered, "I'm from Wales." He asked, "What state is that in?" She replied, "It's in Great Britain." Bush paused and a crease of perplexity appeared on his presidential brow. He said, "Oh really? I'll have my people look into that." Church said she found him "kind of stupid."<sup>820</sup>

In March 2001, shortly after taking office, Bush embarrassed both South Korean president (and Nobel laureate) Kim Dae Jung, who had been promoting a "sunshine" policy toward North Korea, and Secretary of State Powell, who had just endorsed the effort. Bush publicly repudiated the negotiations

and declared, "We're not certain as to whether or not they're keeping all terms of all agreements." His own aides were unable to find any evidence to support his public accusation. Bush later launched into an embarrassing tirade to a group of U.S. senators about Kim Jong Il, calling him a "pygmy."<sup>821</sup>

On September 5, 2001, at an informal press conference prior to his first state dinner in honor of Mexican president Vincente Fox, Bush told reporters to "shut up" in broken Spanish, and then cut off inconvenient questions by saying, "*No puedo oirle*" (Spanish—"I can't hear you").<sup>822</sup>

During another joint press conference a year later in Los Cabos, Mexico, Bush, who was upset with Fox's failure to support his invasion of Iraq, "glowered during Fox's windup and looked annoyed at the unruliness of the camera crews." According to the *Washington Post*, "The last straw was when a cell phone went off, which infuriates Bush. ... In a breach of protocol, Bush cut off the translator before Fox's answers could be rendered into English" and walked out.<sup>823</sup>

On the occasion of a joint press conference with British Prime Minister Blair, Bush was asked what they had in common. He answered, "We both use Colgate toothpaste."<sup>824</sup> Insipid, asinine, or just ignorant?

In February 2002, Bush gave a speech to the Japanese Parliament that stunned its members. Bush said, "My trip to Asia begins here in Japan for an important reason. (applause.) It begins here because for *a century and a half* now (emphasis added), America and Japan have formed one of the great and enduring alliances of modern times." (silence.)<sup>825</sup> The man was either hung over, slept through, or just ditched his history classes. Our alliance with Japan began a *half century* ago, following our use of atomic weapons for the only time in history to force its surrender in a war in which millions died.

In May 2002, Bush set off on a world tour to meet with other leaders and to encourage the *perception* that he is presidential. In Russia, he met with Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, to whom Bush had publicly given the insulting nickname "Pootie Poo." Russian television repeatedly showed a video clip of Bush

chewing gum as he entered a meeting with Putin, and then spitting it into his hand before the press conference.<sup>826</sup>

In Germany, Bush was greeted by massive demonstrations against him and his plans to attack Iraq, and when he spoke in the German parliament, members held up a peace flag and walked out. The German magazine *Der Spiegel* held Bush up for ridicule when it reported that he had embarrassingly asked Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "Do you have blacks, too?" And it told how National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice had to inform Bush that Brazil was populated with more citizens of African descent than was the United States.<sup>827</sup>

Bush met with French President Jacques Chirac for two hours and then participated in a lengthy joint press conference. When asked a question, Bush verbally wandered around the syntactical landscape until he was forced to admit that he had forgotten the question, saying, "That's what happens when you get past 55." Bush twice referred to President Chirac as "President Jacques," and pronounced his last name throughout as "shrak."<sup>828</sup>

NBC reporter David Gregory asked Bush, "I wonder why it is you think there are such strong sentiments in Europe against you and against this administration? Why, particularly, there's a view that you and your administration are trying to impose America's will on the rest of the world, particularly when it comes to the Middle East and where the war on terrorism goes next?" Then, speaking in French, Gregory asked President Chirac, "And, Mr. President, would you maybe comment on that?" Bush retorted, "Very good. The guy memorizes four words, and he plays like he's intercontinental." Gregory said, "I can go on." Bush replied, "I'm impressed—*que bueno* (Spanish—"how wonderful"). Now, I'm literate in two languages." He then accused Gregory of "showing off as soon as you get in front of a camera."<sup>829</sup> For Bush, it is all a matter of *perception*. But who was showing off, and who came off as being both ignorant and arrogant?

On March 18, 2003, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press released a survey of the changes in world opinion

about the United States between January 2002 and March 2003, following the commencement of Bush's War. In France, the percentage holding a favorable view plummeted from 63 to 31; in Italy, from 70 to 34; in Russia, from 61 to 28; and in Turkey, from 30 to 12. Even the citizens of our closest ally, England, lost respect for America, from 75 to 48 percent.<sup>830</sup> Overall, America's popularity roughly dropped 50 percent or more.

Does Bush represent the image of America you want to be projected to the rest of the world? You're not stupid! Get the truth.

### **The Stealth Co-President**

Political consultant Karl Rove did the field research and taught the classes on political dirty tricks. Starting as a paid staffer for the Republican National Committee, he evolved an anything-goes approach to political campaigning in which winning becomes everything. Among his creations was the phony "push poll," in which potential voters are called and asked provocative questions, such as those asked in the 1999 primary campaign against McCain and in the midterm 2002 elections in Florida and Texas. More often, he relies upon the false whisper campaign, such as his rumors of Governor Ann Richard's appointment of gays and lesbians to state commissions and McCain's fathering of an illegitimate black child.

Rove taught classes on negative political campaigning at the University of Texas, relying upon the doctrine of war taught by Sun-Tzu, "All we need to do is throw something odd and unaccountable at the enemy." He taught that "Radio is really good for a negative attack, because it's tough to figure what the opposition is doing." He said, "The only thing worse to face is mail." Because direct mail "is immune from press coverage."<sup>831</sup>

When Bush Sr. was the chairman of the Republican National Committee in 1973, the *Washington Post* ran a story entitled, "GOP Probes Official as Teacher of Tricks." The teacher was Karl Rove, and although Bush Sr. promised to "get to the bottom" of the allegations that Rove was using dirty political tricks, he later promoted Rove to be his special assistant.<sup>832</sup>

One of Rove's jobs was to make sure that Bush Jr. got the keys to the family car whenever he came to visit in Washington.<sup>833</sup> Rove served as Bush Jr.'s political advisor in his failed run for Congress in 1978. It is unknown whether Rove had anything to do with Bush's television ads showing him jogging through West Texas,\* a scene which is downright ridiculous.<sup>834</sup>

Karl Rove created George W. Bush, the politician. In 1990, Bush hired Rove to do a makeover from being a failed featherweight businessman into a heavyweight political contender. Rove arranged tutoring sessions with experts in juvenile justice, corrections, state government, school finance and education issues, welfare, and social services. Bush was not a quick study. For example, he had difficulty grasping the difference between federal Medicare for the elderly and disabled and state Medicaid for the indigent. He was better at business issues. Whatever was good for the corporations had to be good for the citizens of Texas; the issue just had to be properly packaged and marketed.

Once Bush graduated from political kindergarten, Rove enrolled him in public policy elementary school by creating policy teams to formulate positions for Bush on education, welfare, crime, and business issues, including "tort reform."<sup>835</sup> Rove would take the policy issues, place a political spin on them, and reduce them to one or two simple themes for Bush to memorize.

This approach worked well as the campaign for governor commenced in 1993, unless Bush was questioned too closely, which Rove normally would not allow. Once, however, after Bush gave a prepared speech on education, a reporter approached him and asked him about his plan to reform education. After repeating a couple of his staple lines, Bush was unable to answer basic questions about the workings of the state education agency, how his plan would change the school-finance formula, how much it would cost, and finally, if the voters

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\* Bush's opponent joked that in Muleshoe, Texas, the only people who jogged were running away from something or somebody.

would know how much it would cost before the election. His answer, "Probably not."<sup>836</sup>

Bush was elected governor and settled into a job often described as the fourth or fifth most powerful political office in Texas, following even the lieutenant governor in authority. According to his political ally Representative Paul Sadler, Bush delegated responsibility to top aides to study issues and to report back with recommended solutions for snap decisions. Bush had a limited attention span and was uninterested in discussing the philosophy of an issue. Sadler said, "I have absolutely no question in his ability to make the right decision if he's presented with the facts from all sides. I have watched him do it. Where I found he gets off track is if he only has one voice in the room. There's what's always bothered me. ... It's about the need to have different viewpoints in the room. Part of my training as a lawyer is trying to understand what the other side thinks. He comes from an MBA background. He doesn't have that training. I want to know why I think the way I do, but I always want to know why the other side thinks the way they do. He doesn't go through that thought process as often. To me, it makes it more important to make sure the counselors around him come from different viewpoints."<sup>837</sup> Do you think Bush is exposed to differing viewpoints?

Bush concedes that he only "glance[s] at the headlines just to [get a] kind of a flavor for what's moving. I rarely read the stories." He says "the most objective sources I have are people on my staff who tell me what's happening in the world."<sup>838</sup> Do you believe Bush's "people" are objective enough to tell him what he needs to know to make critical decisions?

Rove agrees that Bush "doesn't make decisions alone. That is to say, you know, you get a sense of some people. They are self-contained. They are totally self-contained so they need nothing in order to arrive at a decision. He respects, he honors the process that gives information." Bush honors Rove by giving Rove control over the information that is provided to him, and by accepting Rove's interpretation of that information, especially as it relates to its political implications.<sup>839</sup>

Bush repeatedly lies and says he does not govern by polls. The truth is that Rove conducts the polls, discerns political trends, and then advocates for policies that will move Bush in the same direction.<sup>840</sup> Rove identifies the opponent's weaknesses, designs the attack, and releases the attack dogs. For Rove and Bush, the true course of a political campaign is attack, attack, and attack.<sup>841</sup>

For Rove and Bush, *perception is reality*. They engage in the politics of pretense.<sup>842</sup> For Rove and Bush, it does not matter if the President is in fact compassionate, it matters only that he is *perceived* as being compassionate. In many respects, their belief appears pathological in that they seem to really believe that the rest of us will never catch on to their deceptions, or that if we do, they will be able to convincingly lie their way out of it.

When Bush was asked about meeting with Log Cabin Republicans, an affluent gay lobbying group, he said he probably wouldn't meet with them. Why? "Well, because it creates a huge political scene."<sup>843</sup>

*Message.* For Bush to follow the program, Rove's themes and messages have to be simple and repetitious. It does not matter what the question is, the answer must always be the same. Rove is proud of developing the theme and articulating the message, and Bush is proud to deliver it. However, a part of the scheme is to always give Bush credit for the thinking of others. An internal memorandum instructs government spokespersons to refer to Bush's "leadership" in all media contacts. His staff constantly refers to "the president's position," and what "President Bush believes" about different issues.

Writing in *From 9/11 to Terror War*, Douglas Kellner concludes, "In fact, the pro-corporate, unilateralist, and militarist hard-right corps of his administration formulates the plans, makes the decisions, and carries out the policies, with Bush serving as a mere figurehead and cheerleader. Bush's role is to provide sound bites to the public when his handlers have agreed on specific policies and to raise funds for the Republican Party."<sup>844</sup>

Bush says, "The important question is, How many hands have I shaken [sic]?" and "I don't want to win? If that were the case, why the heck am I on the bus 16 hours a day, shaking thousands of hands, giving hundreds of speeches, getting pillared [sic] in the press and cartoons and still staying on message to win?"<sup>845</sup>

Rove and his relationship with Bush were described by a well-connected business and political consultant: "Rove is Nixonian in his cynicism and manipulation of patriotic themes. The irony is that W., in many ways, is the anti-Nixon. Nixon was brilliant but self-destructive. W. is dull but, in Rove's hands, maniacally disciplined. It's like Rove is Nixon's heir. Cold-blooded. Ruthless. Paranoid. But unlike Nixon, Rove has figured out how to mask it all behind Bush's smile."<sup>846</sup> A smile, or a smirk?

Is Rove the kind of guy you want making policy for America? Pulitzer Prize-winning author Ron Suskind was once waiting outside Rove's office and overheard him yelling, "We will f\*\*k him. Do you hear me? We will f\*\*k him. We will ruin him. Like no one has ever f\*\*ked him." A real Christian gentleman, right?<sup>847</sup>

Since 1990, Bush and Rove have entered into a continuing political marriage of convenience in which their thoughts and actions have become inseparable.<sup>848</sup> Clinton openly said that, if elected, he and Hillary would give us two for the price of one. In contrast, Bush's political twin is kept out of view in a backroom at the White House. But he's there, ruling the roost, our unelected stealth co-president.

Do you trust Rove more than Bush? Did you vote for Karl Rove? Did anyone? Does it bother you that Rove has so much power and control over the president? You're not stupid! Get the truth.

### **The Mayberry Machiavellis**

It is not often that we are able to obtain inside information about the high-level decision-making that takes place inside the White House while the administration is still in power. Luckily, John DiIulio, a former Assistant to the President, sent a lengthy

“For/On the Record” letter to journalist Ron Suskind that sheds light on Bush’s policy-making process. DiIulio, an author, historian and professor at the University of Pennsylvania, was appointed by Bush to create the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, which Bush called the Cornerstone of his “compassionate conservatism.”

Once Suskind published an article in *Esquire* magazine, based upon DiIulio’s letter, that was critical of Karl Rove and Bush’s policy-making apparatus,<sup>849</sup> Bush’s press secretary Ari Fleischer labeled the charges “groundless and baseless.” However, DiIulio stood by his assertions, at least initially, before issuing an “apology.”<sup>850</sup>

DiIulio’s insights, based upon his 20 years of studying American government and public policy formulation and his personal observations made during numerous senior staff meetings within the White House, are quoted here at some length.

As of the date of the letter, October 24, 2002, DiIulio did not believe the administration had done much, “either in absolute terms, or in comparison to previous administrations at this stage, on domestic policy. There is a virtual absence as yet of any policy accomplishments that might, to a fair-minded non-partisan, count as the flesh on the bones of so-called compassionate conservatism.”

DiIulio advised, “they could stand to find ways of inserting more serious policy fiber into the West Wing diet, and engage much less in on-the-fly policy-making by speech-making.” He believed that “what they needed ... was more policy-relevant information, discussion, and deliberation.” During all the meetings attended by DiIulio, he heard perhaps three “meaningful, substantive policy discussions. There were no actual policy white papers on domestic issues. There were, truth be told, only a couple of people in the West Wing who worried at all about policy substance and analysis.”<sup>851</sup>

DiIulio found that “on social policy and related issues, the lack of even basic policy knowledge, and the only casual interest in knowing more, was somewhat breathtaking—discussions by

fairly senior people who meant Medicaid but were talking Medicare; near-instant shifts from discussing any actual policy pros and cons to discussing political communications, media strategy, et cetera. Even quite junior staff would sometimes hear quite senior staff pooh-pooh any need to dig deeper for pertinent information on a given issue.”<sup>852</sup>

DiIulio continues, “This gave rise to what you might call Mayberry\* Machiavellist† -staff, senior and junior, who consistently talked and acted as if the height of political sophistication consisted in reducing every issue to its simplest, black-and-white terms for public consumption, then steering legislative initiatives or policy proposals as far right as possible. ... Like college students who fall for the colorful, opinionated, but intellectually third-rate professor, you could see these 20- and 30-something junior White House staff falling for the Mayberry Machiavellist.”<sup>853</sup>

DiIulio offers his insights regarding Rove: “Some are inclined to blame the high political-to-policy ratios of this administration on Karl Rove. Some in the press view Karl as some sort of prince of darkness; actually, he is basically a nice and good-humored man. And some staff members, senior and junior, are awed and cowed by Karl’s real or perceived powers. They self-censor lots for fear of upsetting him, and, in turn, few

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\* The Andy Griffith Show was a highly successful sitcom that ran on television from 1960 to 1968 featuring a small-town sheriff in Mayberry, North Carolina who spent more time fishing and discussing philosophy than fighting crime.

† Writing in *The Prince*, Niccolò Machiavelli discussed the use of deception by leaders: “the experience of our own time shows that those princes who had little regard for their word and had the craftiness to turn men’s minds have accomplished great things and, in the end, have overcome those who governed their actions by their pledges.” Machiavelli believed that “Men are so simple and so much inclined to obey immediate needs that a deceiver will never lack victims for his deceptions.” The advantage goes to those “who broke faith”; however, the prince “must know how to mask this nature skillfully and be a great dissembler.” (Corn, David, *The Lies of George W. Bush*, p. 6)

of the president's top people routinely tell the president what they really think if they think that Karl will be brought up short in the bargain. Karl is enormously powerful, maybe the single most powerful person in the modern, post-Hoover era ever to occupy a political advisor post near the Oval Office. The Republican base constituencies, including beltway libertarian policy elites and religious right leaders, trust him to keep Bush '43' [Jr.] from behaving like Bush '41' [Sr.] and moving too far to the center or inching at all center-left. ... Little happens on any issue without Karl's okay, and, often, he supplies such policy substance as the administration puts out."<sup>854</sup>

DiIulio wonders, "A year after 9/11 and with a White House that can find time enough to raise \$140 million for campaigns, it's becoming fair to ask, on domestic policy and compassionate conservatism, 'where's the beef?'"<sup>855</sup>

DiIulio was not alone in his questions. In his *Esquire* article, "Why Are These Men Laughing?" Suskind quoted several other senior White House officials, one of whom confided, "Many of us feel it's our duty—our obligation as Americans—to get the word out that, certainly in domestic policy, there has been almost no meaningful consideration of any real issues. It's just kids on Big Wheels, who talk politics and know nothing. It's depressing. DPC [Domestic Policy Council] meetings are a farce."<sup>856</sup>

Bush's former speech writer, David Frum, wrote a generally favorable book about Bush, *The Right Man*, after he left the White House, in which he describes Bush as "impatient and quick to anger; sometimes glib, even dogmatic; often uncurious and as a result ill informed." Frum said that Bush's staff has a "dearth of really high-powered brains," and that one seldom "met someone who possessed unusual knowledge."<sup>857</sup>

Bush fired his first Treasury Secretary, Paul O'Neill, because he publicly questioned the wisdom of Bush's second round of tax cuts. In a recent book, *The Price of Loyalty*, by Ron Suskind, O'Neill described a lack of real dialogue in the Cabinet meetings he attended, saying that Bush "was like a blind man in a roomful of deaf people." According to O'Neill, Bush is a disengaged president, who doesn't encourage debate either at Cabinet

meetings or in one-on-one meetings with his Cabinet secretaries.<sup>858</sup> So, who does Bush listen to?

Are you satisfied that Bush receives adequate advice on alternatives before making policy decisions? Is Bush creating sensible policies or is he pandering to political perceptions? You're not stupid! Get the truth.

### **The Disappointment of Diogenes**

In around 400 B.C., the Cynic philosopher Diogenes is said to have walked through Athens in broad daylight carrying a lighted lamp, hoping that its light might reflect upon a man of virtue.

A person of virtue conforms to a standard of right, exhibits a particular moral excellence, and displays courage. Would Diogenes be disappointed, should the light of his lantern shine in the direction of our president?

During the third presidential debate at Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., the candidates were asked about the "apathy amongst young people who feel there are no issues directed to them and they don't plan to vote." Bush answered, "I don't think it's the issues that turn kids off. I think it's the tone. I think it's the attitude. I think it's a cynicism in Washington and it doesn't have to be that way." He concluded, "And finally, sir, to answer your question, it needs somebody in office who'll tell the truth. That's the best way to get people back in the system."<sup>859</sup> Bush's approach to truth-telling may be getting people back into the system, not as he expected, but in revolt against his lies and where they have taken us.

If nothing else, this book has shown that Bush does not tell the truth and that he may be incapable of knowing or recognizing the truth. Bush lies about the most serious and life-threatening matters facing our country and its government. His continued inability to tell even basic truths reflects no virtue.

On taking his oath of office, Bush placed his hand on the Bible and swore to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. His willful refusal to defend America against the 9/11 terrorist attacks, although he was repeatedly given specific

advance warnings, his subsequent abrogation of our freedoms for no just cause, and his engaging us in an illegal war are all violations of his Constitutional duties. There is no virtue in his performance.

As this effort is being concluded, we learn that Saddam has been finally captured in Iraq.<sup>860</sup> As an old cop, I cannot help but feel excitement at the arrest of a mass murderer. But as an old prosecutor, I have yet to identify any offense in America's criminal codes for which Saddam could be indicted and successfully tried in any court in this country. Certainly, the people of Iraq have the right to draft a new constitution and to form a lawful government, which would then have the authority to try Saddam for his crimes against the people of Iraq. Even though I generally believe the death penalty does little to deter crime, I believe I could present the case against Saddam and argue for the ultimate penalty if the evidence supported it, but not here, and not now.

The facts that Iraq was invaded and conquered using the military forces that Bush inherited from Clinton, and that the military was successful in finally locating Saddam's hiding place, reflects no virtue upon Bush. His secret trip to Baghdad and his photo op with a phony Thanksgiving turkey contributed nothing to the search. No, nothing about Bush's War and the capture of Saddam reflects any virtue on the part of Bush.

His creation of endless preemptive war is not a virtue; indeed it is a scandal. No, more than that, it is a crime, a war crime that has made our world a less safe place to live in. In Bush's dark world, our freedoms are continually at risk and our peace is forever threatened.

Bush's War threatens the safety of ordinary people everywhere, and they live in fear of his aggressive, never-ending preemptive war. A survey was conducted of the European Union public to identify the countries that currently present the greatest threat to world peace. Fifty-three percent of those surveyed believed that the United States threatened their security, a distinction we shared with the "axis of evil," Iran, North Korea, and Iraq.<sup>861</sup>

Has Bush's War made you feel safer? If not, you're not alone. An NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll found that 79 percent of Americans did not believe that Bush's War has made them feel safer from terrorism.<sup>862</sup>

Do you believe that Bush is telling you the truth about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? If not, you're not alone. A CBS poll has revealed that 53 percent of Americans believe that Bush "either was hiding important elements of what he knew about WMDs in Iraq (37 percent) or was mostly lying about what he knew (16 percent). Another poll released by the Program on International Policy Attitudes reveals that a majority of Americans no longer see Bush as "honest and frank" (56 percent).<sup>863</sup>

In his State of the Union address delivered on January 22, 2004, Bush stated, "Last March, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, a mastermind of September 11<sup>th</sup>, awoke to find himself in the custody of U.S. and Pakistani authorities."<sup>864</sup> What he did not tell the American people is that Khalid Shaikh Mohammed has told his American "interrogators that al Qaeda rejected the idea of any working relationship with Iraq, which was seen by the terrorist network as a corrupt, secular regime. When Hussein was captured, he was found with a document warning his supporters to be wary of working with foreign fighters."<sup>865</sup>

In his address to Congress, Bush stated, "We are seeking all the facts—already the Kay Report identified dozens of weapons of mass destruction-related program activities and significant amounts of equipment that Iraq concealed from the United Nations. Had we failed to act, the dictator's weapons of mass destruction programs would continue to this day."<sup>866</sup> A lie. David Kay revealed the truth the very next day when he resigned as the chief U.S. arms hunter in Iraq. In fact Kay had concluded that the stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons that everyone expected to find in Iraq never existed because they were eliminated by "a combination of U.N. inspectors and unilateral Iraqi action."\* Kay reported that Iraq's

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\* Bush's doctrine of preemptive war has been dealt a severe blow by his inability to find any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. David Kay

nuclear program was only “rudimentary.” He said, “It really wasn’t dormant because there were a few little things going on, but it had not resumed in anything meaningful.”<sup>867</sup>

On February 8, 2004, Bush appeared on NBC’s “Face the Nation” and repeatedly lied about the justification for his war. While he conceded the error of his pre-war statement that “the intelligence ... left no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised,” he attempted to cover up by lamely suggesting that Saddam may have hidden the weapons or moved them out of the country.<sup>868</sup>

Even if it was true that Saddam did not have any weapons of mass destruction, Bush said that inspector “David Kay did report to the American people that Saddam Hussein ... was dangerous with the ability to make weapons.” Another lie (see above). According to a *New York Times* editorial, “Kay said that Iraq’s weapons program seemed to have ground to a halt under the pressure of the United Nations inspections and sanctions that Mr. Bush and his staff disdained last year. Mr. Kay said Saddam Hussein retained only the basic ability to restart weapons programs if that pressure was removed.”<sup>869</sup>

Bush argued that the war was necessary so people don’t “look at us and say, they don’t mean what they say, they are not willing to follow through.” Bush warned, “In my judgment, when the United States says there will be serious consequences, and if there isn’t [sic] serious consequences, it creates adverse consequences.”<sup>870</sup> However, it was the United Nations, not the United States, that had threatened “serious consequences” in Resolution 1441, and it was the United Nations inspectors who had reported there was no evidence of an imminent threat from

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states, “If you cannot rely on good, accurate intelligence that is credible to the American people and others abroad, you certainly can’t have a policy of preemption. ... Pristine intelligence—good, accurate intelligence – is a fundamental bench stone of any sort of preemption to be even thought about.” (Savage, David G., “Failed Arms Search Called Blow to Strike-First Policy,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 2, 2004, p. A9.)

Iraq. Bush insisted, "We had run the diplomatic string in Iraq;" however, in truth, Bush rejected all diplomatic alternatives.

Perhaps the most chilling thing Bush said in the interview was, "I believe it is essential that when we see a threat, we deal with those threats before they become imminent. It's too late if they become imminent."<sup>871</sup> Thus, in his arrogant aggrandizement of power, Bush is now convinced he can launch an immoral war without the legal justification required by international law.

Bush stated, "I'm a war president. I make decisions ... with war on my mind. ... And the American people need to know they got a president who sees the world the way it is." Does he? He went on to say, "I'm not going to change, see? I'm not trying to accommodate. I won't change my philosophy or my point of view."<sup>872</sup> That much is certainly true. Since he won't or can't change, we must. We have no choice. We must have a leader who forms opinions based upon an informed reality, rather than one who attempts to manipulate reality to conform to his ignorant beliefs.

Increasingly, Bush is finding himself without official support for his lies. CIA Director George J. Tenet stated on February 6, 2004, that his agency never warned Bush that Saddam's government posed an "imminent threat." Tenet confirmed that the CIA had allowed "fabricated" information from an "unreliable" Iraqi defector about suspected mobile germ-weapon labs to be used in its October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate provided to Congress, just before it voted to approve the use of force in Iraq, and later used by Secretary of State Powell in his pre-war address to the United Nations.<sup>873</sup>

Bush is without virtue as he continues to lie to Congress and to the American people. As we learned earlier, Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, prohibits anyone (including the President of the United States) from "knowingly and willfully" making "any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation to Congress. Bush continues to commit high crimes and misdemeanors with impunity, and he will do so until he is removed from office.

Some day, when our children's grandchildren look back at this moment, they will see the world we live in as it is, not the imaginary perceptions our president and his gang of zealots have attempted to pass off as the truth. History will judge us, not by what we believe, but by what we do. Awareness will be presumed, and ignorance will be no defense. If we continue to allow the commission of horrible crimes against others on our behalf, without protest, our names shall be joined in the indictment engraved upon the monument of our civilization. Will it be with pride that our descendants read the chronicle of our lives or will they be filled with shame?

You're not stupid! Get the truth. Act upon it!

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794. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

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808. Conason, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

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810. Ibid., p. 49.
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