

PREFACE

The Bush administration has been running on lies in the belief that we are too stupid to figure it out. The business of exaggeration in politics has gone beyond the usual. It has become a culture of nastiness and downright lies. Is this acceptable?

We're Not As Stupid As *They* Think We Are

There's *something* going on, and *we* have to do something about it. Otherwise, *they're* going to pull it off.

- *Something* is a movement to shift the burden of taxation from corporations and the wealthy to the middle and working class.
- *Something* is a movement to put business in control of governments and to privatize all public services, including education.
- *Something* is the surrender of individual freedoms in response to cultivated fear.

They are getting away with it because *they* lie about what *they* are doing, and *we*, you and me, seem to be swallowing it, hook, line and sinker.

This is about the lies we're being told. Not about the usual political puffing, exaggerations or spinning. It is about lies, plain and simple. It's about who's telling the whoppers and about who's being duped. It's about you and me, and about those who are trying to take advantage of us and our trusting nature.

They believe that they can tell us *they're* going to do one thing and that we're too stupid to see that they do something entirely different. *They* believe that they can tell us something, and then later say the opposite and that we're too stupid to notice. *They* believe we are ignorant and are too lazy to become informed. None of this is true.

America *is* the Promised Land. Our population comprises the greatest genetic pool of humanity on earth. For over 500 years, the best the world has to offer have struggled to get here

and there's a reason why people line up at our embassies and consulates in every country to legally immigrate here, and to sneak across our borders when they can't. We have freedom, and we have the intelligence and courage to defend it. We have only to recognize the danger. The time is now. Read on. You're not stupid! Get the truth.

Nasty Political Lies

Perhaps one way to define politics is the art of not telling the truth. To be elected, politicians must avoid telling the truth at all costs, because if they told the truth about everything all the time, everyone would find something to disagree with, and no one would ever get elected. So politicians learn to not tell the truth. They avoid taking positions; they hedge their comments, speak in ambiguities, abstain, hide and deny, dissemble, and otherwise torture the true meaning of words. Perhaps it's always been that way, and perhaps it'll always be that way. But, right now, there's a new game in town.

In 1995, Representative Newt Gingrich said, "I think one of the great problems we have in the Republican Party is that we don't encourage you to be nasty." To overcome this character defect, his advice was to "go negative early" and to "never back off."¹ He published a political handbook entitled *Language, a Key Mechanism of Control*, in which he encouraged Republicans to paste labels on Democrats such as "corrupt," "sick," "pathetic," "greedy," "anti-flag," "traitors," "decay," "permissive attitude," "anti-family," "bizarre," and worst of all "liberals."² Throw it on the wall and see if it sticks, who cares whether or not it's true? Of course, Gingrich advised Republicans to refer to their own party values using words and labels such as, "moral," "crusade," and "family."³

Frank Luntz, who collaborated with Gingrich in drafting the "Contract with America," advised "Republicans to call themselves 'conservationists,' not 'environmentalists'; to talk of 'climate change' instead of the more alarming 'global warming'; and to foster skepticism about the science of environmental problems." In a later memo to the Bush administration, Luntz

advised, "A compelling story, even if factually inaccurate, can be more emotionally compelling than a dry recitation of the truth."⁴

Since then, Gingrich's students have learned their lessons well, and the nastiest lesson they have learned is how to tell lies, how to deny their lies, and how to make it seem that others, who are telling the truth, are lying.

Gingrich, who claims to be an historian, may have borrowed some of his insights from Adolf Hitler, who taught, "By means of shrewd lies, unremittingly repeated, it is possible to make people believe that heaven is hell—and hell, heaven. The greater the lie, the more readily it will be believed."

Today, in the United States, our president, George W. Bush, has abandoned the principles of the proud party of Lincoln and has advanced the political art of avoiding the truth to the high science of flat out lying. This book will show how he has institutionalized falsehood as a matter of policy, and how frightening his success is. More than scary, his practice absolutely threatens our freedoms and undermines our democracy.

Do you believe it is acceptable for politicians to lie to us? Have you given up hope on hearing the truth from politicians? You're not stupid! Get the truth.*

1. Franken, Al, *Lies and The Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at The Right* (New York: Dutton Penguin Group, 2003), p. 139.

2. Conason, Joe, *Big Lies: The Right-Wing Propaganda Machine and How It Distorts the Truth* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2003), p. 60.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 117, 118.

4. Alterman, Eric and Mark Green, *The Book on Bush: How George W. (Mis)leads America* (New York: Viking, 2004), pp. 17, 20.

* Note to reader: Many of the following references are to articles and materials that were located on the Internet. Every attempt has been made to provide accurate and current URLs; however, they are often changed. The best solution, should you be unable to connect to a site, is to copy the entire title in quotation marks, along with the author's name, into your search engine. You should find either the correct URL or an alternative source.

