

# *Some Perspective*

## *On Family Values and the Law*

PROLOGUE: *The following was written in the early part of 2001 while I still chafed at the thought of democracy having been hoodwinked, and before criticisms of G. W. Bush were considered tantamount to treason following the events of September 11. I was waiting for the editor of **Gift of Fire** to get an issue of the journal published in which I had previously submitted an article before submitting this piece, but in those many months of his delinquency history took over. Continued unraveling of evidence of unethical individuals financing fifty percent larger expenditures than could be amassed by his opponent's more numerous supporters and their almost immediate payoffs in revised government policies worth many times what was expended emboldens me again. Today (January 29, 2002), we have another News story that continues to shed the same perspective on Bush family values -- Noelle Bush (Brother Jeb's daughter) was arrested in Florida and released on drug charges. So here's the original article:*

Recently we have been privy to the juxtaposition of the time-honored concepts, *family values* and *the law*. These are concepts that have recently been promoted along with *Christianity*, as exclusively right-wing Republican values, but, whether or not Jesus really was a Republican like Billy Graham, the Reverend Moon, and Bob Jones, let us begin by considering the plight of the twins Jenna and Barbara Bush.

The venerable conservative William F. Buckley blames the Texas teenage alcohol use law for their current predicament. He says, "whatever one might intone about the relative responsibilities of children of public figures, still the offense for which they were arraigned is better commentary on the misbehavior of the law, than of the two violators of it." It is not clear, but one senses that "the misbehavior of the law" perceived by Mr. Buckley has been with regard to scooping up royalty along with the trash for which the law was clearly intended. The law's primary promoter and the one who actually signed the maligned legislation into law was none other than the right honorable right-wing, bible-slapping family man Texas Governor, George Dubya Bush who in so doing promoted himself as an adamant unstinting supporter of strong teen alcohol and drug laws. So in that spirit, Jenna has been the very first offending teenager according to the Austin Times-Statesman who got her charge (her first one, that is) reduced to a lower class of offense than other teens: "Since September 1999 police have usually charged people using fake identification to buy alcohol with the more serious offense — Class B violation of the Texas Transportation Code. Class B offenses typically result in arrest." Faithfully executing the law must surely be one of those morals most 'valued'.

Earlier Frank Rich noted in the New York Times: "Had George W. Bush conducted a charm offensive when his daughter was hospitalized for an emergency appendectomy at Christmas —

**George the 2<sup>nd</sup> with  
the newly minted  
twins Jenna and  
Barbara**



rather than fleeing for golf in Boca Grande, Fla. — would she be in open revolt now? By engaging in two underage-drinking ruses in one month — a 'crime' likely committed by more college students than not — Jenna Bush has made herself into the No. 1 poster child for the lack of compassion in her father's conservatism. It's Mr. Bush who signed the 1997 three-strikes, 'zero tolerance' Texas law that now puts her a margarita away from serving 180 days in jail."



**Have the twins finally realized their full potential?**



Laura must have thought, "Whew! Sometimes I wonder what might have happened if I hadn't crashed into my boyfriend's car and killed him. Life might have been easier. Oh well, George's folks helped to get him off drugs... I think. But these fertility drugs... twins! I don't know. Well, George's folks will guarantee we have a wealthy life anyway if George doesn't screw the pooch. Harkan Inc should be able to make money... even with George as CEO, but he better sell his stock before it's too late. Oops! Oh well, Papa Bush's appointee can fix that. One way or another George will 'keep food on the family' — wasn't that a cute comment of his?"

Of course in Florida we have a brother Jeb promoting a law rejecting the use of contraception by teens, espousing abstinence instead, although his own son has been arrested (one of the times!) for breaking and entering the apartment of a former girlfriend while intoxicated — presumably for cookies.

Nor was the earlier generation of Bushes a model of propriety. Jeb had his own appointed Playboy playmate just one office down the hall even though other more legitimate appointees (she had been appointed to a position in which she would rule in favor of her former employer) were assigned to other buildings. Then, of course, we have a brother for whom his father had to use presidential powers to rescue failed savings and loan escapades out of (correct me if I'm wrong) *many billions* of dollars in losses incurred by innocent people — why do we no longer hear of *that* brother and why do I worry about what *he* might be up to? Oh yeah, wasn't he in charge of the World Trade facilities in New York?

Dubya's professed date of giving up booze and drugs seems to have coincided with Papa beginning his own campaign for the presidency for which naughty children could be construed as a liability. So *that* obviously made sense to Dubya, but it wasn't family values as traditionally held nor certainly the deep respect for the feelings of his wife Laura or their children as implied by the current resident of the White House. No. (Right wingman Dick Cheney out prioritizes Laura in living room photo ops.) The twins Jenna and Barbara were already well past the age when right and wrong and inebriated parents are beginning to crystallize into a lifelong family image, and well past the time that responsible parents have seen those obvious "thousand points of light" of their grandpa. So clearly family values are secondary to political and economic necessity in

George 2<sup>nd</sup>'s case, and in general that is the only logical lesson to be learned if family values are things to be learned from the Bushes at all.

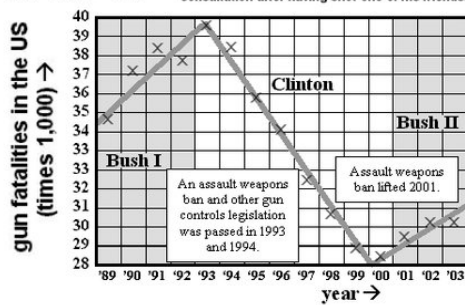
## Don't Be Just Another Statistic!

Year	Deaths in US	Deaths per 1000
1979	33,019	14.7
1980	33,780	14.9
1981	34,050	14.8
1982	32,957	14.2
1983	31,099	13.3
1984	31,331	13.3
1985	31,566	13.3
1986	33,373	13.9
1987	32,895	13.6
1988	33,989	13.9
1989	34,776	14.1
1990	37,155	14.9
1991	38,317	15.2
1992	37,776	14.8
1993	39,595	15.4
1994	38,505	14.8
1995	35,957	13.7
1996	34,040	12.8
1997	32,436	12.1
1998	30,708	11.4
1999	28,874	10.6
2000	28,663	10.4
2001	29,573	10.4
2002	30,242	10.5
2003	30,191	10.5

This is a public service announcement on Gun Safety.

## Be safe, not sorry!

Vice President "Gunner" Dick Cheney considered bad alternatives before calling suspected 'Spy Outter' Carl Rove for some much-needed advice and friendly consultation after having shot one of his friends.



Dick Cheney is a misunderstood man, what with defense of our well intentioned torture policies and unfortunate hunting accident. But Dick's experience in the first gulf war that he promoted has been invaluable in helping get the next one going. As CEO of Haliburton he made out all right during the hiatus between wars by selling equipment to Iraq even while the Clinton administration had sanctions on and that sort of thing. He cleverly divested Haliburton of subsidiaries through which they made those 30 million dollar profits during that awkward period. That was good. Kept his reputation in tact with the people that mattered for street cred. His energy commission set it up for all our oil buddies too, and the faked intel to support the war. Wow! Now there's a real patriot! And loyalty? Wow again! He ain't backin' down on torture. No siree! The constitution? Who wants to know? You all be careful with assault weapons now would you? We don't want any more regulations!

use records in order to secure public office, who has broken Federal laws on several occasions to accrue tremendous profits on insider trading, and who with his friends has used political influence to accrue huge benefits at public expense and avoid criminal prosecution. And whereas the right-

And what about ethics? We have heard a lot from the Bush corner about the lies of "Slick Willie." As we all know, he was caught by a four year \$70,000,000 fraudulently tax funded witch-hunt conducted by the right-wing. And what was the ultimate offense secured illegally by intimidation? That the meaning of "having sex" has been restricted in a purist sense rather than to include any act conceivably involving the genitals that most (and all Republicans at this juncture of history) might include under that rubric. He was, in fact, impeached by a right-wing congress for that offense even though the out-of-wedlock generality of the offense about which the restriction applied was one of which virtually every one of his accusers and his predecessors in office were equally guilty – I'm not actually sure, of course, whether Senator Orin Hatch has ever had sex of any denomination so that claim may not unanimously apply. But the president's offense alone was escalated by bigots to the magnitude of *treason* since there were virtually no other flaws in the unprecedented economic and diplomatic successes of the Clinton administration nor in the reduction in the national debt, crime rates, welfare recipients, government costs and the outstanding records with regard to the many other measures of the health of a society which are now once again plummeting. Of course Republicans feigned disdain that Clinton had not served in Viet Nam (a failing in common with Cheney and Dubya and again, most all of Clinton's accusers) and that he had demurred with regard to having smoked "but not having inhaled" marijuana. Recently resident Bush has signed a proclamation that would deny financial aid to any student who refuses to answer questions concerning his/her previous drug use record. This is the same demagogue who had refused throughout his campaign to answer any question what-so-ever concerning whether he himself had ever used drugs, a fact that is no secret to anyone who has ever checked the record.

So let's compare Slick Willie's crimes with those of the Bush brothers if you will. We have a resident of the White House who has repeatedly hidden arrests and drug use records in order to secure public office, who has broken Federal laws on several occasions to accrue tremendous profits on insider trading, and who with his friends has used political influence to accrue huge benefits at public expense and avoid criminal prosecution. And whereas the right-

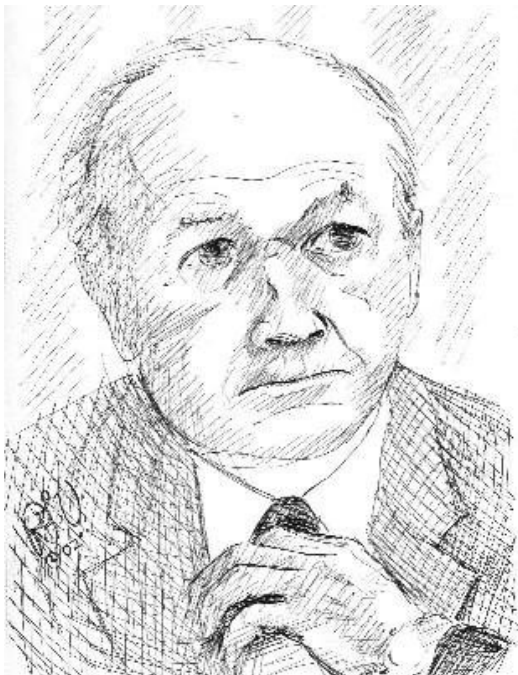
wing tittered about Clinton's campaign contributor's being granted a night in the *president's* spare bedroom at his place of residence – albeit called the "Lincoln Bedroom" in such cases – Dubya's backers were put at the helm commanding top secret US nuclear submarines resulting in the loss of innocent lives and international embarrassments of the first magnitude. In these first few but ever lengthening months that he has been in office, Dubya's primary backers have already gleaned hundreds of millions of dollars at public expense with favorable tax breaks and authorizations for exploitation of public resources with promises of much, much, more to come even while the economy is languishing on that account. His appointees are violating the public trust to their own benefit to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars just as Cheney's companies amassed wealth by illegally dealing with a foreign government that was off limits to law abiding citizens. A precedent that Dubya's grandfather Preston set in dealing with his favored Nazi's long after such dealings had been outlawed for all US citizens. This does not even broach papa's pardon of Jeb's drug dealing affiliates. "Slick Willie" indeed!



**The ideal of 'family values'**

Of course, Richard B. Cheney, the currently vacationing CEO of the friendly oil company Halliburton seems like one of the family when we see him sitting around the fireside chatting with his Texas neighbor – Oh, I'm sorry, they can't be neighbors, can they? Dick and Dubya have sworn that Dick resides in Wyoming, haven't they? Oh, well, small difference. Or when Dubya with much concern stubbornly defended that it wasn't a heart attack his cohort had suffered no matter what the doctors said. Anyway, it's hard to think of Dick as other than an *All In The Family* kinda guy even with his new artificial heartstrings. He is currently in a little hot water with the government accounting office for refusing to disclose the subject and costs of closed meetings with his fellow oil executives to establish US policies, but that too, what with concern for the heart problems that ensued, will blow over. On June 30, 2000, he appeared on ABC's "This Week", and said, "I had a policy that we wouldn't do anything in Iraq, even arrangements that [were?] supposedly legal. We've not done any business in Iraq since U.N. sanctions were imposed on Iraq in 1990, and I had a standing policy that I do that," clearly indicating that Haliburton operated

under *his* (Richard B. Cheney's) policies! But three weeks later he appeared again on "This Week" – this was after it had been revealed that, in fact, Halliburton subsidiaries *had* been trading with Iraq since 1998 – to exclaim out of the other corner of his mouth Popeye-style, "We inherited two joint ventures with Ingersoll-Rand that were selling some parts into Iraq, but we divested ourselves of those interests." So, he obviously must not have meant that they hadn't been doing *any* business with Iraq – just a little, indirectly (and "without inhaling" perhaps?). And why would any CEO purchase a company without knowledge of their business base? But of course, *if* Halliburton *had* divested itself of those interests immediately as he implied they *had*, Dick's comments might be considered ingenuous and even marginally honest. BUT it has recently been revealed that the subsidiaries signed nearly \$30 million in contracts and traded with Baghdad for over a year to the benefit of Halliburton before he finally sold them off. But still, as the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Halliburton, how in the hell was he supposed to know what was going on throughout the company? I still wonder what Saddam might have been thinking, what with his now dealing with Cheney who was, after all, key to his *Mother of All Defeats* in the Oil War while Republicans were blasting Clinton for not being harder on Saddam. Maybe the fact that Saddam's highly trained fighters, ironically called the "Republican Guard" had been considerately protected while hundreds of thousands of unwilling citizen conscripts were blanket bombed into oblivion endeared a natural affection between cunning foes. And of course dealings with foreign powers while sanctions are in place and against which we risk hundreds of thousands of American lives is not *foreign* to the Bush family.



"Kenny Boy" (as George 2<sup>nd</sup> called him) Lay was a great friend and primary campaign donor. It was really unfair that his company ENRON got blackballed like that. Kenny had a slick scheme going; he certainly didn't deserve to have to give up any of those fifteen residences. A guy like that deserves to live big. That was pretty cool what he did to California though. Ya gotta like that. A shame.

So while it is easy enough to believe the current resident of the White House when he says, "I know just how hard it is to put food on your family (have you ever tried it?) one must wonder whether other 'family values' have registered. As stated in the New York Times, "Fairly or unfairly, the man who campaigned for president as a Republican with a heart, a compassionate conservative, appears to be favoring the cold, heartless insurers over ordinary Americans struggling with illness and their finances. It's exactly the kind of stance that causes poll numbers to sink." And not amazingly, they are sinking here as they have abroad.

Meanwhile, quietly and without notoriety nor much more than a mere mention by professors that she has been a good student, Slick Willie's daughter has graduated from Stanford. Congratulations Chelsea!

Acorns don't fall far from the tree.

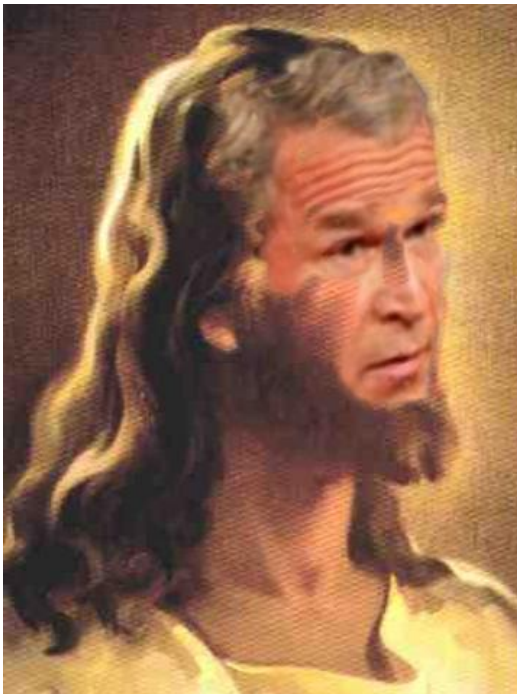
EPILOGUE: *There's really nothing to change after all the many horrible months – now years. But much could be added including Dubya's business partnerships with Osama bin Laden. The longstanding business ties between bin Ladens and Bushes could be discussed and the involvement of the CIA (formerly headed by papa Bush) in installing the Taliban and funding and arming Osama and his band. And the 'family values' of George and his friend and campaign financier 'Kenny Boy' and*



*the evil twists in getting us into war, toleration of torture, and acceptance of Carl Rove, are just plain laughable in retrospect although admittedly in a rather cynical sort of way.*



**Chelsea and 'Slick Willy' with his version of family values – not great, but...**



*EPILOGUE #2: In further retrospection all these years later, Dubya takes his place as the poster child of a 'compassionate conservative'. He never raped anyone that we've heard about, never separated children from their parents, and never praised Putin even after staring admiringly into his eyes. He wasn't racist, didn't violate the Hatch Act, engage in nepotism in his administration, and although he stole an election, he did it in a supremely legal way without inciting much violence or at least encouraging the taking up of arms to install himself in power.*

*All this seems pretty positive after what the country has gone through with Donald Trump's escapades, the misdeeds of which would require tomes of tiring litany. If George W. Bush had been the worst our democracy (republic if you insist) had ever had to endure, its survival would be much more certain that it is today.*

***Long Live the United States of America.***