

CHAPTER 18

Corruption in America and Iraq—GOP Style

Profiles in Corruption

I like to believe that people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than our governments. Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

It is not a coincidence that the GOP corruption and incompetence rampant in America parallel the corruption and incompetence rampant in Bush's Iraq. Plague-infected rats spread their disease wherever they scurry and feed.

We'll begin this chapter by focusing some sunlight on just a few of the biggest GOP rats in the U.S. Congress. This is a difficult task at best, partly because there are so many of them, and largely because this pack of vermin is skilled at covering its tracks.

Profiles in Corruption: The Modern GOP

A party and its leaders who do not believe in government should not be entrusted with the reins of government. Crooks belong in jail, not in Congress.

The GOP-controlled Congress during Bush's reign was the most corrupt in the last century. The infamous 109th GOP Congress of Crooks and Creeps richly deserves its place in history as the worst ever. GOP now means "Grease Our Palms."

As of early 2007 at least four GOP members of the infamous 109th had already gone to prison or resigned under a cloud of criminal corruption. Unfortunately, they are merely the tip of a GOP iceberg of sewage.

The GOP congressional leaders carried to the extreme Ronald Reagan's 11th Commandment—"Thou shalt not speak ill of a fellow Republican"—as they systematically protected the scoundrels and criminals in their midst. Reagan's 11th Commandment became synonymous with obstruction of justice.

Well, America's democracy demands that *much ill* be spoken about the GOP crooks and scoundrels in the U.S. Congress. We'll cover just a few—about a dirty dozen—of America's favorites in the next few pages.

Tom DeLay: GOP Representative (1984-2006) from the extreme right fringe of Texas; GOP House Majority Leader (2003-06.) DeLay resigned in June 2006 while under indictment in Texas, and after winning the Republican primary. He was the first legislative leader ever to be indicted. As a frontrunner in the race for America's favorite crook and creep in Congress, DeLay has too many sins and ethics violations to list here. Nicknamed "The Hammer" and "The Exterminator," he helped midwife the K Street Project. Two of his former political aides, Michael Scanlon and Tony Rudy, pleaded guilty in 2006 to charges relating to the Abramoff scandal, as did Abramoff himself, and other DeLay associates are under indictment. After the House ethics committee began to investigate DeLay's corruption, the GOP leadership replaced several GOP committee members with DeLay allies light on integrity, and GOP rules were changed to keep DeLay as majority leader. However, notwithstanding heroic efforts, the GOP leadership could not protect the crook from everything.

Bob Ney: GOP Representative (1995-2006) from Ohio. Another in a long crooked line of GOP leaders, Ney pleaded guilty in 2006 to various corruption charges in connection with the Abramoff lobbying scandal, and in early 2007 he was sentenced to prison for 30 months. Ney withdrew from his reelection race in August 2006, pleaded guilty to criminal corruption charges in October, finally resigned his congressional seat on the eve of the 2006 midterm election (which was won in a landslide by Democrat Jack Space), and was sentenced to prison in early 2007. The Abramoff investigation focused on several former and current GOP legislators, and Ney was the first congressman to plead guilty. As of early 2007, at least four lobbyists, including Neil Volz, Ney's chief of staff, had pleaded guilty to criminal charges. Another former chief of staff, William Heaton, pleaded guilty to corruption charges in February 2007. Heaton's plea agreement revealed that he helped Ney stash some of his ill-gotten loot from a trip to Britain in his congressional office safe, and that he would open the safe for Ney whenever cash was needed. Heaton, a former congressional page, became Ney's chief of staff at age 23. At Wikipedia you can easily locate a photo of various GOP crooks and petty thieves, including Abramoff and Ney, at St. Andrews in Scotland during happier days. As chairman of the House Administration Committee, Ney ordered that French fries be relabeled "freedom fries" on House menus. He was a leader of GOP-style diplomacy.

Randy "Duke" Cunningham: GOP Representative (1991 to 2005) from California. Cunningham resigned from Congress in late 2005 after pleading guilty to federal charges of conspiracy to commit bribery, tax evasion, mail fraud and wire fraud. He admitted accepting at least \$2.4 million in bribes for steering defense contracts to favored contractors. In March 2006 he was sentenced to eight years and four months in prison and ordered to pay \$1.8 in restitution. He is expected to be released in 2013. In January 2007 the Bush Justice Department forced the resignation of Carol C. Lam, the United States Attorney who led the criminal prosecution of Cunningham and was in charge of an important continuing investigation of other wrongdoers. Lam had been nominated by Bush and approved by the U.S. Senate in 2002.

SIDEBAR: Assault on U.S. Attorneys—The Corruption of American Justice

In addition to purging Carol C. Lam, the U.S. Attorney who led the successful criminal prosecution of Duke Cunningham, the Bush regime in early 2007 also axed at least eight other U.S. Attorneys for political reasons.

At the time of her termination, U.S. Attorney Lam was leading a massive investigation into public corruption that extended well beyond Abramoff and the successful Cunningham conviction, and reportedly included high officials in the Pentagon, the Congress, and perhaps the White House. Former CIA Executive Director Kyle “Dusty” Foggo resigned in May 2006 shortly after *The Wall Street Journal* reported that the U.S. Attorney’s office in San Diego—Lam’s office—was investigating whether Foggo illegally influenced the awarding of CIA contracts.

The San Diego investigators were trying to determine if defense contractors who bribed Cunningham had similar success with other congressmen. In early 2007 federal prosecutors issued subpoenas regarding influence peddling and special-interest earmarks to three House committees—armed services, appropriations and intelligence—after GOP leadership refused to release the information voluntarily.

Thanks to the outrage spawned by the sacking of Lam and other U.S. Attorneys, at least some of the prosecutorial efforts continued. In November 2007 Brent Wilkes was convicted of 13 felonies for bribing Cunningham in exchange for tens of millions of dollars in government contracts. It was even alleged that Wilkes set up a prostitution ring to provide prostitutes to Cunningham on demand.

U.S. Attorneys are supposed to be highly qualified, highly respected and fiercely independent. For good reason, they must be nonpartisan. By tradition, they are appointed by the president, are subject to confirmation by the Senate, and are not removed unless there is fraud or other serious cause. The Bush administration shattered that tradition by firing U.S. Attorneys across the country for political reasons under a cloud of secrecy, and then appointing interim U.S. Attorneys without Senate confirmation under a provision sneakily slipped into amendments to the Patriot Act.

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales’ office tried to cover its misdeeds by lying about the reasons for the terminations. Gonzales selectively lost his memory. However, as the conspiracy began to unravel, it became crystal clear that the terminations were not due to poor job performance. America’s system of federal criminal law enforcement, which lives and dies by its integrity and independence, had been undermined.

Have no doubt about it. America is living through the biggest scandals in the history of the U.S. Department of Justice, and the morale of the department is at an all-time low. Many books should be written about this malevolent and malignant period of nonstop GOP corruption that strikes at the heart of American jurisprudence and government. The U.S. Attorneys scandal is just one chapter, albeit an extremely important chapter, in the Bush regime’s despicable legacy of corruption and unconstitutional governance.

The principal incubators of the deadly disease are Bush, Cheney, Rove and Gonzales. The corrupt campaign by the Bush White House to politicize America's government extended even to the Department of Justice, and it will take years and many investigations for the entire truth to be uncovered.

The disease was nurtured and spread by numerous GOP congressmen who had grown accustomed to acting without ethical or legal boundaries. The notion of a "permanent GOP majority" undoubtedly further emboldened GOP politicians who had arrived in Washington with less than a full tank of ethics.

Here are just a few of the important threads in the broader U.S. Attorneys scandal:

- H. E. "Bud" Cummins, the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, was fired for the purpose of replacing him with an aide to Karl Rove, Timothy Griffin, who formerly was a political director for the Republican National Committee and an "opposition researcher" for Rove. On February 6, 2007, a senior Justice Department official, Paul McNulty, testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that Cummins had been dismissed without specific cause in order to give the position to the lawyer closely tied to the Bush White House. McNulty agreed in his testimony that Cummins had done nothing wrong to justify his removal. Cummins told the Senate committee that the deputy attorney general's top aide, Mike Elston, had threatened him if he "went public."
- Although the focus has been on the terminated U.S. Attorneys, why was the Bush regime apparently happy with the ones it didn't fire? Expect the criminal investigation and resignation of other U.S. Attorneys around the country.
- In Missouri, Bradley Schlozman was appointed to replace U.S. Attorney Todd Graves who had been forced out as part of a complex scheme to help the GOP win a pivotal U.S. Senate seat in Missouri in 2006. If the GOP scheme had been successful—the GOP lost the Senate race anyway in a very close election—the GOP would have retained control of the Senate (and the Senate's constitutional oversight role would still be in cold storage.) Graves has been termed the "ninth" U.S. Attorney in the unfolding scandal.
- Monica Goodling, the former Director of Public Affairs under Gonzales, is one of several Department of Justice employees near the center of the storm. Along with others, she apparently was involved in planning the U.S. Attorney dismissals, as well as subsequent efforts to obstruct justice and limit the damage. She invoked her Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination and refused to testify before Congress. Subsequently, the House Judiciary Committee on April 25, 2007, granted her immunity (which was approved by the U.S. District Court) and authorized a subpoena. Time will tell whether Goodling will truthfully tell what she knows, or instead will put loyalty ahead of truth and the best interests of America, the Department of Justice, and the U.S. Constitution.

- Goodling received her undergraduate degree in 1995 from Messiah College and her law degree in 1999 from Regent University Law School, which is ranked in the lowest tier of American law schools. Regent University was founded by Pat Robertson, who also serves as its chancellor. When the Bush regime put conservative credentials and appropriate religiosity ahead of relevant experience and academic achievement in its hiring decisions, the number of Regent graduates working in the federal government soared. Regent proudly claims that about 150 of its graduates have served in the Bush administration. The school's name was changed to Regent University in 1990 to acknowledge the sovereignty of God.
- Two GOP politicians from New Mexico, Senator Pete Domenici and Representative Heather Wilson, each telephoned then U.S. Attorney David Iglesias right before the November 2006 election, improperly asking about the investigation of a Democratic politician. As noted above, Iglesias was later fired.
- At least two of the terminated U.S. Attorneys (David Iglesias in New Mexico and John McKay in Washington State) believe Rove was behind the firings and that criminal charges could be brought against high-level personnel in the Department of Justice. "I think there will be a criminal case that will come out of this," McKay told *Seattle Times* journalists. "This is going to get worse, not better." Other U.S. Attorneys stepped forward with similar testimony. By the way, none of this testimony is partisan—Bush appointed all of the terminated U.S. Attorneys, and, as far as we know, all are Republicans.

Attorney General Gonzales and several of his subordinates disgraced themselves and the Department of Justice. In addition to obstructing justice, they took outrageous Alice-in-Wonderland positions on numerous critical issues, including torture and wiretaps, and misused both the Patriot Act and national security letters. Their assault on U.S. Attorneys and the integrity of criminal law enforcement is just one chapter in this sad history.

No one should be surprised that Gonzales became the worst Attorney General ever. After all, he worked for many years as the consigliere for the Confederate politico who became the worst American president ever.

Gonzales finally resigned and slithered out of town in September 2007, just ahead of the posse. Under pressure from both parties to resign, this lying political hack and war criminal should have been impeached, but—thanks to lethargic efforts of the Democratic leadership in Congress—Gonzo escaped this just remedy. Full investigation of Gonzales' crimes must nevertheless be aggressively pursued, even though Bush is likely to pardon him in order to silence this key Bush regime accomplice and enabler.

Gonzales caused unprecedented damage to the U.S. Department of Justice and the rule of law. He ran the department as a political tool of the White House, thus jeopardizing pending and future criminal prosecutions. Department morale plunged, and many career prosecutors quit. Although it isn't on the list of "Gonzo's 10 Worst Crimes," Gonzales' visit to a hospital on March 10, 2004, to take advantage of extremely sick and hospitalized John Ashcroft (then Attorney General) would provide good grist for a television series showcasing personal depravity.

As for the difficult job of extracting the truth from the Bush regime, White House counsel Fred Fielding in March 2007 offered the following “generous” compromise to the Senate Judiciary Committee. White House staff members Rove, William Kelley, Scott Jennings and Harriet Miers would testify before the committee, but only if:

- the testimonies are given in a private closed-door session,
- no transcript of the meeting is kept, and
- those testifying are not under oath.

Senator Patrick Leahy replied: “I don’t accept his offer. It is not constructive and it is not helpful to be telling the Senate how to do our investigation, or to prejudge its outcome Instead of freely and fully providing relevant documents to the investigating committees, they have only selectively sent documents, after erasing large portions that they do not want to see the light of day. Testimony should be on the record, and under oath.”

Impeachment of the Bush regime is long overdue.

Mark Foley: GOP Representative (1995-2006) from Florida. Foley resigned his House seat in September 2006 following publicity about his hitting on underage (and overage) male congressional pages, including sending numerous sexually explicit instant messages. Using that favorite dodge of GOP sinners, Foley cited an alcohol problem and checked himself into a rehab center. GOP leaders responsible for the page program and other GOP leaders including Speaker Dennis Hastert did nothing to stop Foley’s predatory tendencies and were eventually tainted by the scandal they covered up. Perhaps they relied upon Foley’s frequent promises “to turn over a new page.”

Don Sherwood: GOP Representative (1999-2007) from Pennsylvania. Another proud member of the “party of values,” Sherwood was defeated in the 2006 midterm elections. It didn’t help his reelection bid that he had recently settled a lawsuit by a mistress who claimed that he repeatedly assaulted her, including repeatedly choking and attempting to strangle her at his D.C. apartment. Sherwood denied any extra-marital affair when reports of the abuse surfaced, but he later admitted a five-year liaison. A host of GOP politicians, including strong-on-family-values George W. Bush and Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum, supported Sherwood’s losing reelection campaign. (In a landslide, Santorum also lost his 2006 bid for reelection.)

Richard Pombo: GOP Representative (1993-2007) from California. Pombo lost his reelection bid in 2006, largely because of a host of allegations of corruption, nepotism, misuse of government resources, and other sleazy activity. As one of many House members reportedly under investigation in the Abramoff corruption and influence peddling scandal, including the Indian lobbying scandal, Pombo apparently took about \$500,000 from Abramoff, more than that received by any other congressman. Bragging about the pork he brought home to his district probably didn’t

help Pombo's reelection campaign, and neither did his incredibly awful record on the environment.

Curt Weldon: GOP Representative (1987-2007) from Pennsylvania. Weldon lost his race for reelection in November 2006 by 12 percentage points, amid numerous media reports that the Justice Department and the FBI were investigating whether he unlawfully used his political influence to help one of his daughters secure lucrative consulting and lobbying contracts with foreign firms, including a Russian company called Itera International Energy Corporation. In October 2006 it was reported that the FBI raided the daughter's home, as well as several locations of associates of Weldon, searching for evidence, and that a grand jury proceeding had begun. *The Los Angeles Times* reported almost two years earlier, on February 20, 2004 (in a lengthy article entitled, "Lucrative Deals for a Daughter of Politics—Karen Weldon, whose dad is a Pennsylvania congressman, is a lobbyist for three foreign clients who need his help, and get it"), that all three known clients of the daughter's firm (a partnership called Solutions North America, or SNA, which she formed two years earlier when she was 28 years old) had connections to Weldon. For example, here is a summary of the Itera timeline: On September 24, 2002, Weldon co-hosted an event at the Library of Congress to honor Itera's chairman; two days later, Weldon gave a congressional floor speech praising Itera; and four days later, on September 30, his daughter's firm received a \$500,000 annual contract from Itera. The other two lucrative contracts obtained by Weldon's daughter were with: (1) another Russian firm, Saratov Aviation, which, after Congressman Weldon and his daughter visited Saratov's plant in Russia, signed a contract to pay her \$20,000 per month plus a 10% commission, and (2) Dragomir and Bogoljub Karic, associates of Slobodan Milosevic, who paid \$240,000 to the daughter's firm in March 2003. American intelligence officials had warned the congressman that the Karics were too close to Milosevic, who is infamous for the ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslav federation. The foregoing only scratches the surface of the various lobbying scandals associated with Curt Weldon.

John Doolittle: GOP Representative (since 1991) from California. Doolittle barely won reelection in 2006 with less than 50% of the vote, whereas he had won previous elections with about 65% of the vote. He won notwithstanding his connections to Abramoff and various corruption and ethics issues, including payments made to his wife relating to his campaign fundraising and political action committees. Doolittle is the subject of a federal investigation regarding his Abramoff relationship and has hired criminal defense attorneys. In April 2007 Doolittle gave up his seat on the House Committee on Appropriations after FBI agents searched his home in Northern Virginia. On the day of the FBI raid, Doolittle's former chief of staff, Kevin Ring, who had left Doolittle to work with Abramoff, resigned from a law firm in Washington. In September 2007 three aides to Doolittle—including his chief of staff, Ron Rogers, and his deputy chief of staff, Dan Blankenburg—were subpoenaed to testify before a federal grand jury in an investigation of ties Doolittle and his wife had to lobbyist Abramoff.

Rick Renzi: GOP Representative (since 2003) from Arizona. Renzi is facing a slew of allegations of corruption, including a land-swap deal and legislation he sponsored that benefited his father's company, ManTech International Corporation. His father, a retired major general in the U.S. Army, is Senior Executive Vice President of ManTech and also President of ManTech's Defense Systems Group. The Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington in a 2006 report named Renzi as one of the "20 Most Corrupt Members of Congress." He is under investigation, and the FBI raided his family business on April 19, 2007. Shortly thereafter, Renzi resigned from the House Intelligence Committee, and on August 23, 2007, he announced he would not seek reelection in 2008. Renzi is also connected to the U.S. Attorneys firing scandal. Paul Charlton, the U.S. Attorney for Arizona, in September 2006 opened a preliminary investigation into some of Renzi's activities, and almost immediately Charlton was added to a hit list of U.S. Attorneys to be purged. On September 13 Attorney General Gonzales' chief of staff, D. Kyle Sampson, wrote to White House Counsel Harriet Miers that Charlton was someone they "should now consider pushing out," and on December 7 the White House demanded his resignation without explanation. Charlton is a highly regarded professional and had consistently ranked among the best performing federal prosecutors.

David Vitter: GOP Senator (since 2005) and GOP Representative (1999-2005) from Louisiana. Serial john and adulterer David Vitter replaced disgraced "family values" GOP Congressman Bob Livingston in Louisiana's 1st district after Livingston resigned (in 1999) following his own adultery scandal, and who—serial adulterer Livingston, that is—in turn, as GOP Speaker-elect of the U.S. House of Representatives, had been slated to replace disgraced serial adulterer "family values" GOP House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and who—serial adulterer Gingrich that is—in turn had resigned in a self-inflicted cloud of GOP hypocrisy. Whew! Vitter's photograph should appear next to the definition of hypocrite in the dictionary, although he has countless other GOP leaders competing for this dubious honor. After being identified in July 2007 as a client of "D.C. Madam" Deborah Jean Palfrey's prostitution service in Washington, Vitter publicly acknowledged "a very serious sin in my past," went into seclusion for a week, and thereafter refused to talk about it. Vitter noted that he had "asked for and received forgiveness from God and my wife"—that's apparently enough for the GOP "family values" crowd in the U.S. Senate, which readily swallowed his explanation and welcomed him back with a standing ovation, even though prostitution is a crime and typically debases the paid participant. Many commentators correctly predicted that the GOP leadership—in sharp contrast with the way it handled Senator Larry Craig's scandal (see next paragraph)—would not call for Vitter's resignation from the U.S. Senate, for the simple reason that upon such a resignation the Governor of Louisiana—a Democrat—would appoint a replacement for Vitter until a special election could be held. In March 2007—just four months before Vitter's latest scandal erupted—serial adulterer Vitter announced his support for serial adulterer Rudy Giuliani in the 2008 presidential campaign, with Vitter serving as Giuliani's southern regional chair. Vitter is one of the most sanctimonious Bible thumpers and rightwing nuts in Congress. One wonders how much longer American voters and America's Big Media will allow the GOP to beat the "family values" drum.

Larry Craig: GOP Senator (since 1991) and GOP Representative (1981-1991) from Idaho. On June 11, 2007, Senator Larry “family values” Craig was arrested for lewd conduct in a men’s toilet at the Minneapolis airport, and on August 8 he pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct and paid a \$575 fine. After the Washington newspaper *Roll Call* on August 27 disclosed these events, Craig found himself on the proverbial hot toilet seat. At his “I am not gay, I never have been gay” news conference on August 28—and perhaps thinking he was auditioning for *Saturday Night Live*—Craig prefaced his prepared comments by thanking everyone present “for coming out today.” Indignant that they had been left out of the stall—well, out of the loop—GOP leaders quickly tried to flush Craig down the toilet, but Craig’s “wide stance” made that more difficult than expected—Craig soon reneged on his announced intention to resign from the Senate at the end of the month. The GOP and especially its Christian Reich cut their teeth bashing the GLBT community—while teaching self-hate and self-denial to millions of young Americans—and many of the GOP’s most venomous bashers are closeted self-haters and hypocrites. Let’s be clear. The issue here is not sex—it’s hypocrisy. The more your GOP politician or preacher talks about family values, the faster you should count the spoons. As for Craig, for some reason this “family values” senator stepped down from his senior position in the “family values” campaign of Mitt Romney—just as Florida State Representative Bob “Blow Job” Allen resigned his “family values” position as co-chair of John McCain’s presidential campaign in Florida. On the board of directors of the National Rifle Association since 1983, Craig is not a “straight shooter.” By the way, the controversy surrounding Craig goes back at least to the congressional page scandals of 1982—yes, page scandals have persisted for decades, without rectification, notwithstanding frequent GOP promises to “turn over a new page.”

Other GOP Crooks: Alas, there are numerous other Republicans in Congress who deserve to be added to the foregoing list. Regarding just the Abramoff scandal, at least two dozen more GOPers have ties to Abramoff’s web of influence-peddling associates. In addition, many GOP staffers and associates—too many to name here—have already been convicted of corruption charges.

Alas, it’s a safe bet that other GOP scandals will emerge before the ink is dry on the pages of this book.

Therefore, dear readers, here’s some space for you to jot down your “Top Five” favorites not previously mentioned:

My Favorite GOP Congressional Crooks, Criminals and Hypocrites:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

If you’re from the great state of Alaska—a place dear to your author’s heart ever since he worked in Alaska during a summer many years ago—you’ll probably want

to include at least two-thirds of Alaska's entire congressional delegation—GOP Senator Ted Stevens and GOP Representative Don Young—on your list of “Favorite GOP Crooks, Criminals and Hypocrites.”

The GOP Congress holds the record for highest “Grime Rate”—which is short for “GOP Crime Rate”—among all demographic groups in America. Only multimillionaire rightwing Christian media evangelists give GOP congressmen a serious run for their money—or your money, for that matter.

If the 109th GOP Congress of Crooks and Creeps had its own zip code, it would have the highest crime rate in America, and the dollars involved would be orders of magnitude greater than that stolen in total by *all* of America's run of the mill criminals. The best way to lower the crime rate—and the Grime Rate—in the city of Washington and in America is to stop electing GOP politicians.

But the problem is not just a few bad apples like Bush and the congressional rogues mentioned above. The problem is the Republican Party itself, which has lost its way and is rotten to the core. America finally began to wake up in 2006 when it ended GOP control of both houses of Congress.

The GOP's Destruction of America's Constitutional Democracy

Never has Washington been so controlled by Big Money. By carrying the banner of the Super Rich and huge corporations Bush and the Cons raised record amounts of campaign funds. One hand washes the other. In the Cons' Washington, legislation is frequently drafted without any public input other than that of lobbyists for big business and the Super Rich. Large corporations have far more lobbyists in Washington than Congress has staff members.

When *Profiles in Corruption* is written about the Bush regime and its cronies, it will be an encyclopedia set, not a single volume. In sharp contrast, John F. Kennedy, who wrote the inspirational *Profiles in Courage*, never suffered an approval rating below 56%, notwithstanding the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961. Kennedy, a Catholic, represented all the people, not just Catholics.

For good reason, the GOP Congress operating during Bush's administration was known as a “do nothing Congress.” It refused to hold even one comprehensive hearing into the wartime failures of the Bush administration. Abandoning facts and critical thinking, the GOP Congress blindly supported Bush's “stay the course” plan of waste, fraud and failure in Iraq. The GOP refused to investigate anything that might embarrass Bush, the GOP, or their well-heeled masters.

For example, between 1997 and 2002, the GOP-controlled House Government Reform Committee issued more than 1,052 subpoenas regarding alleged misconduct by the Clinton administration and the Democratic Party, but as of late 2005 the committee had issued only *three* subpoenas to the Bush administration, and none of the three related to Iraq. (Two subpoenas went to the Energy Department regarding nuclear waste disposal at Yucca Mountain, and one went to the Defense Department regarding Hurricane Katrina documents.)

Although the acts of corruption by individual members of Congress are despicable, the GOP collectively did several orders of magnitude greater damage to America and the U.S. Constitution by rubber stamping every madness of the Bush administration and by abdicating its constitutional oversight role regarding war and the execu-

tive branch. The GOP became a de facto coconspirator in a systematic cover-up for the most corrupt and incompetent government in U.S. history. The Cons simply cannot be trusted to govern for the greater good. They cannot be trusted to defend America against threats, both domestic and foreign. They cannot be trusted to respect and protect America's Constitution and democracy.

U.S. troops stand out as the one bright exception in a sea of American and Iraqi corruption in Iraq. Iraqis widely regard U.S. troops as highly competent, trustworthy and dedicated professionals, even though the vast majority of Iraqis want America to remove its forces. In sharp contrast, the Bush administration and its private blood-sucking profiteers, as well as Iraqi politicians and Iraqi security forces, are widely viewed as incompetent and corrupt, seeking only what is best for themselves.

America desperately needs an independent Truman-style commission to root out waste, corruption, incompetence and war profiteering in America's war efforts. Such a commission would attempt to make government and contractors accountable to taxpayers. Truman, a Democrat, headed what became known as the Truman Commission in World War II during the Democratic administration of Franklin Roosevelt, and his respected nonpartisan efforts helped the war cause and America's troops, in addition to propelling him on a path to the White House.

In contrast, the Republican Party has blocked all attempts to create a Truman-style commission, or any kind of commission, regarding corruption in the conduct of America's current wars. For example, in May 2005 the GOP-controlled House voted 224-196 along party lines to prevent such a commission.

The first congressional hearings regarding fraud and corruption in Iraq began only after the Democratic Congress took control in January 2007. Only then did the true extent of the Bush administration's corruption and utter incompetence begin to emerge.

For example, the Bush administration has been unable and unwilling to account for billions of dollars in cash shipped to Iraq shortly after the 2003 invasion. In 2005 the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction reported that America's provisional authority in Iraq, which was run by Paul Bremer, could not account for more than \$8 billion of Iraqi oil revenues previously held by the United States. But the curiously uncurious Republican Congress sat on its hands.

The awful truth began to surface only after the new Democratic Congress starting investigations in early 2007. What did happen to the 363 tons of cash from the Federal Reserve Bank that had been flown to Iraq on 484 pallets in 2003? Investigators reported that one huge outlay of \$500 million in cash was explained in the coalition authority's books with only a one-word entry, "security." That's it, just one word explaining what happened to \$500 million dollars in cash blowin' in the wind. There is *no* documentation for it or for another ten huge disbursements ranging from \$120 million to \$900 million each.

According to the investigators, Bremer's provisional authority gave about \$12 billion in cash to questionable Iraqi authorities and other recipients, with much of the cash being stuffed in duffle bags and doled out of the back of pickups. When you try to visualize \$12 billion, you might try to imagine 12,000 stacks of \$1,000,000 each, all in crisp new U.S. \$100 bills.

It's a safe bet that a big chunk of the cash was used to fund militants who killed Iraqis and American soldiers.

The GOP's recent rise to power began in 1994 when it seized control of the House under the banner of its Contract with America, better termed its Contract *on* America. The many signing GOP congressmen promised term limits of 12 years for themselves, but many ignored this promise 12 years later during the 2006 midterm elections.

Running on "values" in 1994, the GOP promptly forgot and broke their campaign promises and became the Carpenters of Corruption, proceeding over the next dozen years to turn America's government into a cesspool where the sleazy profited and traditional American values died.

The 1994 GOP gang had complained endlessly about the amount of pork passed by the preceding Democratic Congress, but the new GOP—the "Gang Of Porkers"—promptly took pork to the moon, as part of its broader campaign to turn Washington into a public trough for generous lobbyists, the wealthy and favored corporate interests.

An October 2004 article in the *Boston Globe* pointed out that congressional conference committees, which reconcile differences between Senate and House versions of legislation and which were given greatly expanded powers, added a record 3,407 pork barrel projects to the year's federal budget. In comparison, the joint panel added just 47 such projects in 1994, the last year Congress was controlled by the Democratic Party. Pork projects, including an explosion of earmarks, are snuck into legislation at the last minute, without identifying the politicians pushing the particular pork, and they are not debated beforehand.

Far more damaging, the GOP leadership fundamentally changed the way Congress did business, and in the process made America's democracy a laughing-stock. The GOP leadership controlled everything. Time for debate in Congress was cut drastically. Congress set records for fewest days in session. Amendments on the floor were rarely permitted. Legislators intentionally were not given time to read favored special-interest legislation being rammed through. For example, members of Congress were given only one day to read the Medicare bill that exceeded 400 pages.

Democrats were largely excluded from conference committee meetings that previously had been bipartisan. Major pieces of legislation were drafted in private sessions that excluded Democrats. "Debate" meant the minority party would be told after the fact what the GOP had decided. "Reaching across the aisle" meant the minority party should bend over and reach for the KY jelly.

The legislative process was changed and manipulated to ensure that the GOP leadership alone controlled what bills reached the floor. Even legislation supported by a *bipartisan* majority of the House did not reach the floor unless the GOP kingpins wanted it there. If Bush opposed certain legislation, the GOP leadership would ensure that no vote took place, even if a bipartisan majority in the House supported the legislation. Legislation was decided in backrooms before it reached the floor for "debate" and vote.

Favored lobbyists were given unprecedented access and control, and they frequently wrote their own laws, which saved the time of lazy corrupt GOP congressmen and their staffers. Secrecy ruled. The legislative process was defiled.

The GOP dimmed the lights and closed the doors on open government. America became a Banana Republic run by Banana Republicans. Huge defense appropriation bills were railroaded through with the time for consideration and debate cut to a small fraction of what was previously customary. Defense profiteers and the GOP donor class were protected and pampered with special access. Legislators of both parties complained that they didn't really know what they were voting for or against.

SIDEBAR: Hurricane Katrina—A Costly Lesson in GOP Corruption and Incompetence

The chickens came home to roost when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in late August 2005. Political hacks in FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) who had been selected because of their political loyalty and ideology, not their expertise and experience, failed the citizens of the Gulf Coast, especially the residents of New Orleans and coastal Louisiana and Mississippi. In addition to illuminating the incompetence of the Bush administration, Katrina exposed the underbelly of GOP economic policies that favor the Super Rich and punish America's middle- and lower-income workers, especially Americans of color most in need.

Yes, racism is alive and well in Bush's America. Although most Confederate Party members are not racists, the Confederate Party can claim the loyalty of a huge supermajority of those voters who are. America's friends shook their heads in amazement as they watched Bush turn off the power on America's once-bright beacon of justice and opportunity.

Katrina shocked America's friends, especially because America for many decades had ably and generously answered the call throughout the world in times of natural disaster. But Bush and "his people" saw Katrina as an opportunity to establish a pork barrel at FEMA and push through unrelated legislation for their own benefit. The battered Gulf Coast needed a government that could fix things, but Bush's people knew only how to fix contracts.

The following is what two *Republicans* said about FEMA's Katrina performance, as reported by *The New York Times* on June 27, 2006. "This started off as a disaster-relief program, but it turned into a cash cow," said Representative Michael McCaul (R-TX), then chairman of a House panel investigating Katrina waste and fraud. "The blatant fraud, the audacity of the schemes, the scale of the waste—it is just breathtaking," declared Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), chairwoman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

Seeing Bush's response to Katrina, Americans began wondering more about homeland security too, especially since Bush claimed that America's security was his administration's "number one job." Now, that is scary. You can bet the farm that mountains of additional evidence of raw greed and incompetence will surface in the years ahead—like puss oozing from a gangrene wound—as more and more of Bush's own appointees and other U.S. employees find the courage to tell their truths.

Consider the Department of Homeland Security. Under Bush, it has a workforce with terrible morale, ranking 29th out of 30 in a 2005 survey of employee satisfaction, including 29th in both “effective leadership” and “teamwork.”

Another major-league eye opener came on December 5, 2005, in the form of a final “report card” from the bipartisan 9/11 Commission regarding the dismal performance of the Bush administration and GOP Congress in implementing the commission’s counter-terrorism recommendations. The report card included 5 F’s, 12 D’s, two “incompletes,” and only one A (an A minus.) The Bush administration opposed the creation of the commission in the first place, and acquiesced only because of intense pressure from the families of 9/11 victims. Its failure to implement the commission’s recommendations and protect the American people should not have surprised anyone.

GOP Corruption and Incompetence Exported to Iraq

The corruption and incompetence of the GOP Congress contributed directly to both the Iraq war and its corrupt and incompetent execution.

A Congress of just average integrity and competence would almost certainly have prevented the Iraq war. But the do-nothing-good GOP Congress supported every White House madness, helped fuel fear, and “debated” only two days before rubber stamping the Iraq war.

Also, a Congress of just average integrity and competence would have fulfilled, or at least tried to fulfill, its constitutional obligation to oversee the executive branch and the conduct of the Iraq war. But the GOP Congress refused to hold even one oversight hearing regarding the rampant waste and fraud in Iraq, thus allowing Iraq to become a magnet for corrupt contractors and incompetent political appointees. It allowed Iraq to descend into that hell known as Bush’s Iraq.

Given the passage of time, it is most unlikely that justice will ever be served regarding the fraud and corruption in Iraq, even if the investigations that began only after the GOP lost control of Congress in 2006 are permitted to run their course. There is the risk that the American public as well as its Democratic leaders will grow weary of the onslaught of sleaze uncovered and just want to forget and move on. That would be a tragic mistake.

Here are some examples of the Bush League mess in Iraq:

- The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) run by Paul Bremer was a free-wheeling government of corruption and incompetence, two areas in which Iraqi politicians and bureaucrats needed no encouragement. The CPA hired employees based on political correctness, not experience and expertise. Young and clueless rightwingers from America were on the loose.
- Rajiv Chandrasekaran, the Baghdad bureau chief for *The Washington Post*, revealed in his 2006 book, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, that job applicants who wanted to help run post-invasion Iraq were even asked for their opinions of *Roe v. Wade* and for whom they voted in America’s 2000 presidential election. This is both illegal and un-American.

- Most of \$18 billion in U.S. reconstruction funds was wasted. The Bush government's refusal to prosecute American firms accused of corruption turned Iraq into a "free fraud zone," according to Frank Willis, a senior advisor to the CPA when it ran Iraq into the ground. In early 2005 Willis compared Iraq to the "wild west," and said prophetically that the "corruption will only get worse." And it did, GOP style.
- Oil smuggling and other types of corruption are "a second insurgency" in Iraq reported Stuart Bowen, Jr., a GOP appointee who served as the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) and was responsible for auditing Iraq's reconstruction efforts since 2004. In late 2006 he agreed with the assessment that corruption had gotten so bad that it threatened the survival of the Iraqi state. Bowen is not a leftie out to get Bush. To the contrary, he is a GOP lawyer who campaigned for Bush and was in the army of GOP lawyers who helped Bush steal the election in Florida in 2000.
- Incredibly, the GOP-controlled Congress passed legislation, signed by Bush in October 2006, that included a provision to eliminate Bowen's oversight position by killing his oversight agency, the Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. Over objections of Democratic minority members, GOP members of the House Armed Services Committee slipped the sneaky provision into a massive military authorization bill at the last minute. After all, oversight is not compatible with war profiteering. Fortunately, public indignation and the realities of the 2006 midterm elections helped to reverse the travesty, and Bowen stayed on the job.
- Bowen made the mistake of trying to do an honest professional job in Iraq, with a focus on reducing corruption and improving the efficiency of reconstruction efforts. Because his periodic reports embarrassed the Bush administration and GOP-connected firms like Halliburton, Bechtel, DynCorp and Parsons, Bowen in effect pinned a bull's eye on his own back, and GOP operatives were more than eager to insert a dagger.
- "It appears to me that the administration wants to silence the messenger that is giving us information about waste and fraud in Iraq," said Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA), who later became Chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.
- Asking the GOP Senate and GOP House of Representatives to investigate the Bush regime was like asking Vito and Michael Corleone to investigate the Mafia.
- Here's how it works. Let's say you're a Republican in Congress. And let's say you're a crook. Oops, sorry, that's redundant.
- Just kidding. Yes, there are many GOP members of Congress who technically are not crooks. However—not kidding—whether crooks or not, they aided the looting of both America and Iraq by not doing their jobs, by actively preventing the legislative branch from doing its job, by rubber stamping every action of their GOP leaders and the Bush White House—whether moral or immoral, whether legal or illegal—including both the decision to wage war on Iraq and its incompetent execution, including bankrupting

America by not paying for one penny of the war's cost, and including the shredding of the U.S. Constitution.

- The Bush League corruption and incompetence gave comfort to America's enemies, helping to fund Iraqi insurgents in countless ways. Even American weapons were not adequately safeguarded. Bowen's office reported that 14,000 weapons paid for by the United States could not be accounted for. In violation of U.S. law, no record of serial numbers was kept for more than 96% of the weapons distributed, thus making it impossible to determine the source of stolen weapons later recovered by U.S. forces.
- Later, in August 2007, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) announced that the Pentagon could not account for 30% of the weapons distributed in Iraq during the previous three years. The GAO estimated that 110,000 AK-47s and 80,000 pistols were included in the missing weapons. It is widely believed that many of these weapons are being used against American troops in Iraq.
- Although Bush and the GOP did not create the preexisting religious, tribal and ethnic tensions in Iraq, these unknowing, uncaring, irresponsible fools eagerly put the match to the powder keg, and their relentless incompetence just added fuel to the resulting fiery holocaust. Iraqis rightly expected so much more from America, but our Bush League government let them down. Bush's America is not the America of our fathers, or the America that Bush inherited when he became president.
- However much Bush and the GOP screwed America, they screwed the Iraqi people a thousand times more—without ever killing in Iraq a single criminal responsible for 9/11. Not one. Americans cannot imagine the horror unleashed by Bush's and the GOP's War on Iraq.
- Companies like Cheney's Halliburton and KBR needed no encouragement to commit fraud, but the Bush administration and the GOP Congress nevertheless helped them. No-competitive-bid contracts encouraged war profiteering, as did contracts that encouraged waste and fraud by guaranteeing a profit equal to a percentage of total cost. Because "perfectly legal" crony deals virtually ensured fat contracts with fat profits, the thousands of contractors who milked the system had no compelling reason to commit outright fraud, but many did so anyway. Greed has no limits.
- The Bush administration divided Iraq into "no competition" sectors and gave the work to nine large U.S. companies. Most of their contracts were awarded on a cost-plus basis, thus reducing the risk and jacking up the profits. It became the antithesis of "free enterprise"—the new GOP paradigm was "freebie enterprise."
- "GOP" now stands for "Gang of Plunderers."
- Many thousands of contractors feed at the GOP public trough in Iraq. No one knows the exact number.

SIDEBAR: Creation of Massive Patronage System Loyal to the GOP

Upon assuming power in 2001 the Bush administration immediately embarked on a political mission to replace America's civil service system based on expertise with a massive patronage system based on political ideology and loyalty to the Republican Party.

The Heritage Foundation, a rightwing "think tank," helped provide the framing for the new corrupt structure.

Everything was driven by divisive politics. Professional expertise took second seat to political hacks. Truth took second seat to ideology. Witness the U.S. intelligence function. Witness the military, yes, incredibly, even the military.

One key Bush initiative was to outsource as much federal work as possible to private contractors who could be counted on to fund the GOP and its cronies. While talking about the benefits of bringing competition to the game, the Bush administration did the opposite. *The New York Times* reported in early 2007 that "fewer than half of all 'contract actions'—new contracts and payments against existing contracts—are now subject to full and open competition," a big drop from 79% in 2001.

To be clear, the GOP's intent was *not* to increase competition in order to drive better performance and lower costs. The goal was to reduce competition, or to eliminate competition entirely, in order to steer fat contracts and fat profits to politically loyal corporations and executives in a vast, morally corrupt, patronage system.

The result is that the Bush administration sabotaged the performance and cost effectiveness of America's government in both: (1) the work provided by America's civil service professionals, *and* (2) the work provided by outside contractors. The cancer spread both domestically and internationally. Witness Katrina. Witness Iraq.

- In spite of blatant conflicts of interest, the Bush administration hired CACI International (which was notorious for supplying private interrogators to Abu Ghraib) to handle cases of fraud and incompetence by private contractors in Iraq. This was like hiring Jack the Ripper to investigate sexual predator cases. Rubbing salt in the wounds, CACI charged \$104 an hour, according to *The New York Times*.
- With clumsy assistance from America's occupation authority, the new Iraqi government became one of the most corrupt in the world. By 2006 Iraq had dropped to a tie for second worst in an international index that measures corruption (kickbacks, embezzlement, bribery, etc.) in 163 nations. Only Haiti had a worse score in this survey conducted by Transparency International in Germany, which combined the results of 12 surveys of country experts and businessmen over a two-year period. Primary victims of this corruption are the poor. The chairwoman of Transparency International, Huguette Labelle, noted that the misappropriation of government funds "feeds a vicious circle, where those with access to funds or bribes take what they

can, because they can, locking the poor in poverty.” Her words sound like the GOP’s mission statement for the world.

- The United States dropped three places to 20th place in the same corruption index, hardly a coincidence, since America’s Republican Party and the Iraqi successor to Saddam’s Republican Guard operate like Republican Siamese twins.
- A GlobeScan poll of 26,000 people in 25 nations, released in January 2007, showed a sharp deterioration during the previous two years in global opinion of America’s foreign policy. Almost half of those polled believe America played a mainly negative role in the world. Almost 75% disapproved of Bush’s policies regarding Iraq.
- By early 2007 Iraqis were receiving about 7 hours of electricity per day, with the average in Baghdad being only 4.4 hours, much less than that under Saddam’s rule. Bowen, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, reported to Congress in January 2007 that, despite more than \$4 billion in U.S. funds being allocated to the problem, Iraq’s nationwide electricity output had fallen below the prewar level of 4,200 megawatts. How did the Bush administration respond to this embarrassing fact? The State Department cagily eliminated the *prewar* electricity output line from its standard weekly report on Iraq’s electricity production, thus eliminating the unfavorable comparison. Spin is everything.
- Iraq’s drinking water suffered greatly during Bush’s reign. By 2007 only 4.6 million of Iraq’s 26 million people had access to safe drinking water. In 2007 there was a new outbreak of cholera in Iraq.
- Congress initially granted \$18 billion for Iraq’s reconstruction, but almost all of it was wasted. You may recall images of contractors playing football with bundles of new \$100 bills.
- Thousands of members of the Mahdi Army and other militias who attack American troops are paid a monthly salary with funds diverted from the Iraqi government.
- Although Americans are largely kept in the dark, the Iraqi people experience first hand the Bush League corruption and incompetence, as well as that of Iraq’s government. A poll conducted in late 2006 by the Iraq Center for Research and Strategic Studies found that “about 90% of Iraqis feel the situation in the country was better before the U.S.-led invasion than it is today.”
- Although it took several years, a substantial majority of the American public eventually became fed up with Bush’s incompetence and deceit regarding Iraq. They lost faith in him and his plans for Iraq. A late 2006 CNN poll found that only 11% of Americans supported his so-called *surge* plan to send thousands more American troops to Baghdad. As for the rest of Bush’s feeble coalition in Iraq, the Bush League of Nations, not a single member offered even one additional soldier to the surge—they in fact “de-surged.”

Bush’s Golden Rule is: “He who has the gold makes the rules.” And they do. Never have the Super Rich done better in America, even though the nation is at war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Bush destroyed America's tradition that all citizens should contribute and sacrifice when America is at war. Personally an expert on government freebies and exemptions from sacrifice, Bush not only gave the Super Rich an exemption from pain during this time of war, he also gave them hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks. War is profitable for Bush's Chosen People. Thanks to Bush, the GOP's "Two Americas" plan, which was started by Reagan, continues to work miracles.

The Bush administration, the Bush family and their cronies are experts at public trough dining. In Bush's America, personal success is far less dependent upon education and hard work than it is upon family connections, cronyism and pulling government strings. Bush's entire life, especially his business career, is living proof that *Affirmative Action for the Privileged* works.

Our British allies know that "W" stands for "wonga," which is British schoolboy slang for money, lots of money.

There are countless huge companies that rely upon cronyism and government connections for success. Most of their activities are perfectly legal, which is understandable since the U.S. Congress works for them.

Many of these companies reek of the revolving door syndrome. Consider The Carlyle Group, a fabulously successful private company that has done very well in government business. It has had a political *Who's Who* on its payroll, including the likes of a former American president (George H. W. Bush),¹³⁵ a former British prime minister, various U.S. secretaries of defense, state, and treasury, senior CIA and SEC officials, and so forth.

Carlyle is an important conduit and door opener for anyone wanting to do serious business with the U.S. Government, especially defense work. Imagine running a legitimate small or mid-sized company that is trying to compete in federal contracting against firms connected to Carlyle. With the GOP in charge, connections count more than excellent products and services at competitive prices.

Foreign businessmen and government officials could logically conclude that Carlyle is part of the U.S. Government or acting for it. Its offices are conveniently located on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington about halfway between the Capitol building and the White House.

Members of bin Laden's family were investors in Carlyle until the embarrassment of 9/11 caused them to liquidate their investment.

Bush the Father kept his position with Carlyle until late 2003 when the sunlight of public scrutiny caused him to leave. Bush the Son also has had connections to Carlyle.

We mention Carlyle here in passing simply to highlight the cronyism, conflicts of interests, abuse of America's taxpayers, and greed that characterize the leeches attached to America's government and its operations in Iraq. One excellent book that focuses on Carlyle is *The Iron Triangle—Inside the Secret World of The Carlyle Group*, by Dan Briody.

Bush believes with all his heart and soul that The Carlyle Group represents the way America should be run. After all, it has worked well for his family for decades.

¹³⁵ In sharp contrast, Jimmy Carter, a Christian who believes in family values, works for organizations such as Habitat For Humanity.

Bush has no sympathy for low- and middle-income working Americans who are too lazy or too dumb to snatch the low-hanging gold apples like his family does.¹³⁶

We conclude this chapter with a sidebar about W's younger brother Neil, who does not get the attention he deserves.

SIDEBAR: All in the Bush Family: Valuables over Values

Neil Bush, the son of one president and the brother of another, has led a life of crony capitalism, taking advantage of his family name and America, and costing American taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. Nevertheless, the extent of his shady business and political activities appear limited when compared to those of his more prominent relatives.

Perhaps Neil's success has been limited because he does not receive the massive favorable publicity that the American media routinely heap upon other members of his extended family. In fact, he gets little coverage at all. This is unfair—America's rightwing royalty is entitled to better treatment from Big Media. After all, Neil does share the same lust for valuables that preoccupies his extended family. Therefore, in the interest of fairness, let's check in on Neil and see how he's doing.

To Neil Bush's credit, he has wisely learned to rely upon family and political connections for "success" rather than business skills he doesn't have. The only business skill he does appear to have is one he shares with his brother Dubya—the ability to run businesses into the ground.

You perhaps last heard about Neil in the 1980s in connection with Silverado Savings and Loan in Denver, Colorado. At age 30 and with no relevant business experience,¹³⁷ Neil was appointed to the board of directors of Silverado.

He and his cronies then looted Silverado, and although dimwitted Neil personally ended up with little of the loot, the total cost to U.S. taxpayers was \$1.3 billion. That's not a typo—it's \$1.3 billion, not \$1.3 million. That's more than *four times* the *total worldwide annual budget* of the U.S. Peace Corps.

You may wonder how this \$1.3 billion loss at the Denver S&L compares with the *total* amount stolen by criminals in *all* bank robberies in the state of Colorado in one year. Well, Neil wins "hands down," or rather, "hands up." The Silverado loss was *hundreds* of times greater than the total annual haul by all bank robbers in Colorado.

¹³⁶ Bush's two-decades long college career of drinking, drugging and partying ended after he had several walks in 1985 with Billy Graham, who was visiting the family in Kennebunkport, Maine. Bush must be thinking, "Why aren't them average lunch-pail Americans ... you know, the lazy poor and coloreds ... I mean, the blacks and browns and greens ... smart enough to use Billy like I do?"

¹³⁷ Neil undoubtedly had some experience in cashing checks and spending money he never earned, and perhaps he knew something about trust accounts. This all could be important in the banking business.

Thinking bigger, you might then compare Neil Bush's accomplishment with *all* the bank robberies in the *entire* United States for one *entire* year. Again, Neil wins, "hands up." Stunningly, it's not even close. According to FBI statistics, in 2001 a bank robbery occurred approximately every 52 minutes in the United States, and the total annual net loss was \$70 million.

This means that the out-of-pocket cost to U.S. taxpayers of the looting and bankruptcy of federally-insured Silverado by Neil Bush and his cronies was more than *18 times* the total amount stolen by all bank robbers in the United States in an entire year! And some people say Neil doesn't know jack about business.

In retrospect, the FBI could have saved American taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars through better 24-hour surveillance tactics, say, by permanently handcuffing two of its agents to Neil Bush and to each of his cronies.

Rather than focusing relentlessly on smalltime bank robbers, the FBI should reassign a few professionals—say, 90% of its thousands of law enforcement officers who now work on bank robberies—to investigate and police the Bush family and its extended gang of GOP cronies and white collar criminals. Law enforcement should work where the big criminals work. It should fish where the big fish swim.

By the way, the average "take" for robberies in America is about \$1,000 per robbery, with convenience store robberies coming in at about \$400 to \$600, less than one-tenth the average take from a bank robbery (which is about \$5,000 to \$7,000.) Street muggings average only about \$50.¹³⁸

If you're a bank bandit or convenience store robber, or even a lowly mugger, you might be thinking, "Hey, I'm in the wrong gang. I should marry into the Bush crime family and enjoy some of those Bush family valuables."

Well, be careful what you wish for. Neil went through an ugly divorce in 2003, and the messy divorce papers disclosed just some of the trials and tribulations of being born into the Bush family, or worse yet, marrying into this crime family.

One of the more outrageous revelations in Neil Bush's divorce papers is his morally corrupt business deal in 2002 with Grace Semiconductor Manufacturing, a company backed by Jiang Mianheng, the son of Jiang Zemin, the former president and dictator of communist China. Under this deal, Neil would receive \$2 million in company stock over five years, even though Neil has no skills relating to the company's business. In questioning Neil about this surprisingly lucrative deal, the divorce attorney for his former wife asked Neil, "You have absolutely no educational background in semiconductors, do you?" Neil replied, "That's correct."

¹³⁸ It's data like this that may have caused Neil to focus wisely on banking. A mugger would have to do a mugging *49 times every minute*, 24 hours every day, for an entire year to get to \$1.3 billion! Perhaps Neil took and perfected the advice of the famous bank robber Willie Sutton. According to banking legend, when Sutton was asked why he robbed banks, he replied, "because that's where the money is." Likewise, GOP cronies and thieves go to Congress because that's where the money is.

Just for fun, you might try to make an easy couple of million dollars in stock by writing to the headquarters of Grace Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation in Mainland China and asking for the same deal that Neil Bush got. Perhaps you should lie and tell them you are a member of the Communist Party, or second best, the Republican Party. Here's the address:

Grace Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation

818 Guo Shou Jing Road
Zhangjiang Hi-Tech Park
Shanghai, 201203
People's Republic of China
Address in Chinese:

中国上海

张江高科技区

郭守敬路 818 号

Disclaimer: The "Neil Bush Deal" may be limited to people who have at least as much experience in semiconductors as Neil Bush. But don't worry—this won't disqualify you, or anyone else.

Neil also admitted that during his marriage he had sex with several prostitutes while on business in Asia. He said the women would just knock on his hotel room door, come in, and have sex with him. Since they never asked for money, he never paid them, and he thus didn't know if they were prostitutes. My goodness, didn't he even tip them? Whatever happened to Texan etiquette and Southern hospitality?

These salacious items about Bush family values are just some tidbits from Neil's divorce papers, and they came to light only because of the divorce.

Well, that's enough about Neil Bush. No, wait—let's include a few more nasty nuggets, just for fun.

Neil Bush has lots of crony ties with other unusual or bizarre people—all *rich* people, of course. As a member of the Bush clan, he is attracted to sleazy deals like a moth to a flame. He toured Asia with Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the Korean billionaire and self-proclaimed Messiah of the Korea-based Unification Church. Bush's parents, Barbara and George Bush, also have substantial ties to Moon and have received millions of dollars from him for speaking engagements and other "services." Moon is the self-proclaimed Messiah of the world and has supported many dictators and fascist leaders. He claims he helped Hitler and Stalin be "reborn as new persons."

Moon claims that he, not Jesus, is the hope of the entire world. Why do the Bush family and the Cons love him? Because valuables trump values—money trumps Christ.

Moon has a large financial empire including ownership of the *Washington Times*, which should not be confused with the *Washington Post* or the *New York Times*. The *Washington Times* masquerades as a newspaper and can be relied upon to create extreme rightwing propaganda supporting the Cons and the Bush regime. Moon covers the huge operating losses of the newspaper, which total more than one billion dollars since its inception in 1982.

Moon's bizarre teachings and activities, including his inroads into the Bush family and the Bush White House, are too numerous to attempt to summarize here. He and his "Moonies" are a special danger to gullible young people. But the Bush family loves Moon, and Bush the Father even referred to Moon as a "man of vision." If you are not very familiar with Rev. Sun Myung Moon, please spend a few minutes Googling Moon and Bush.

To raise money for his software company, Ignite!—the so-called learning systems company—Neil Bush traveled around Russia with the infamous Boris Berezovsky, a shady Russian who sought asylum in London to avoid arrest by Russian authorities for fraud and conspiracy. Bush also obtained several million dollars for Ignite! from United Arab Emirates investors eager to ingratiate themselves with the brother of America's president. Incidentally, Neil's company obtained lucrative No Child Left Behind Act contracts in Texas, Florida and other states.

In 2005 Barbara Bush, the former first lady, made a tax-deductible donation to the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund in an undisclosed amount, and, oddly, specifically instructed that the funds be spent with Ignite!, the educational software company owned by her son Neil. What a nifty way to give a tax-deductible allowance to your adult child! Is there no shame in this family?

Well, it must be tough being a Bush and living with the family lies. One of the most devious of the lies—which appears prominently in the political campaign of any Bush family member—is that this first family of sleaze somehow stands for appropriate family values in America. Well, don't let them speak for you. Don't let them try to teach you anything about values. The Bush family stands for family *valuables* for themselves and the Super Rich at the expense of everyone else.

Remember that when George W. Bush says family "values," the synapses in his brain are just misfiring again, and he really means family "valuables"—that is, valuables for his family. Being weak on the real issues that matter most to America, Bush and the GOP simply pick family values as a wedge issue. This is profoundly outrageous.

Like we said, if any progressive family in North Dakota or Massachusetts somehow got infected with the family values of the Bush family, and the neighbors found out, the family would have to leave the state in shame in the middle of the night and move to a red zone in Texas. That's the law.

So don't let the Bush family or any other Cons try to teach you or your children about proper family values. Just remember the official motto of the Bush family and its party: "Rich in Valuables, Poor in Values."