

 **KARL ROVE**

Last but not least comes the only man arguably owed as much for Shrub's ludicrous but dangerous political career as his daddy, Karl Rove, the man best described as "Bush's Brain." (Somebody has to fill that void.)

While Bush likes to feign being a "shoot-from-the-hip" kind of guy, this is disproved by former insiders' accounts. For example, John Dilulio, a former Bush advisor and director of the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives, told *Esquire*: "There is no precedent in any modern White House for what is going on in this one: a complete lack of a policy apparatus. What you've got is everything—and I mean everything—being run by the political arm."

Dilulio describes Rove and his minions as the "Mayberry Machiavellis," unscrupulous architects of simplistic policies. Politics in the Bush White House is a game of cynical reductionism and demagoguery.

Part of the game is hardball, an area of expertise of Karl Rove. The crude smearing of John McCain during the 2000 GOP primaries was his project. And whether or not Rove leaked to the press that Joseph Wilson's wife was a CIA agent, he did call other journalists afterwards to declare her "fair game." Of course, Rove may have become (like Bush) power-drunk from his success. His gloating smile from the pages of *Esquire* and *Time* seems to exceed even Shrub's in smugness. Unfortunately for him, he may have taken his scheming too far: besides his involvement in Leakgate, Rove's plotting appears to be all over the backfired "Mission Accomplished" stunt by Top Gun Bush.

The last test for Rove's shameless ploys before the 2004 election will come in September 2004, during the GOP convention. The convention will take place in New York City, later than usual. The September 2 date for the last day of the convention comes strate-

gically near the third anniversary of 9/11. With the powerful memories of the day still in people's minds, Bush will be there wearing that shit-eating smirk as the Republicans lay claim to God and country. That's not the only thing they'll be claiming: New York Governor George Pataki has arranged for the laying of the cornerstone of reconstruction at ground zero to occur during the GOP Convention. In the *New York Times*, Rove could barely conceal his glee at the plan, which he described as a "checkmate result."

In *New York Magazine*, Michael Tomasky wrote, with rightful outrage, "you might think that someone in the media would step in and say, just for the record, and just in case they are considering it, what everyone who gave the matter two seconds' thought was thinking—namely, what an unimaginably offensive idea this is. Picture it. During the most political event American politics has to offer, a quadrennial nominating convention, the assembled honchos trudge down to ground zero and perform their ceremony. . . . An event like this would make every person who died on the site a martyr—to a reelection campaign. If that's not politicizing 9/11, there is no such thing."

Of course, it has become clear that Bush, Rove, and the rest of the gang of White House thieves are not above such things. The only question left is how the American public will respond.

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