

How Indictments of His Cronies Will Affect President Bush

*On Oct. 22, 2005, Jeffrey Steinberg, along with LaRouche Youth Movement panelists Matt Ogden from Boston and Niko Paulson from Seattle, interviewed special guest Dr. Justin Frank on "The LaRouche Show," an Internet radio show broadcast every Saturday at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time, at www.larouche.com. Dr. Frank, a practicing psychiatrist, is a professor at the George Washington University Medical Center, and was the author of the book *Bush on the Couch*, characterized by Steinberg as one of the most insightful profiles of the current President of the United States, and also one of the most frightening books to be published on the subject of the U.S. Presidency in many, many years. On Aug. 20, 2004, EIR published a review of Dr. Frank's book, and an interview with him. On Nov. 5, 2004, EIR published a guest commentary by Dr. Frank, and on Feb. 4, 2005, we published another interview with him.*

Steinberg: Let me begin by asking Dr. Frank something that's on the minds of most people in this country and around the world, who are close followers of politics in Washington. Namely that the Valerie Plame investigation, among other investigations into White House behavior, seems to be coming to a kind of a turning point. We're hearing that as early as next Wednesday, Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald is expected to announce criminal indictments against a number of senior White House officials. At least two names that have appeared prominently in the media lately, are Scooter Libby, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, who is the chief of staff and chief national security aide to Vice President Dick Cheney; and secondly, the Deputy White House Chief of Staff, but much more importantly, the kind of political Svengali behind President Bush, Karl Rove. There are a number of other names that have come out as well. And in the last several days, there appears to be a growing groundswell of people pointing the finger directly at Vice President Cheney, as the architect of the Valerie Plame leak, and other actions, that constituted willful disinformation and fraud to get this Iraq War going.

So, Dr. Frank, my first question, is, let's say these indictments do come down, next Wednesday, or some time very soon after that, what will be the impact, in your judgment, on President Bush, of this major crisis in his Presidency?

Frank: Well, the most important thing to remember about

President Bush, is that a large part—a huge element of his Presidency has been constructed around secrecy and privacy, and protecting himself from anxiety. From actually external terrorists, and from internal fears of being terrorized by his own issues. And basically, I think that this indictment will make him extremely anxious. He already looks tired and haggard, in a different way from the past. Some of the photos of him that I've seen recently, he just looks like he is finally feeling the strain of having his, kind of, hand-wrought Administration being now subject to being dismantled, or at least questioned seriously.

And I think that it's very stressful for him. I don't know if it's something that would lead him to do even more bicycling, or exercise, or drive him back to drinking—which has been rumored recently, that he's been doing that. But, whatever it is, I think that he is used to having been rescued by his father or his father's friends. And now, the only people who could really rescue him, that are left, are the press and us, through our denial. Because if these other people are indicted, he will have nobody there to help rescue him.

So, I'm concerned that he might become very agitated about it.

Steinberg: What would be the consequences, again, psychologically for Bush, were there to be a forced resignation, or impeachment against Vice President Cheney, who's been one of the anchors of the Administration on most policy issues?

Frank: Well, he is a very tough guy, George Bush, even though he's a peculiar paradox of being very tough and very frightened. And when he's in a corner, he strikes out. And my thought is, that he would just be appointing a new Vice President who would be more extreme, in some ways (if that's possible) than Cheney, and certainly untouchable by Congress or by the Senate. I don't know who he would find. But I think that he would strike out, and strike back. I don't think he is a person who will just disappear to Crawford, the way he does every August.

I don't know what he'd do exactly. But I do know, that he gets *very* angry. He does have a temper. I do think that the only time when he's really at risk for being taken over by anxiety, is when the confrontation is direct. In other words, an indictment of Cheney is not the same thing as having to be at a press conference, when he is being questioned directly



White House Photo/Eric Draper

The only person who could approach Bush about making a fundamental change in policy, said Dr. Frank, “would have to be a woman,” such as Karen Hughes, or his wife, Laura. Here, Bush discusses a speech with Hughes, at the White House.

by a member of the press. That’s when he collapses. That’s when he has trouble.

I think he might actually—you know, he’s going to stick with Harriet Miers, he’s not going to withdraw her name. He re-introduced all those judges who were rejected by the Senate; he re-introduced them in 2005, seven of them. I mean, he does not give up, in his fixed ideas.

Steinberg: About two weeks ago, there was a column in the *Washington Post*, by Jim Hoagland, in which he basically said, that what President Bush needs to save his Presidency, is the way someone like Clark Clifford, who of course, went to Lyndon Johnson in 1968, and convinced Johnson that the Vietnam War had destroyed his Presidency and that he should not run for re-election. And Hoagland basically said, somebody has to go to Bush, and basically tell him the truth about his disintegrating Presidency, so that perhaps he can make some personnel changes, or other things, to deal with what he’s going to have to face over the next three and half years. And now, of course, we have Cheneygate, Libby, Rove, these people very close to him, now potentially facing indictment, and forced immediate resignation.

Is there anybody, who could approach Bush in such a way, that he would actually come to his senses, and see that maybe there was an alternative to the disastrous policy course he’s followed, and bring some fresh blood in, who would not be more radical and more provocative than Cheney?

Frank: Well, I think the only person who could approach him that way, would have to be a woman, and it could either be Karen Hughes, or Laura—the only two I can think of, who could counsel him in that regard. They function as what in psychiatry, we call “affect regulators”: They’re people who function to regulate his emotions, and they calm him down. And I think that anybody who was going to tell him that his Presidency is crumbling, is going to have to first find a way to calm him down. Because, he would get so angry, and so indignant, and so outraged, that he would certainly “attack the messenger,” unless that messenger had a very clear path into his psyche. Because, he fundamentally is much more like the way Hitler was in the last days of the bunker, in that movie—I forgot what it was called now—about the bunker life.

And I do think this is not the “last days of George Bush,” and I don’t want to compare him to Hitler in terms of what his policies are. But there is a way in which, the circle around him gets narrower, and narrower, and narrower. But at the same time, *he* does not change: He escalates his anger, his rage, his distrust, and he, eventually, as I wrote in my book, will distrust his own advisors. Because, what happens, is, that if you live outside of the law, and you live psychologically outside of the law and you know it, you are always going to be suspicious of other people. And first, you’re suspicious of the people who vote against you; then you’re suspicious of the Richard Clarkes of the world, and the Paul O’Neills of the world. And then, gradually, you start getting suspicious of the Colin Powells, and then you start getting suspicious of your closest advisors.

And so the circle narrows, and narrows, and narrows. And today, for instance, in his Presidential address, he said, at the end of his address—it was all about the new bill that’s coming out, that he’s going to sign about immigration. But he says, and I quote: “America is a country of laws. *We must not allow dishonest employers to flout those laws.*” That’s what he said today, Oct. 22, this morning, and I wrote in my book on page 91, “The flagrant flouting”—same word—“of authority of the law took place before he actually became the law, first as Governor, and then as President. Not surprisingly, it has continued throughout his time in office.”

In other words, he is the one who used to flout laws all of his life, growing up, and then, when he became the law, namely the Governor or the President, he continues to flout authority and the law, even though he *is* the authority.

So, I think, that the only person who could *possibly* have access to getting him to change course—I mean, he does flip-flop about certain things, and he does back down, there’s no question about it, and bullies do back down. But the only person and people who have access to him, whom I think he would really listen to, are people like Karen Hughes or Laura Bush. I just don’t know who else would have that kind of influence, other than Karl Rove, who might be gone. And I don’t know that Karl Rove—I mean, I have no idea; he’s

so savvy politically, that he might counsel him to change directions. But, who knows, whether Bush would turn on him, too?

Steinberg: We're talking today with Dr. Justin Frank, who is the author of *Bush on the Couch*, which first came out, I believe, in 2004. But, around June of this year, a second, paperback edition of the book was published, and it includes a fascinating new chapter, that updates the Bush psychological profile, through the period of the Presidential campaign, and up through the early months of his second term in office.

I want to ask you a kind of unfair question, Dr. Frank.

Frank: Okay—I refuse to answer!

Steinberg: Could you give a sort of synopsis of your kind of clinical diagnosis of President Bush?

Frank: Well, that's very hard to do. You're right, it is an unfair question, especially since the entire book was devoted to developing different thoughts and strains of that. But, in terms of synopsis, I think there are certain qualities in his character, rather than making it as a diagnosis, that would be what are called a "character diagnosis," and a couple of them are very important: One is, that he is an untreated alcoholic. And by that, I mean, a person who has the same kind of psychology as alcoholics do, without the alcohol. Namely, they see things in black-and-white terms; they're quick to jump to conclusions; they're very critical, and they are unable to take blame or take responsibility. And they are full of bravado, where they will say, as a drunk would say, "I can lick any man in the house," when he's had a few beers. This man can say, "Bring 'em on, wanted dead or alive," and use the bravado of our military and get us into these wars and these various situations, when he is functioning in the same mentality and mental state as somebody who's been drinking.

The second part of the diagnostic assessment, is, that he does have an ability to split, and to become detached, and to disconnect. So, I think that for many years, he's been able to disconnect inside his mind, from being compassionate, from being concerned about other people. So, when Hurricane Katrina was coming, and it was announced to him, he would not pay any attention to it, he was indifferent to it. He disconnects. And that's another defense, that's a way of managing anxiety.

The problem is, that when you disconnect, you also are being potentially—and in this case, literally—very hurtful. Because, if you're not taking care of this country and being responsible, and you disconnect, then a lot of people die and suffer needlessly. And, in fact, Dennis Kucinich, I thought, said an amazing thing the other week—the Congressman from Ohio—who said that, "indifference is a weapon of mass destruction." And that fits with the thing about disconnection.

The third part of his diagnosis is, that he has a cruel streak that is very strong. And that is, that he has a long history of inflicting cruelty, cruelty to animals, blowing up frogs as a

kid; and I think, that he can outsource that cruelty and that destructiveness. And some of it is even aimed at our own citizens, and certainly plenty of it is aimed at people in Baghdad, for instance.

The fourth part is about learning disability: He has trouble processing information and thinking clearly. He is actually smart in certain ways, but not smart in others. So, new information that comes his way is very hard for him to process, because he has to filter it through all of his preconceptions and all of the things that he relies on and clings to, to keep him organized.

Another part has to do with his massive anxiety and suspiciousness.

Steinberg: That's a pretty compelling indictment of somebody who has the responsibility for the General Welfare of this country, and is presumably the leader of the most powerful nation on Earth.

Frank: I can't imagine any business group, at this point, who would hire him to run their business, given what he's done. I just can't imagine it—and yet, the people voted for him, and re-elected him. Let's say even if he lost both elections by a few hundred thousand votes, and there were shenanigans done with the Supreme Court: Let's even say that that's all true. There still are millions, and millions, and millions of people, who support him, and love him, and vote for him. It's disturbing to me.

Steinberg: Absolutely, right. It's an indictment of where our culture has gone, that someone like George Bush would be looked up to as someone whom we would want to see in the White House.

Frank: Right. As heroic.

Steinberg: Exactly. I want to actually open up the discussion to our two members of the LaRouche Youth Movement. Let's kick it off, in Boston. Matt, do you have a question for Dr. Frank?

Ogden: Sure. Hi, Dr. Frank, I'm Matthew Ogden. I organize with the LaRouche Youth Movement here in Boston. I just wanted to pick up again, from what you brought up about the culture. Lyndon LaRouche wrote a paper recently, where he talks about Dick Cheney, and George Bush, and the Administration, called "The Case of the Vice President's Mass Insanity." And in there, he brings up one advisory comment that he had on Dr. [Jerrold] Post's method—who I believe is your associate.

Frank: Yes.

Ogden: And he says that the question of judging the psychology of somebody, is not something that you can do in an ahistorical kind of perspective. But you have to judge their psychology from the standpoint of the historically specific

culture in which they exist. You talked about George Bush's denial of reality, kind of fantasy life. We experience in the population, a lot, the kind of denial of reality in terms of the oncoming economic collapse.

Frank: Yes.

Ogden: And I think that a lot of people decided to vote for George Bush, because they actually wished to partake in his sort of denial, and fantasy world. And I just wanted to see what your thoughts were specifically on the Baby-Boomer generation, and what is the general cultural insanity that produced the kind of reflection and amplification of that insanity that we're seeing in Bush, and also Dick Cheney?

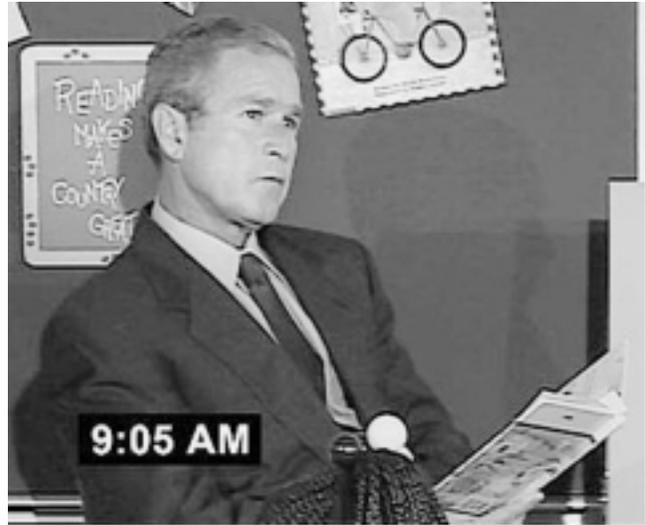
Frank: Well, I don't know about the Baby-Boomer generation, which is a huge number of people. And I don't know how the voter profiles are, in terms of which groups of people voted for Bush. I am pretty sure that the more-educated people do not vote for Bush, although that's a hunch. People who have been college graduates and above, and there are many Baby-Boomers like that, I would be surprised if the majority of them voted for Bush.

But, to respond to your question, I think that you're exactly right. I think that Bush in a way, is a product of his time, and of our time, and in fact, he understands that. In fact, [White House Chief of Staff] Andy Card made this *amazing* disclosure that he backpedaled from, or that people haven't really picked up on. He was interviewed in the *Boston Globe* and he made a comment that George Bush pitches his speech to about a 10- to 12-year-old level of understanding in this country. The understanding of a 10-year-old, or a 12-year-old! And I think that those are people who see the world in black and white; they're still pre-adolescent, so they have a lot of magical thinking, they have heroes, sports heroes, good guys and bad guys. And they have fantasies that are very grand and powerful. So, for instance, when my 9-year-old son was given a tennis racket by a friend of mine, he said that by the time he was 11, he would be able to defeat me in tennis with no problem—having never taken a lesson.

It's an idea that kids have. And Bush taps into that. And that's *very* prevalent in our culture right now, that way of thinking. And I think the best book about that, actually, is by somebody who has the same name as me, but is not related, named Thomas Frank, who wrote this book called *What's the Matter with Kansas?* It's really disturbing: It's about all the kind of juxtaposition between the poverty, and the failed businesses, and all the different economic troubles in Kansas, and all the people carrying around Bush signs. And he thinks a lot of it has to do with religion, and that Bush taps into that part, also.

But I do think a lot of it has to do with what you're talking about, which is, wishing makes it so, denial of reality, and that we live in a kind of a fantasy world. And he taps right into that.

And I think that that context is very much one of kind of



credit

After being told "America is under attack," when the second plane hit the World Trade Center on 9/11, a visibly stunned George Bush continued to read *My Pet Goat* in a Florida classroom for nearly seven minutes.

magical thinking, and that people retreat to that. They either become very frightened, like after 9/11, there was a *tremendous* wave of fear; or, they become grandiose, saying, "We're invulnerable. We'll just beat everybody, root out all the terrorists and destroy them, one by one." So, that's a *very* appealing way of thinking to a lot of people. Including—you know, I've had a couple of people in my practice who felt very much that way, right after 9/11.

In terms of the historical context, I agree with Lyndon LaRouche, about the importance of doing an assessment within the context of the time that the assessment being made, the times that the person is living in, when the assessment is being made.

Steinberg: Now, let's turn to the West Coast: Niko, in Seattle.

Paulson: Hi. Just along similar lines as Matt's question, your response to it: It seems like there are all of these different defense mechanisms, which Bush has thrown up around himself, so he doesn't really have to deal with reality. And, that seems like a perfectly lawful expression of generally the context that he was surrounded with, and also apparently something that a large portion of the population has responded to, as well, in that they enjoy and agree very much with his oversimplification, when he speaks with these people, and identify with that in a big way. What do you think is the proper approach to dealing with this type of problem? And obviously, in the case of Bush, it's probably quite difficult, in that you're not ever going to be able to get very close to him. But, we deal with this, organizing in the LaRouche campaign,

on a daily basis, trying to get over some of these very same psychological problems embedded in the minds of many, many Americans. What do you think is the best means by which to address some of these defense mechanisms, in solving these types of problems?

Frank: The best way to address these defense mechanisms in my experience, and I don't know how to do it, in terms of the practical—when you're going and talking to people—but this is how I would like to suggest: And that is, to psychologically ally yourself with the people's narcissism. In other words, ally yourself with what people feel proud of. And rather than talking about doom and gloom, or how bad things are, or how bad Bush is, I would try to ally myself with what makes people feel good about themselves, and then see if they can start to think about the ways in which those good feelings are actually being undermined and undercut by this Administration. So, I would want to talk about what it is that they're proud of, what it is that the people feel good about, about being an American, and what they think about, and how do they think about what's going on in the world: What do they think about paying debts? What do think about credit cards? What do they think about interest-only mortgages, where so much of our income is going to be spent, just paying off interest, not even debts! And I think that people can think about those things. I thought your use of humor in music is one thing.

I think that it's really important in terms of talking to people to be clear about the positive things that the people are aspiring to and that they feel. And I think that Bush has been able to tap into that, as well as to people's fears, but always that he has the answer to their fears. I think that the issue really is, to help people think about what's actually happening to them.

I remember people used to call Reagan the "Teflon President," that nothing stuck to him. Well, Bush has got Reagan beat by a mile here! Nothing has stuck to him. People don't even connect the dots! They don't connect that he constantly lies, basically; that he'll say, "I didn't know—" what was the guy's name, from Enron?

Paulson: Ken Lay?

Frank: Yeah. "Kenny who?" he said. And then he didn't know Chalabi, when Chalabi was sitting right there at the State of the Union. He doesn't know this person, he doesn't do this, he doesn't do this. And then, they're done! And it's a constant thing. But, when people look at him, they look at him, in the segmental way, which is very typical of how people deal with alcoholics, they also don't want to make links and look at patterns.

So, the second thing, after you ally yourself with people's narcissism, would be to talk about patterns of behavior, and try to make links that will be easy to make—between Katrina and various other things, where lots of solutions to the problems are actually left to the states, and turned back onto people

who have to solve it for themselves, which is both a good thing, and certainly an abdication of governmental responsibility.

So, the second thing I would look at, is try to help people look at the patterns of behavior of this Administration, and this particular President, in terms of both making things up and then changing his story, to justify what he wants to do; and that the issue is, what he wants to do, not why he wants to do it. And I think that people don't quite understand that. Most people need a reason, so they really *did* believe that Saddam was a threat. Those kinds of things.

So, I think that those are the two things that I would do, in terms of dealing with the public: Find out what it is that people feel good about, and then work with that, and don't just beat them over the head with all the problems. And then, look at patterns of behavior.

As far as confronting Bush directly, the only person who has confronted Bush—there have been a few people who have had the guts to do it—the most gutsy person has been Cindy Sheehan. People talk about her, saying, "You're so courageous," and she says, "I'm not courageous. I'm fearless." She said, after you have a son die, and killed by misinformation about this war, she doesn't know fear. And she has been able, as they say, "to speak truth to power." And everywhere she is, Bush leaves. When she was at Crawford, he went to Idaho, then he went to San Diego. He left Crawford—he'd never left Crawford before this year, in August. And now, she's coming to Washington, and she said she's going to chain herself to the fence in front of the White House, starting with the 2,000th American trooper killed, which will be sometime this coming week.

Truth to power, and being direct, is really important: There are no Congressmen who speak directly to him, and no Senators who speak directly to him. She doesn't speak to his face, obviously, but she does try to confront.

So, our only hope, would be to find maybe some people in the press, at press conferences, who would be willing to, shall we say, risk their jobs! Look what happened to people like Dan Rather, look what happens to Helen Thomas, look what happens to people who do confront Bush—I mean, it's really a risk. And I can understand why the press doesn't do it. But the question is, can they say to him, for instance, "I don't want to follow your rules. I'm going to ask a follow-up question now." And he'll say, "Well, you're not doing it right, there's no follow-up questions. Next!" And then, when he goes to the next reporter, that reporter has to say, "I want to ask. . ." and then figure out what the follow-up question is, that the other person was going to ask, and ask it! And stay with that kind of pattern, and really confront him, and be direct with him. That will really, I think, expose who he is, and what's going on with him.

People are afraid to do that, and I understand why they are. There's a culture of oppression, and there's a culture of fear. And it's very subtle. People don't want to join

groups, don't want to say things. I mean, people came up to me, and said, "Thank you for being cannon fodder for the rest of us."

I do think it's a serious problem in this culture. And it was a problem, I think, in the Vietnam days, but not the same. The press at least asked some questions then. . . .

Steinberg: I'm reminded of a brief section of the new edition of the book, in which you're describing this one particular moment, during the first Presidential debate, in which Senator Kerry really brought Bush to the edge of cracking, and then seemed to not follow through in the way that you're describing. Maybe you could recount that incident to our listeners.

Frank: Well, Kerry did—and I actually sent him some suggestions, which I think they used in the first debate—Kerry confronted Bush, and the best way to confront Bush is to undo him by talking about his failures, or his inadequacies, in specific ways. And in this case, he talked about his father. And he said, that Bush's father said that going to war against Saddam Hussein, or in Iraq, is a quagmire, and would be really dangerous and a negative thing, and how come he didn't listen to his father's advice? But, what happened was, that Bush became very flummoxed, and really uncomfortable. And Kerry, I think, just couldn't go for the jugular. I don't know if that's a Democratic failing. I don't know if that's a fear, of having a President collapse when he still is the President, and you don't want him to collapse in front of everybody on television; he doesn't have a killer instinct—I don't know what it is. But, whatever it was, he backed off.

And it really disturbs me, that he did, because, I think that's the only way to deal with him, and he had ample opportunity to talk directly to him. But it was clear that you can undo him, when you ask questions like, "Have you ever made a mistake?" When you point out the inconsistencies of what he's saying. And if you don't let him off the hook.

The other thing about that first debate, that was so interesting, and that the second debate really took care of, in part, for Bush, is that a person with a learning disability, and who discharges anxiety through running around and through touching people, and through jumping around and action: In the first debate, he had to stand still and have a debate. In the second debate, he was on those stools, and was jumping up and down, and that really allowed him to dissipate some of his anxiety. The first debate was the chance to *confront directly* the President.

That is what the press needs to do. Diane Sawyer tried to do it once on TV, but it's very hard to do that. And, when she confronted him, eventually, when she said: "Well, what if there's no weapons found?" He said, "Well, what's the difference?" I mean, if people really thought, and stopped, and listened to that, and they played that tape over and over again, you would see that this is a person who doesn't care whether there are weapons of mass destruction or not.

So, I think that, in my book, in the Epilogue, I really did

write about what was a continuation of his behavior: Which is, that he is a person who can get by, by bullying, by bullying, by intimidating, by having people like Karl Rove around him, and Dick Cheney *clearly* as an attack dog. And an architect, as you were saying, an architect of the Valerie Plame thing—he may well *be* the architect. But you've got to remember, that an architect has an employer! And Bush is the employer, at least of that particular architect.

Steinberg: We're getting a pile-up, actually, of questions coming in on the internet, and I want to turn now to a number of those questions. First, from Meghan, I guess, from our Boston Youth Movement: "Could Dr. Frank speak on how Vice President Cheney would react to being told to step down, and also perhaps give a psychological profile of Cheney, as you do with Bush, if possible?"

Frank: Well, I couldn't do a psychological profile of Cheney, because I haven't studied him. And the one thing that I am very clear about, is that my comments about Bush are based on a lot of extensive study and thought. I mean, I've certainly noticed Cheney and paid attention to him, but I haven't reviewed all of his biography and his life-history, and studied videotapes the way I've done with Bush. And so, I don't want to be off-the-cuff about Cheney.

As far as how Cheney would react? Again, that's *very* speculative. I think the biggest concern that anybody in this Administration has, is that they don't want to go to jail. So, he will do anything, he would rather step down, than go to jail—that's for sure. And he would make an arrangement, that he will step down, if he can be immune from any kind of prosecution, is my thought. And I think that's what all these guys are about: Which is, how to avoid jail time. Because they really have done things that are extremely illegal, across the board. The stuff that Cheney's done with Halliburton, and continued and persisted in, all this time, while he's in office—I mean, it's pretty stunning.

So, that's my answer. I think that Cheney would make a deal. He'd be willing to step down, if he knew he'd be free of jail time. Humiliation is not an issue, in other words, for him. Or shame. That's not an issue for these people. Which is quite interesting, when you stop and think about it. I don't know too many people who are that shameless.

Steinberg: We have another question from Scott from South Jersey, and he just simply asks, "What will another three years as President do to George Bush?"

Frank: Well, it depends. It really depends on whether people stand up to him or not. He's perfectly happy living his life, if he can keep appointing Harriet Miers and those kinds of people, and not have much opposition.

I think the issue is really, what will three years do to him in terms of opposition? I think that, clearly, the climate changes are quite striking—I don't know if there'll be another hurricane season next year, that's like this one, but it wouldn't



EIRNS/Michael Rowland

What will Bush do if Cheney resigns to avoid going to jail? "I think this indictment will make him extremely anxious," said Frank. Here, LaRouche Youth Movement organizers in August 2005 giving a goodbye party for Cheney, in Washington.

surprise me. I think there's a lot of things that will put pressure on him. But the only thing that I think that could happen, in terms of what the next three years could do *to him*, would be if people stood up and started to ask questions, and not accept everything he says. Otherwise, I think he goes on, and has his pre-screened audiences, and lives his life that way as President, and continues to give his tax cuts to the rich and his friends; and appoint friends to high office; and continue on his merry road.

I mean, he's much closer, of any American President that I've seen and know about historically, he's much closer to Warren G. Harding than any other President, except that he's also gotten us into a war. He's very similar to Harding, in terms of appointing all of his friends, and then finding that they're corrupt. And, supporting it—you know, Harding said it was his friends who got him into trouble.

Steinberg: I want to go back to our panel, throw out again to Matt, if you've got further questions for Dr. Frank.

Frank: Or, points of disagreement even, or argument.

Ogden: Sure, I had just one question, actually, because I was re-reading an interview that you did, I believe back in August of last year, during the Presidential campaign, that you did with *EIR* magazine, called "George Bush, A Puppet Who Chose His Puppeteers."

Frank: Yes.

Ogden: I had a question about your analysis there. Because, I believe the interviewer asked you about the role of Dick Cheney in the Administration. And you said, "Well, people overestimate the role of Cheney in the Administration." I wanted to ask you whether you meant "overestimate" George Bush's view of the role of Dick Cheney in the Administration? Or, actually the role of Cheney, and that you think that George Bush has much more of a power over his Administration than most people tend to think he does?

Frank: Most people do not think he has power over his Administration, and I am in the minority, but I think he does have power. I think he doesn't know how solve problems, but he does know what he wants. And that's his power, plus he's the President. So, he can say, "I don't care what you say, do this." And I think in that sense, he does have the power. I think he gets paralyzed, and has trouble thinking when there's a crisis, and that's very clear, and so the other people think, shall we say, for him—like Cheney.

But, I *do* think there's a fundamental direction that he is taking this country in, and that he believes in, that's very strong. It has to do with religion. It has to do with doing away with the concept of the Great Society, and the New Deal, and that government is there as a safety net; and that it's there to protect people, and that laws are there to protect people from one another. He really has fundamental belief systems—that deficit spending is fine—I don't think those are Cheney's beliefs, necessarily. I think that these are his, and that he has found people to implement it. I think that Cheney is clearly comfortable lining his own pockets, and being a menacing figure—and certainly a scary one to me.

But I think that Bush is the person who—every time there's a person who disagrees with him, they're out! I mean, he just closes them out, and that's it. So, I don't think that he is a puppet. I think that he's strong. I think that he's smart, in his own way: I think that he's smart in a way of sizing people up; he knows how to reach out to people; he knows how to make jokes, and use humility as a way of disarming his critics. Almost like Woody Allen did, in some of his things. But, I think that he runs the show.

And I know I'm in the minority about this. I mean, Cheney is a strong guy. And I've known and dealt with him for years, because he was very much involved in the pro-nuclear movement in the '80s. And the nuclear buildup.

Bush is very good at distracting people, and deflecting questions. His defense system allows him to remain opaque; it allows him to avoid blame; it allows him to use humor; it allows him to surround himself with Secret Service and with a Cabinet that's all of his liking; it allows him to see the world in black-and-white terms, which is much easier than anything else.

Ogden: Just as a quick follow-up: Do you think that the coming ouster of Dick Cheney, will change the policies that are coming out of the Bush Administration? And would you be able to say that Bush is committed to a certain ideology consciously, or is he just so clouded in his view of the world, in terms of what you said, in terms of his preconceptions?

Frank: I think he's committed to a conscious idea, which, again, is about the installation of religion in the government, and installation of "every man for himself" kind of attitude at the same time. I *really* think that if Cheney is ousted, Bush will appoint somebody very similar and will not look back. I don't think there will be any change in his policy.

I think that, unconsciously, however—it's a great question you asked—because unconsciously, I think he is, of all the people in his life, I think he's most deeply identified with his mother. And I think that, one of the qualities that she has, is not just her sarcasm, but her ability to kind of cut people off, and say, when she said something to the effect that, "I'm not going to disturb my beautiful mind by looking at body bags, I'm not going to watch the war news"—she said that on national television, right before we bombed Baghdad in 2003. And then, she just recently at the Astrodome, made that very unfeeling comment, about the poor from New Orleans who were sort of "lucky to be there" and "never had it so good" kind of thing. There's a contempt, that I think she had for her own children, that's very similar. And I think that he has delivered that, and given that to us: that he treats us, the citizens of this country, the way he felt treated as a child by his mother. And I don't think that's going to change—unless he's out of office. There's a lot of other people who agree with him in certain ways, but not to the degree.

I don't know that Cheney would have to leave, or whatever. I think that the question is really whether Bush himself would be impeached: Then, we'd see something new.

And I think that, as you remember, about Nixon—nobody really wrote about this very clearly, except for I.F. Stone, who said that the entire purpose of Nixon's search for a replacement for Agnew, for Vice President, would be somebody who—and this was before Nixon was impeached—will keep Nixon out of jail and will pardon him. And that that's the only criterion by which Gerald Ford was selected, I'm sure of that. And I think that's the same with

Bush now. If Cheney were to go, Bush would make sure that whoever replaced him that he chose, would *never, ever*, do anything other than pardon him.

And I think that's why he chose Harriet Miers; and that's why he chose [Supreme Court Chief Justice nominee John] Roberts. Roberts, he got away with, because Roberts is smart. Harriet Miers, he may not get away with, because she's not smart, or competent. But, it's the same idea: They are both there to protect him, and to make sure, that if there's any kind of a trial, he will be protected by them. They won't allow White House papers to be disclosed. He can wrap himself up in the Supreme Court. I think that's the main reason for all of this stuff about abortion; and gay rights, and everything else, is a red herring. I think it's all about self-protection.

Steinberg: The issue of Bush's impeachment may emerge out of this process this next week.

Frank: Yes. Yes, it may.

Steinberg: I saw that one news account suggested, that back in 2003, right after the Valerie Plame leak, that there was a kind of a shouting match between Bush and Rove, where Bush was furious, not that Rove had done something illegal, but that he had potentially gotten caught, and gotten the Administration in trouble. That's a fairly damning statement from a President who said he had no idea who was behind the leak.

Frank: Well, we'll see. Fitzgerald is sure getting a lot of positive accolades about being steadfast, and impartial. We'll see what happens. I don't know what's going to happen.

I mean, Bush is not a hands-on leader, in terms of somebody like Jimmy Carter, for instance, who could never delegate to anybody. He had to control everything, and that was a good quality and bad quality in a leader. But, Bush, I think, really says, "I don't care how you do it, just do it." And that's my sense of him.

Paulson: It seems like the way you're painting George Bush is that it is in fact he who is the one who's largely controlling policy from the White House; that the overall intention coming from his Presidency, is completely personal. Do you

think that's the case? That this is all just personal vendettas, and that it's his internal state? Or there's some overall strategic intention which is governing the Administration?

Frank: Well, I think that there are strategic intentions, but I think that the source of it is personal. I don't like the word "just" because that implies "only." And I don't think it's "only" personal. I don't think that's fair to anybody. One of the dangers of having a President like Bush—to a person like me, and all of us—is, that, in order to confront him and focus our thoughts about him, we may start thinking in black and white, also. In other words, we start thinking the way he does, that he's all bad, or that he's all "this," or Cheney's all "this." And I think that that's just as dangerous for the critics of this Administration, as it is for the way this Administration has been functioning. But a person who is a President like that, does put other people who are critics in the position of sounding that way, and acting that way; it's very exasperating and frustrating.

So, given that, I don't pretend to know all of his motives, but I *do* think there is enough evidence that he either likes to, or needs to, or can't help but, break things. He likes to break things. He's always broken things. He broke other businesses that he has led, and then gets rescued. He breaks laws, breaks rules, breaks his word. And that, he, for instance, broke treaties. He broke treaties that his father did; he broke traditions in this country, about never attacking a nation that has not either attacked us first, or threatened to attack us first.

He likes to break things. And that's a very destructive quality, obviously. It's not breaking things to build things new, otherwise there would be an exit strategy: After you break Baghdad, you want to build it. He's not like that. And the way he treated his father, as I wrote in the Epilogue of the book, at the Republican Convention, is just symbolic of that: He didn't let his father speak! And his father was the Vice President for eight years, President for four years—I mean, Reagan had just died, and here is the President, the son of the former 12-year occupant of the White House. And he didn't let him speak! That's breaking things.

There is a lot of a personal vendetta against institutions. He is wanting to live comfortably, the way he saw his parents live. They would just let the kids run wild, they'd drink their whisky, or their martinis, or their gin and tonics, whatever they would drink in the Midland Country Club.

So, I think that there's really an indifference that is destructive, and that he has a mission that is destructive. One of the things that's so striking, for instance, as it's important in listening to political leaders, but *particularly* this President: Is, that you always need to listen to, especially because of mass communication, to what they say they're *not* going to do, or who they're *not*, is very often who they are. And that's true in lots of cases, in my practice. But, in this particular President, it's *really* dramatic. So, when he says, "I'm a uniter, not a divider," which he said in 2000,

he has proven to be a divider, and not a uniter. And I think that's much more clear to people, about who he is.

And so, he does the same thing now, which is, that he says what he's about, in a negative way. When he said this thing today, about America is a country of laws, and we must not allow dishonest people to flout those laws, he is essentially saying, we must not allow people to do what I'm doing! And he's doing it.

It's important for us, as citizens, and paying attention and thinking psychologically, to listen to the things that he says, with what we call a "third ear": Listen to it, in a way that allows us to try to think about it, as possibly meaning something different from what it is. Sometimes not—often the opposite.

Steinberg: It would be very interesting this week, if these indictments, as we expect, do in fact come down, and are announced, to see whether Bush is going retreat from the public, or whether he's actually going to step forward and say something.

Frank: It's very hard to tell. But I would certainly be prepared for a lot of Code Oranges. Because, I think that's one way to manage the indictments, is to distract people.

I don't know whether he'll step up or not. He's very good at distracting people, and deflecting questions, and avoiding, innovating. I mean, his defense system is quite elaborate, and *extremely* tight, and very successful in so many ways. It allows him to remain opaque; it allows him to avoid blame; it allows him to use humor; it allows him to surround himself with Secret Service and with a Cabinet that's all of his liking; it allows him to see the world in black-and-white terms, which is much easier than anything else. It allows him to exercise, and retreat, and hide, and pray, and be deeply religious: all of which, are in the service of self-maintenance, regulation of his anxiety. And he has a whole *elaborate* system. And he also can be detached, and disconnected.

So, it'll be interesting to see how he responds, given his elaborate systems. The problem with those systems, in the long run, and that's what we're seeing now, is, that they undermine your ability to think. Because, if you want to avoid anxiety, the only way to avoid anxiety completely, is to stop thinking. Because when you start thinking about different things, you get anxious.

I mean, I get anxious with some of the questions you ask! I want to be sure I do a good job, and I start thinking about it—not that I answer them that well all the time, but the point is, that anxiety is a source of information, and you can use it, and you should try to use it, to help you think about things. But, if his whole life, and his whole *raison d'être*, is to manage those things, and *not* think about them—not even to manage them, but to manipulate and get rid of—it makes it much harder to think in a crisis. And that's why, when he says he's a "gut player," he means it, because he's not able to think clearly.