

## George W. Bush Should Shut Up and Go Away

Bush is a mass murderer. He should be sharing a bunk bed with Ratko Mladic at The Hague, not giving interviews on Afghanistan in Maine.

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*By now, George W Bush should have completed volumes one and two of his prison letters.*

*But, as we know, the world is not a just place. So, like all the other American presidents who have avoided the dock despite the crimes they have committed at home and abroad, the former US president remains a free, and, indeed, carefree, man.*

I suspect that Bush is happy, too, biding his time during his “golden years” painting what can charitably be described as globby, deformed “portraits” and tending to the tangled bush on his Texas estate.

It is inconceivable to me, though, that a once immensely powerful man who is almost singularly responsible for two calamitous wars-of-choice which have caused such immeasurable harm and suffering to so many innocents, in so many places, could ever experience a genuine moment of stillness, let alone happiness.

I wonder, as well, if Bush ever pauses from his painting and gardening to consider the appalling measure of his guilt or shudders at the unfolding and halting scope of the profound, disfiguring consequences of his many and manifest crimes against decency and humanity.

That may well be a largely rhetorical question since one of the principal qualifications of becoming president is the necessity to kill, maim, and traumatise other human beings in the murderous pursuit of the ever malleable US “national interest”.

So, Bush likely finds considerable solace in the slimy evasion that being president is often a thankless, dirty job that requires, on occasion, the occupant to order “hits” – big and small – against America’s “enemies” just like a mafia don, but with a much larger, more well-equipped army, of course.

I have pondered these questions lately about this banal, unrepentant killer and torture-approving thug with a presidential library because, rather than finally doing the world a

smidgen of service by permanently shutting up in lieu of being charged, Bush continues to believe, incredibly, that his musings on war and diplomacy have serious merit and should be heeded.

Earlier this month, Bush was interviewed at his palatial summer home in Kennebunkport, Maine, by a German broadcaster with apparently nothing better to do with its time and resources.

The agreeable tête-à-tête was billed as a “rare” departure of form for Bush, who reportedly avoids sit-down interviews with journalists.

Gee, I wonder why?

Apart from briefly prying Bush away from his juvenile tinkering with paint on a canvas and taming his unruly hedges, an interview conducted by an intrepid reporter might cause the stammering, reclusive ex-president a little discomfort and serve as a mild, belated comeuppance of sorts.

Bush could, for once, have been challenged to account finally for the litany of lies he concocted and told to start wars that he and his posse of criminal “advisers” in slick suits and designer outfits convinced themselves would be cheap, easy and quick.

Two decades later, the cruel, lethal folly of Bush’s cocky, catastrophic delusions and fabrications is plain: millions dead and scarred in body, mind and spirit, countless other lives ruined or left adrift in refugee camps where disease, want and hopelessness are rampant, countries engulfed by endless uncertainty, violence and sectarianism and a patient, resurgent Taliban poised to reimpose its malignant dominion over Afghanistan.

Bush could also have been pressed about his role in engineering an international abduction racket – known as “renditions” – that permitted America’s state-sanctioned hoodlums to kidnap mostly Muslim men and dump them into secret dungeons in Iraq and beyond where they were bound, interrogated, humiliated, electrocuted, attacked by dogs, sexually assaulted, water-boarded and, ultimately, murdered.

None of that appears to have happened. Instead, Bush was given unfettered licence to object to the withdrawal of the remaining US and NATO troops from Afghanistan.

“The consequences are going to be unbelievably bad,” Bush said, without, I imagine, even a hint of irony.

That this callous cretin would suggest anywhere, at any time, for any reason, that the “consequences” of another president’s actions “are going to be unbelievably bad” for Afghanistan is blatant proof of Bush’s genetically programmed stupidity and obscene, near nauseating hubris.

Then, Bush proceeded to demonstrate that he is damaged in ways that only a psychologist could possibly decipher and is incapable of introspection or remorse for the horror he has wrought on so many people, in so many places because of his orders as commander-in-chief.

First, he told his German guests that the Afghan withdrawal was a mistake.

Given his atrocious geopolitical record, Bush should be banned from ever uttering, under any circumstances and in any context, the word: “mistake”.

Still, to define how Bush and equally culpable company went about methodically defacing Iraq and Afghanistan as “mistakes” would, itself, be a mistake.

The injuries and atrocities Iraqis and Afghans have endured in the long, bitter aftermath of Bush’s decision to invade cannot be diminished or dismissed simply as errors.

They were and remain the inhumane corollaries of the sinister, calculated choices made by an inept president who was convinced that it was his and America’s destiny to “liberate” two distant lands for the same evangelical reasons.

Second, remarkably, Bush took implicit credit – amid all the death and destruction the American-led invasion has visited on Afghans – for brutally refashioning Afghan society as a recuperative antidote to the Taliban’s brutality.

“It’s unbelievable how that society changed from the brutality of the Taliban,” Bush said.

No, what is unbelievable, is Bush’s lunatic idea that the US military occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan had any redeeming or salutary impact on the fates of both nations.

Finally, and so cynically, Bush attempted to rewrite his incriminating history by implying that he unleashed American forces and drones on Afghanistan not to rout the Taliban or punish it for harbouring al-Qaeda, but to emancipate women and girls.

“All of a sudden – sadly – I’m afraid Afghan women and girls are going to suffer unspeakable harm,” Bush said from the comfort of his picture-postcard oasis.

The name George W Bush is synonymous with the suffering and unspeakable harm girls, boys, women and men in Iraq and Afghanistan have braved for decades.

With the eager help of grovelling, amnesiac television hosts, Bush has mounted a muted, yet determined campaign to rehabilitate his foul reputation. In its place, a new, gracious, if slightly awkward and endearing caricature of Bush has emerged.

It is a sick mirage.

Bush is an unindicted mass murderer. He ought to be sharing a bunk bed with Ratko Mladic at The Hague. Failing that, he should keep monastically quiet and go away.

As penance, it is the least this intolerable piece of crud could do.

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