

Oaf Of Office

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Watching John Kerry lip-synch the oath of office, I couldn't help wondering, 'what if.'

Here on stage in Washington was the winner-class warmed and protected by cashmere and tax cuts against the strange, nipple-chilling cold. Hell had frozen over.

Our President said, "It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation." Well, no, it isn't.

Our President said, "We will widen retirement savings and health insurance." No, he won't.

Our President said, "America will not pretend that jailed dissidents prefer their chains." Yes, he will.

Our President said, "And our country must abandon all the habits of racism." Oh, sure.

He doesn't believe a single word he's saying. And all over America, everyone knows he's lying and America is truly relieved.

America doesn't want to give up the habit of racism. Karl Rove doesn't. Jeb Bush doesn't. If not for challenging hundreds of thousands of voters in Black precincts of Ohio and other swing states, if not for purging thousands more from voter rolls for the crime of voting while Black, you wouldn't be president now, would you, Mr. President?

You won't "pretend that jailed dissidents prefer their chains," unless they are chained by your buck-buddies in Saudi Arabia.

You'll "support democratic movements" so long as the citizens of Venezuela don't get carried away and decide that democracy means they can choose a leader you don't like.

And you'll "widen Social Security and health insurance"? Who are you kidding? I just got a doctor bill for \$5,200 - should I send it to you at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue?

You said, "You have seen that life is fragile, and evil is real, and courage triumphs." What you meant was, "Courage is fragile and real evil triumphs." Indeed your entire campaign was about American cowardice: "they" are coming to get us. Americans, scared for their lives, soiled their underpants and waddled to the polls crying, "Georgie, save us!"

Franklin Roosevelt said in his inaugural, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." But he didn't have Dick Cheney creating from his bunker a government which is little more than a Wal-Mart of Fear: midnight snatchings of citizens for uncharged crimes, wars to hunt for imaginary weapons aimed at Los Angeles, DNA data banks of kids and grandmas, the

Chicken Little sky-is-falling social security spook-show, and shoe-searches in airports. Fear is your only product.

In another world, in which all votes are counted, J.F. Kerry would have gathered most of those arcane chits called “electoral votes” and would have taken that oath today.

But, dear Reader, there’s one cold statistic Kerry voters must face. The fact that Republicans monkeyed with the votes in swing states doesn’t wash away that big red stain: 59 million Americans marched to the polls and voted for George W. Bush.

If bin Laden doesn’t scare you, THAT should.

Because if 59 million Americans agreed with George Bush that every millionaire’s son, like him, shouldn’t have to pay inheritance taxes; that sucking up to Saudi petrocrats constitutes a foreign policy; that killing Muslims in Mesopotamia will make them less inclined to kill us in Manhattan; that turning over social security to the casino operators that gave us Enron, WorldCom and world depression is smart economics; then, fine, Mr. Bush deserves the job. But most Americans, bless’em, don’t actually believe any of that hokum. YET MOST STILL VOTED FOR HIM!

What we witnessed on November 2, 2004 was a 59-million strong army of pinheads on parade ready to gamble away their social security so long as George Bush makes sure that boys kill each other, not kiss each other; who feel right proud that our uniformed services can kick some scrawny brown people in the ass in some far off place when we’re mad and can’t find Osama; who can’t bring themselves to vote for a guy with a snooty Boston accent who’s never been to a NASCAR tractor pull and who certainly thinks anyone who does is a low-Q beer-burping blockhead. And they are.

Today we witnessed more than the coronation of some privileged little munchkin of mendacity. It is the triumphal re-occupation of our nation by nitwits who think Ollie North’s a hero not a conman, who can’t name their congressman, who believe that Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden were going steady, who can’t tell Afghanistan from Souvlaki-stan. Bloated with lies and super-size fries, they clomped to the polls 59 million strong to vent their small-minded little hatreds on us all.

When I looked today at the oaf of office, I could not shake the feeling that this election was an intelligence test that America flunked.

Catch Greg Palast’s film, “Bush Family Fortunes,” at the Freedom Film Festival at Sundance, Thursday, January 27. For more information or to sign up for Palast’s writings, go to www.GregPalast.com Palast is the author of the New York Times bestseller, *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*

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