

Opinion

Call it heartless: Bush's emotional incapacities

Joshua Frank

Online Journal Contributing Writer

August 19, 2005—President Bush isn't having all that great of a summer. Sure his team ushered CAFTA through Congress and will most likely get a stamp of approval for their rankled Supreme Court nominee, John Roberts. But as the dog days of summer heat up, President Bush is sweating bullets as he lays low out in Texas.

Why the evacuation from Washington to Crawford? Well, his approval ratings are fast plummeting. Republican Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist turned his back on Bush and came out in favor of stem cell research. Members of the president's cabal may be facing federal indictments over the leaking of a CIA operative. Iraq isn't looking so good, either—soldiers are getting blown up daily. Some of their bereaved parents are even camping outside his plush ranch demanding an explanation for their children's deaths. Indeed there isn't much news the Bush administration can feel good about.

Apparently the president isn't taking this too well. According to Doug Thompson of Capital Hill Blue, White House aides "describe a president whose public persona masks an angry, obscenity-spouting man who berates staff, unleashes tirades against those who disagree with him and ends meetings in the Oval Office with 'get out of here!'"

Bush's more than frequent mood swings have been taking their toll on White House staff who now release "weather reports" which warn of Bush's current emotional state. "'Calm seas' means Bush is calm," writes Thompson, "while 'tornado alert' is a warning that he is pissed at the world."

Bush's emotional instability is only part of his problem says celebrated novelist E.L. Doctorow, who claims Bush's real issue has to do with his incapacity to feel. That's why he doesn't care for the dead soldiers of the grieving parents. That's why he throws tantrums in the Oval Office, like a beleaguered adolescent male. Bush doesn't have the mind or the capability to understand death.

"You see him joking with the press," says Doctorow, "peering under the table for the WMD he can't seem to find, you see him at rallies strutting up to the stage . . . to the roar of the carefully screened crowd, smiling and waving, triumphal, a he-man. He does not mourn. He doesn't understand why he should mourn. He is satisfied during the course of a speech written for him to look solemn for a moment and speak of the brave young Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country."

He's too ethnocentric and masculine to express grief for others. Hence why he has been the ideal marionette to act out the callous neocon agenda. The perfect bobbing head to rally support for the most right-wing of causes. Not only can Bush not think for himself, he does not have the ability to admit he's ever been wrong. These are not traits of a leader but of a very troubled soul. So don't expect Bush to ever show empathy for Cindy Sheehan, or the hundreds of other parents who have lost their sons and daughters unjustly. Not to mention the tens of thousands of Iraqis who have been killed in the name of democracy.

Maybe Bush needs a cocktail. Looks like the baby Jesus isn't doing it for him.

Joshua Frank is the author of the brand new book, " Left Out!: How Liberals Helped Reelect George W. Bush", published by Common Courage Press. To order a discounted copy and to contact Frank, visit www.brickburner.org.

Copyright © 1998–2005 Online Journal™. All rights reserved.