

## W VI

We'll use a "subtle shift" as a watchword for our discussion of America's worst President, George W. Bush. If it is the purpose of the government to spend the people's money, and we eliminate the somewhat subjective viewpoint of who the money should come from, we are left with the subjective viewpoint of how the money is spent. When W took office, President Clinton had left a \$237 billion dollar surplus in the Treasury. W and his advisors' felt like the budget surplus was the people's money and they embarked on a campaign to reform the tax code to make sure that there would never be a surplus again. W went into hard sell mode, even holding town hall meetings, to have Congress sign into law a \$1.35 trillion tax cut program. Now, as math challenged as I am, I can see that the program is giving breaks that are five times greater than what was deemed as "surplus" in the Treasury. I wonder why W's accountants didn't see the discrepancy?

Perhaps it was because of who would benefit from the bulk of the tax breaks. I'm betting you're guessing the middle class and the poor, right? I mean who actually needs their money more, a minimum wage worker or a billionaire? Well, at the Bush household, they're tired of carrying all of those poor folks on their backs. I'm guessing that all of the talk at the country club was about how awful the death tax was and how awful it was to have to pay taxes at the regular rate from money earned from investments. It just doesn't seem fair to have to pay the same rate of taxes on something you inherited as someone who gets up and goes to work each morning has to pay, does it?

Now, we have previously discussed the widespread belief that W is severely dyslexic. So, he could have read \$1.35 trillion as \$1.35 billion and felt like he'd still have money in the bank to invade Iraq, Afghanistan, or anyone else he felt like going after. In fact, in W's mind, he would have plenty in surplus to invest heavily in America's new cottage industry, surveillance. "The Patriot Act", which no patriot would have voted for, opened up the Treasury doors to every Tom, Dick and Harry who could pitch W's administration on a surveillance device. It didn't hurt if some of the pitchers were insiders, like former Homeland Security secretary Michael Chertoff. Chertoff seemed to think that the only way American fliers would be safe is for all of them to be subjected to a full body scan before boarding an airplane. Surprise!

Chertoff had an interest in the company that manufactured the scanners. No reason why a little public service shouldn't bring a little private reward, right?

The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the Bush tax cuts added about \$1.6 trillion to the debt between 2001 and 2011. That number doesn't include the interest. So the gift of tax relief for the wealthy has saddled the middle class and the poor with the largest deficit ever recorded. Is it true, like Cheney said, "that deficit's don't matter"? Well, it looks like they matter in the terms of income inequality. Between the years of 1993 and 2011, the top 1 percent's incomes escalated by 57.5 percent, while incomes of the bottom 99 percent rose by a paltry 5.8 percent. We'll call it a "subtle shift" of income from the have nots to the haves. Even if we make allowances for the 1% receiving the monthly BushCheney stock pick list; you know, which stock's to invest in because we're about to invade another country, or we're about to pass legislation that will have us spying on every man, woman and child, or countries where foreign trade will be encouraged, the transfer of wealth came largely from the top 1% being relieved of their tax burden.

There is a popular phrase in Texas that simplistically reveals W's devotion to pandering to the well-heeled. The phrase is, "You got to dance with them what brung you". W didn't care what tune, what physical machinations were required, he just wanted to please the ones that brought him to the dance. His shameless loss of any dignity he might have had in being his own man, forging his own path, writing his own legacy, were all thrown out of the window in the interest of carrying the water for "them what brought him".

More another time.