

FOIA Marker

This is not a textual record. This FOIA Marker indicates that material has been removed during FOIA processing by George W. Bush Presidential Library staff.

Records Management, White House Office of

Subject Files - FG006-27 (Office of Senior Advisor - Karl Rove)

Stack:	Row:	Sect.:	Shelf:	Pos.:	FRC ID:	Location or Hollinger ID:	NARA Number:	OA Number:
W	11	4	5	1	9717	22580	10799	10741

Folder Title:

557243

557243

FG006-27

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

14 April 2003

Dear Eli-

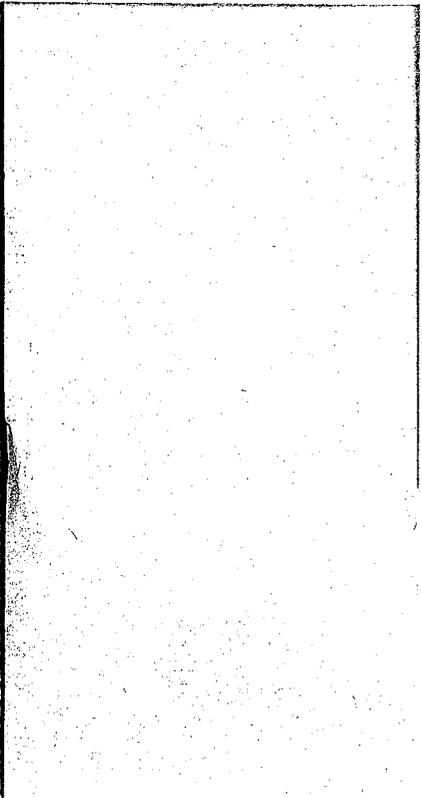
Thanks for the copy of Elizabeth
Drews' reviews in the NY Review
of Books. Not bad, could have been
worse. Appreciate you sending it
on to me.

Best,
Lind

APR 16 2003

~~APR 15 2003~~

Mr. Eli Jacobs
570 Lexington Avenue
3rd Floor
New York, New York 10022



ESSEX MANAGEMENT COMPANY

FAX TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Susan-
disson
Jue

Date: 4/10/03

No. of pages: 6
(including cover)

TO: KARL ROVE

FAX NO. 202-456-0191

FROM: ELI JAWBS

MESSAGE: _____

If you do not receive all of the pages, please call 212-688-7166

To transmit to us, please dial 212-751-4461

The Enforcer

Elizabeth Drew

Bush's Brain: How Karl Rove Made George W. Bush Presidential
by James Moore and Wayne Slater.
Wiley, 395 pp., \$27.95

Boy Genius: Karl Rove, the Brains Behind the Remarkable Political Triumph of George W. Bush
by Lou Dubose, Jan Reid,
and Carl M. Cannon.
PublicAffairs, 253 pp., \$15.00 (paper)

No previous presidential aide has had the power and influence that Karl Rove has in the White House of George W. Bush. He has been Bush's closest adviser since he first ran for governor of Texas. The authors of *Bush's Brain* write that during Bush's six years as governor of Texas "nothing important happened without his [Rove's] imprimatur." Yet Rove's work takes place behind the scenes; he rarely gives television interviews. Most of his activities are carried out in secrecy, and other White House officials are very reluctant to talk about what he does. The Bush White House is more clamped down than any other in recent history; Bush hates leaks, which he believes damaged his father's reelection chances, and Rove is his enforcer.

Both of the recent biographies of Karl Rove concentrate on his role in Texas politics and in Bush's rise, but they go a long way toward helping us understand Bush's presidency. The more recent one, *Bush's Brain*, by James Moore and Wayne Slater, two experienced Texas reporters who have covered the pair for many years, has fresh information about Rove's influence on Bush. *Boy Genius*, Bush's edgy nickname for Rove, by two Texas reporters as well as Carl Cannon, a writer for the conservative *Weekly Standard*, goes over much of the same ground but is less probing about Rove's fascinating, and troubling, character, and his relationship with Bush.

Both books tell us about the heretofore-little-explored early relationship between Bush and Rove and show how it developed. The fifty-two-year-old Rove, a self-described "nerd" who likes nothing more than studying political history and analyzing electoral statistics, was born in Colorado in 1950, the son of a mineral geologist whose family moved about the country. He spent most of his early years in

Karl Rove



what he calls a "relatively conservative state," Utah; he attended the university there and later the University of Texas, as well as George Mason University, and never took a degree. He has a somewhat professorial manner (when he's not red-faced and vituperative on the attack), and has read widely, especially in American history.

Rove made his first important political connections as an officer of the national group called College Republicans, which has branches on hundreds of campuses and has produced a number of well-known political operators on the right, several of whom Rove has worked with. They include the late Lee Atwater, who became a model for Rove and helped to advance his career; the late Terry Dolan, the founder of the first sophisticated right-wing political organization, the National Conservative Political Action Committee, or NCPAC; Ralph Reed, the former executive director of the Christian Coalition and now a flourishing political consultant (he was instrumental in Bush's campaign for the

nomination, in particular using his phone banks on behalf of Bush during the South Carolina primary); and Grover Norquist, founder and head of Americans for Tax Reform and the organizer of a coalition of some one hundred groups on the right, all dedicated to reducing the role of government.

In 1973, with Atwater's help, Rove ran successfully for national chairman of the College Republicans. According to a current associate, he remembers to this day exactly who was for him and who opposed him. From Atwater, with whom Rove worked soon after in an election in South Carolina, he got an early introduction to the ways of South Carolina politics. Atwater was a native of the state as well as responsible for much of the distinctive barbarity of its political campaigns. That experience was to prove invaluable in Bush's victory there in 2000. Atwater also taught Rove how to make the most of such "wedge" issues as patriotism and race in order to divide the opposition. Thus, after being badly beaten by John McCain in New

Hampshire, Bush made a calculated appearance at South Carolina's Bob Jones University, which banned interracial dating, thus appealing to the fundamentalist vote.

Rove's chairmanship of the College Republicans in the mid-1970s allowed him to frequent the offices of the Republican National Committee when it was headed by the elder George Bush, who hired him as his personal assistant. (One of Rove's assignments was to turn over the father's keys when his eldest son came to town and wanted to use a family car.) Later, Rove moved to Austin to help the elder Bush's presidential campaign. Rove came to see son George, who was then part-owner of the Texas Rangers baseball team, as having political promise and sensed he might be the ideal instrument for fulfilling Rove's own ambition to have national power. He steadily nudged George W. toward running first for the governorship of Texas, and then for president. The consultant, as the recent books make clear, was more ambitious for his client than his client was for himself. In the meantime, Rove set up what became a lucrative business as a political and business consultant; he was particularly skillful at running direct-mail campaigns. Before long, he had reorganized Texas politics so thoroughly that the once-Democratic state became dominated by Republicans—almost all of them Rove clients—who held every statewide elective office.

According to both books, Rove's career as a political operator was marked from the beginning by "dirty tricks," which Rove once referred to as "pranks." He learned from Atwater, for example, the efficacy of whispering campaigns—spreading scurrilous charges by radio, organized phone calls, and "push-polls," which circulate a rumor through the wording of a question. Texas Governor Ann Richards, whom Bush successfully challenged in 1994, was said to be a lesbian; John McCain was rumored to be mentally unstable and the father of a black child. (The McCains had adopted an orphan from Bangladesh.) Rove's clients, including George W. Bush, have been able to stay aloof from such smears, protesting that they had nothing to do with them. In *Bush's Brain* Moore and Slater write:

The New York Review

A Rove candidate was always able to honestly argue that he was running a clean, issues-oriented campaign because Rove stirred up the dirt without involving his client. He made phone calls to reporters, supplied documents, and produced third-party groups with damaging allegations. This approach, already a template for the modern electoral campaign, was refined by Rove with a new precision.

Rove sometimes blunders. Absorbed in his study of political statistics, he didn't see McCain gaining on Bush in New Hampshire until it was too late, and McCain beat him by eighteen points. Next came South Carolina and vengeance. But Rove was always confident that Bush would defeat the less well funded and well organized McCain. When it came to the general election, Rove made another mistake, predicting that Bush would defeat Gore by six points; overconfident in the closing weeks, he allowed Bush to run a leisurely campaign and wasted the candidate's time and resources in California, where he had no chance of winning.

After the 2000 election, Rove not only became Bush's White House political adviser but effectively took over the Republican National Committee. Rove forced out his and Bush's first choice as chairman, former governor James Gilmore of Virginia, whom he didn't find compliant enough, and installed Mark Racicot, the former governor of Montana and a friend of Bush's, who had been very helpful during the Florida recount, making numerous television appearances pressing Bush's case. But in fact Rove runs the RNC through its deputy chairman, Jack Oliver, a longtime Bush family loyalist.

About a year before the 2000 election, Rove made an alliance with the anti-tax lobbyist Grover Norquist, probably the most influential figure in organizing the American right, without which Bush could not have become president and probably couldn't be reelected in 2004. Rove not only cultivates the right, the Republican Party's base, but through Norquist he is trying to broaden the constituencies he reaches. Both men are expert coalition builders, and together they are attempting to assemble a coalition to guarantee conservative Republican dominance of American politics.

They are going about it in several different ways. While the tax cuts that Bush—like Norquist—advocates favor the very rich, Rove and Norquist have also been concentrating on appeals to small businesses, which maintain one

of the most powerful lobbies in Washington and whose owners have long wanted to abolish the estate tax (which Norquist has dubbed "the death tax"). That aim was accomplished in Bush's first tax bill, and small business also favors his new tax legislation. Rove and Norquist act on the assumption that stockholders, who currently are estimated to make up 50 percent of American households and 70 percent of voters (what Norquist terms "the investor class"), would favor Bush's proposal to eliminate the tax on dividends. (About the investor class, Norquist says, "Rove understands it.")

The two men also collaborate on getting more ethnic groups to vote Republican, not just Hispanics but also Muslims and immigrants from India and Pakistan—a large number of whom, Norquist observes, own small businesses. Rove has been closely following Norquist's efforts to expand the influence of his own coalition of groups on the right by installing branches of it in additional states. When the two men meet, which they do fairly frequently, Norquist shows Rove a map indicating where his state coalition groups exist—there are now thirty of them—and Rove has urged him to set up organizations in West Virginia, Missouri, and North Carolina, all states important to Bush's reelection. "He keeps pushing," Norquist says. (Rove perceived that Bush could carry West Virginia, traditionally a Democratic state, in 2000; and, after an intensive effort involving not only television advertising but also three trips to the state by the candidate, two by Dick Cheney, and appearances by Bush's parents, as well as Charlton Heston, who received a hero's welcome, Bush won it. Moore and Slater write: "No decision Rove made in the 2000 general election more clearly illustrated his political genius.") Four times a year, Rove attends Norquist's Wednesday morning meetings with his allies in Washington, and he has held fundraisers for Norquist's group.

Bush's campaign for president was hardly the first deceptive presidential campaign—FDR in 1932 pledged a balanced budget—but in hindsight its cynicism was astonishing. Having won the nomination with the strong help of the Republican Party's conservative base, and aware that elections in the US are won by attracting voters who are neither strongly liberal nor strongly conservative, Bush tacked toward the middle, especially for the cameras—there were several scenes, for example, showing him with black children.

During the summer of 2000, when I remarked to Norquist that Bush was apparently "moving to the center," he quickly set me straight. Bush was doing just what the right wanted, he said: backing tax cuts, missile defense, privatization of social security, the "right to life," limits on punitive damages (or "tort reform"), and opposing gun control. Since the election, of course, Bush has governed from the right.

Rove has been promoting tort reform for years, and sees it as an effective political weapon. When he persuaded Bush to favor it in his first race for the Texas governorship, one of the clients of his consulting firm was Philip Morris. "I sort of talked him into that one," Rove said, according to *Boy Genius*. Moreover, Rove understood that the trial lawyers not only support the Democrats but also, having won large contingency fees, could make huge contributions to their favored candidates. It could help Republicans if those fees were diminished. Tort reform has now become a national Republican cause as well. Norquist says, "if you're a pro-business party you want to curb punitive damages."

In the 2002 midterm elections, Rove was more active than any White House adviser had ever been before. He was instrumental not only in selecting Senate candidates but also, as in the case of North Carolina's Elizabeth Dole, in discouraging others from running. He had done the same in Texas. From Rove's fertile imagination came the idea, months before the 2002 midterm elections, in which control of the Senate was at stake, to capitalize on the Senate Democrats' opposition to the part of the bill creating a Department of Homeland Security which denied its employees traditional civil service protections. This was seen as a way to break the power of the public employees union, which supports the Democrats. Norquist believes that the union is a force for the expansion of government. Democrats who opposed the bill because of its anti-union provisions were branded "impatriotic."

At first, it seemed absurd to make a critical campaign issue over a bill to create a new federal department. But Bush was willing to do so, and it testified to Rove's dark genius that the strategy worked. In a speech by Rove to the Republican National Committee in January 2002, he urged Republicans to take political advantage of Bush's war on terrorism, arguing that the pub-

lic has more confidence in Republicans on national defense. There's reason to suspect that the resolution approving war against Iraq was deliberately timed by Rove and Bush to occur just before the 2002 midterm election.

The charge of a lack of patriotism helped to defeat Senator Max Cleland of Georgia, who had lost two legs and an arm in the Vietnam War. Of course it was outrageous to brand Cleland "unpatriotic," but Bush and Rove are not easily embarrassed. Bush, for all his supposedly easygoing manner, is apparently no less ruthless than his mentor. A television ad showed Cleland along with pictures of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. The Republican senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, himself a Vietnam veteran, was so incensed by the ad that he threatened to run his own ad endorsing Cleland unless it was canceled. After Hagel's vehement protests, it was, but the damage had been done.

Essentially the same ad was run against the South Dakota Democratic senator Tim Johnson, whose son had served in the military in Afghanistan and is currently serving in Iraq. Johnson won, but just barely. South Dakota has been a battleground for Bush and Rove since Tom Daschle, a native of the state, became majority leader of the Senate in 2001, and the midterm election in South Dakota became a proxy fight between Bush and Daschle. In November 2001, an ad was run showing Daschle, who was not up for reelection, next to a picture of Saddam Hussein. So much for Bush's 2000 campaign pledge to "change the tone" in Washington. The authors of *Boy Genius* make a persuasive case that Rove was well aware of the ads, and may have had a part in conceiving them. The Republicans retook the Senate in November 2002.

Bush's Brain portrays Rove as an implacable, unforgiving man who sees things in black and white. In a memo for a Texas client he once described his campaign strategy as "Attack. Attack. Attack." And according to Moore and Slater, Rove regards a political opponent or a rival consultant as someone who must be punished, if possible destroyed. (Rove is so competitive, the authors write, that his wife told a reporter, "Even in croquet he'd be hitting my ball so far I was crying on vacation.")

Though John McCain has vigorously supported Bush on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and on some other matters as well, he remains on the list of enemies. Political consultants and lobbyists who supported McCain in 2000 had to maneuver nimbly if they were to gain entrée into the Bush inner circle; few were able to do so. Several McCain supporters, some of them highly qualified, were barred from jobs in the Bush administration. After Congress passed McCain's campaign finance reform bill, Bush indulged in the petty act of signing it suddenly one morning, with only a few White House staff present. The same sort of pettiness led the White House to snub Vermont Senator Jim Jeffords and helped push him from the Republican side of the aisle to become an independent and vote with the Democrats, temporarily giving the Democrats control of the Senate and dealing a huge blow to Bush's program.

One disturbing aspect of the close working relationship between Bush and Rove is that each man is capable of deep and lasting resentments. Now that Karen Hughes, the other staff member who was probably as close to Bush as Rove is, has returned to Texas and only occasionally comes to Washington, there appears to be no one to interrupt the mutually reinforcing anger that runs between the two men. Bush's resentments extend not just to political opponents but also to entire countries, not only France and Germany, but Turkey as well. (A former Clinton foreign policy adviser calls it "policy by snit.")

Bush and Rove were widely credited with having the audacity to risk political reversal and campaign hard in the 2002 midterm election—especially since their efforts succeeded: the Republicans gained two seats to retake the Senate, and increased their House majority by six seats, only the third time since the Civil War that the party holding the White House gained House seats in a midterm election. Yet the Republican victory was not as sweeping as the television commentators suggested on election night. In fact, several of the Senate races were very close—a shift of only 107,000 votes in Missouri, Minnesota, and New Hampshire would have kept the Senate in Democratic control—and some of the House victories could be attributed to reapportionments creating districts more favorable to Re-

publicans. Moore and Slater argue, plausibly, that the strategy of Bush and Rove in 2002 was more a matter of necessity than audacity, because Bush needed the mandate that he didn't receive in 2000. But he is acting as if he received a larger mandate in 2002 than he did.

Since then, with Republican control of Congress, Bush dominates Washington, with Karl Rove by his side. And in Congress's agenda this year is their program for the 2004 election: another steep tax cut; a ban on "partial-birth abortion"; trapping the Democrats into opposing the nomination of a conservative Hispanic for an important judgeship; and tort reform.

Rove protests to outsiders that he's not involved in foreign policy, knowing that this would appear unseemly for a political consultant. But he does in fact take part in foreign policy decisions—as usual, from the perspective of what's in the President's electoral interests. This is probably the most tightly concealed aspect of his many activities. Press reports have documented his urging Bush to tilt his Middle East policy further toward Ariel Sharon—seeking to solidify Bush's support from the Christian right, which strongly favors a Greater Israel, and to increase Bush's share of the Jewish vote in 2004. Of course Rove wasn't alone in this view; he was joined in it by the group of conservatives and neoconservatives (including Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz) who saw Israel as the only truly reliable ally in the Middle East. Less well known was Rove's intervention in a presidentially appointed mission to seek peace in Sudan. He urged negotiators to find a solution favoring the Christian forces in the south—which are supported by the Christian right—over their Muslim opponents who govern in the north.

One of the more striking indications of Rove's influence on foreign policy may have occurred this year in a statement Bush made in his press conference on March 6, while he was still maneuvering to get the UN to approve a second resolution endorsing the imminent war in Iraq. Even if the resolution didn't have enough votes, Bush said, the members of the Security Council should vote because "it's time for people to show their cards." This recalled

an incident from Rove's career while he was still a consultant in Texas; when he went ahead with what he knew would be a hostile hearing before a state senate committee, controlled by the Democrats, on his nomination to serve on the board of East Texas University. Though he knew that he would be rejected, he explained later, he had gone ahead with the hearing because "I was going to make them do it." Bush's vow to proceed with the UN vote was a blunder; he later had to go back on it.

Moore and Slater argue that Rove has been deeply involved in Bush's policy toward Iraq and it seems altogether likely that he has; but here they are on weaker ground than in other parts of the book because much of their case is based on surmise, and they also neglect the strong influence of Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz. Still, some aspects of Bush's handling of the matter have a Roveian ring. When Colin Powell was preparing his presentation to the UN Security Council on February 6, he resisted citing the alleged links between Iraq and al-Qaeda; he was forced to do so at the White House's insistence. This was the weakest part of his presentation. It has not been established that Rove was involved in the decisions about Powell's speech; but it is a safe bet that he took the view that going to war with Iraq would have more public support if people thought that it was involved with the September 11 attack and that if officials said it often enough, the public would believe it. In fact, one poll published shortly before the war began showed that 42 percent of the American people believe that Iraq was involved in the attack.

Moore and Slater think that Rove is a dangerous man, but their book is not biased or malicious, based as it is on solid reporting (until they venture into the subject of Iraq). They worry about someone so single-mindedly dedicated to his employer's political success sitting in the White House with ready access to the instruments of power. It's hard to think of a precedent for this—apart from Richard Nixon's White House, with its "enemies list" which resulted in audited tax returns and other retaliatory actions. The authors of *Bush's Brain* quote a Washington consultant who works for both parties as saying that Rove is "Nixonian," and his political record prompts the thought

that Rove is Bush's Nixon. Like Nixon, Rove sees enemies all around him; he is bent on vengeance and isn't averse to employing unscrupulous methods or exploiting patriotic emotions. His nearly unchecked power is disturbing—but Bush has to be held accountable for his actions.

More important than Rove's personal character, though, is that the brilliant visionary who, with manic energy, remade the politics of the state of Texas—recruiting candidates, throwing opponents on the defensive, raising vast amounts of money—is now trying to do the same thing to the nation. □

Ron Edmonds/AP/Wide World



Karl Rove watching President Bush speak at a news conference in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, Washington, D.C., shortly after the 2002 election