

George Bush Is a Very Destructive Man; He Needs To Be Removed From Office

*Dr. Justin A. Frank, a Washington, D.C.-based psychoanalyst and Professor of Psychiatry at George Washington University Medical School, was interviewed by Jeffrey Steinberg on March 26, 2006. Dr. Frank is the author of the bestselling book, *Bush on the Couch: Inside the Mind of the President* (HarperCollins: hardcover 2004, paperback 2005).*



EIR: Let me first ask, what's the status of the book? I understand it's been translated and is being circulated in several languages, in addition to English.

Frank: Yes, it's been translated into Arabic, Korean, and German. The British edition is coming out in May, and that's got a more updated Epilogue. The Epilogue in the American edition paperback goes through the 2004 election and through all the debates of that Summer, and into the beginning of Bush's second term in early 2005. It still gets lots of media attention, largely because of the trouble that Bush is finding himself in.

EIR: That's terrific. Obviously, since the publication of the original paperback edition, and the update you included in that book, Bush went through a pretty horrific 2005. I wonder if you could start by giving us your updated psychological assessment of President Bush?

Frank: Well, my updated psychological assessment is essentially, that he is still very much the way he was: Which was that he suffers from a couple of basic things which I will describe. But I've gotten the sense recently, that Bush is like a Rorschach test for the left: Everybody has a different theory about him.

My clinical sense of him is that he is a man who is compromised by a couple of things:

One is by learning disabilities, which makes it hard for him to read, and therefore hard for him to visualize and anticipate events.

He is also compromised by his long history of alcoholism. That has led him to see the world in black and white, and for him to have to use black-and-white thinking, in order to

manage his anxiety—and *everything* makes him anxious. So, he has to surround himself with people who agree with him, who see things the way he does, and who never question him.

Both of these problems—his difficulty processing information and his need to manage his anxiety by seeing the world in black and white—make him impervious to criticism, and he blocks out anything that he doesn't like. So he actually attacks reality; he attacks material reality in ways that I have not seen, except occasionally with President Reagan.

I've never seen anybody so distort external reality the way Bush does. What he does not like, he just closes his eyes to. He's sort of like an ostrich, who puts his head in the sand, only he puts his head in the Crawford desert sand.

The other thing he does when he's anxious, is that he dissociates, which means that he switches off part of his mind, and disconnects in order to manage anxiety. Disturbing news is like water going off a duck's back; if you saw the pictures of him in the "[Fahrenheit] 9/11" movie by Michael Moore, reading the book when he was told about the attack on the Twin Towers, you see a kind of vague, glazed look in his eyes. And you see the same thing when he's being briefed about the Katrina flood, the day before it happened: He has a way of disconnecting inside, whenever he's flooded with anxiety he cannot manage.

Dissociation is a simple but profound way to manage overwhelming emotion. Bush has what psychiatrists call a problem with "affect regulation"; he cannot regulate his feelings by thinking them through, which is why he has to increase his exercise routines, increase his prayers, increase his time away from the White House, have only very brief meetings. He just does not want to do anything that will cause him pressure.

So, the diagnosis is very hard to make, and something I'm reluctant to do. I prefer to think much more of a long-range character diagnosis, which is that he is fundamentally a dissociated man, with paranoid and grandiose features. And the grandiose elements are really compensatory for feeling quite inadequate and frightened.

That's a mouthful. I don't know if that gives you exactly what you had in mind, about a specific diagnosis. I wrote in the Epilogue that he really has not changed, other than that he is becoming more grandiose, as bad news about Iraq and our economy continues to mount, and you can see him



University of St. Thomas website

Former Enron CEO Ken Lay, whom Bush jokingly claimed never to have known. Bush's KWD, or "Kenny Who? Defense," is his characteristic reaction of denial laced with feigned surprise.

sort of unravelling.

As I wrote in the Epilogue, people started using my hard-back book during the debates in 2004. Kerry used it, and he even quoted from it, when he talked about how Bush was living in a fantasy world of spin. And he used some Alcoholics Anonymous terms, when he said Bush was "constitutionally incapable" of telling the truth.

One of the things that happens with a person like Bush, is that he becomes a compulsive and congenital liar. And lying is a complicated thing also, in that, as a liar like he is, he believes what he says is true. He lies ultimately to himself. So, when he said the other day that he never made a link between Saddam Hussein and 9/11, and that he never made a link between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda, and that he doesn't know where people get these ideas, it makes me think he believes it when he says that, and that's what's very disturbing. It's as disturbing as if he were just a basic liar.

Nixon was just a liar. This guy *believes* his lies. Nixon, you could see, would be nervous and anxious when he lied. Bush is anxious when he's caught in a lie, directly and immediately, but less so when he just simply makes things up if he is not under pressure. For instance, when somebody asked him if he knew Jack Abramoff, he freezes, and says, "I never met him." And clearly there are pictures of him with each of Abramoff's children, and he used to talk to them about their bar mitzvahs and various things. And the same thing he did when asked if he knew Ken Lay, the CEO of Enron. He quipped, "Kenny Who?" In my book I call that reaction of

total denial laced with feigned surprise the "Kenny Who? Defense" (KWD).

But, when he lies, it's very specific and matter-of-fact (I should call it matter of fiction.) He makes a simple statement, and he believes what he is saying to be totally true. So, his sense of certainty serves him well, and is part of his ability to be convincing. A lot of people used to confuse that for strength of character, but actually it's a defect in his character. His *need* for certainty is so great, that he cannot, ever, doubt himself. So, whatever he is saying at the moment, is what he feels he's always felt.

EIR: When we had a brief discussion the other day, anticipating this interview, you had a very fascinating description about one particular aspect of the President's personality, that you had mentioned earlier. I wonder if you could elaborate on it, this inability to visualize?

Frank: Yes. One of the things that happens with people who have certain kinds of learning disabilities, and who are unable to process information, is that they cannot convert it into images which would help them think and anticipate. I don't think he could visualize the damage Katrina would inflict on New Orleans—partly because he dissociates and partly because he cannot process information in a way that is useful to him.

This is not unique to Bush. Those of you who have been in school will remember, that there are certain people who "pull all-nighters," or who procrastinate and write their papers at the last minute, because they get a rush of adrenalin which gives them an ability to focus. But they actually are not able to visualize the fact that they need to do this writing over the next two weeks; they put it off, because they are not able to visualize it. Well, he is that way in the extreme, in that he can actually not form images in his mind, I think, of what's happening, until after it's happened. So, he couldn't imagine Katrina; he couldn't imagine planes flying into buildings. He's being serious, because he has a deficit in the *capacity* to imagine it. It's not, "who would have thought it, who could imagine it," because he can't imagine it: He's not able to visualize it. He was telling the truth about himself not being able to imagine planes flying into buildings or the levees breaking. It's just that others *were* able to imagine it and warned him in advance. Then he wasn't willing or able to process what he was told.

And it has to do with processing information in the face of a particular kind of deficit neurologically, where you really can't visualize. So, there are some people, for instance, who can escape into reading, and when they read a book, they're able to completely visualize the scene. It's like being in a movie, it's a movie in their own mind, and that's why a lot of people who like to read, don't like to go to movies of the same books, because they don't like somebody else's "movie" of their "movie" of their book. Whereas, somebody like Bush is not *able* to visualize things when he reads, so what he reads

often doesn't make sense to him.

I can relate to that, because I have an element of that in myself, and it was one of the things I discovered over time, in reading about him, and looking at him, paying attention to him. I know that sometimes I'll have to re-read a sentence a couple of times, in order to get the image of the scene. I was just doing that this morning, actually, reading a novel, to get the image.

Bush, if he doesn't get it right away, makes it up. And if he is unable to visualize it completely, he just leaves and goes to something else. So, he is told on Aug. 6, 2001, that there are going to be, very likely, planes flown into buildings. He hears it, but that's as far as it goes. Any other President would immediately gather his intelligence people and look into the situation. But it's not only that he disregards it, he's also not capable of becoming anxious about it. It doesn't *convert* into an image.

So, some people immediately get uncomfortable or anxious. He is a person who doesn't, unless the danger poses an immediate personal threat. His not being able to visualize things is a central way of managing anxiety.

I think this is a serious problem in a President. It's something that can be compensated for. Actors have this problem, sometimes, where they can memorize lines but they can't read, and they can only visualize the action when they're in it. And Bush becomes alive, I think, only during the elections. He's able to visualize then, able to focus on his enemy. He has a kind of hunter's vision, where he can see the target from miles away, and hone in, and go and attack the jugular of somebody he's arguing with. Then, he's amazing. But that requires him to be totally alert and totally awake, sort of like the person who is "pulling an all-nighter" for an exam: All of his cylinders are burning, he has extra adrenalin going to his brain. But it's only few and far between, when that happens to him. The rest of the time, he's like a lion after the hunt, lounging about. And it's disturbing. You need to be always visualizing and always alert, especially if you're going to have the kind of awesome responsibility that he has.

EIR: This past week, Sally Quinn wrote an open letter to Laura Bush in the *Washington Post* Style Section, urging her to talk to her husband the way that Nancy Reagan talked to Ronald Reagan, in the midst of his second term, when he was being overwhelmed by the Iran-Contra scandals and other things, and he was tending to dig in his heels. Nancy Reagan convinced her husband to clean house; in particular, he fired Don Regan, brought in a fresh White House team, and it saved his Presidency. Can we expect Laura Bush to follow Sally Quinn's advice? And if she were to do so, what do you think the prospects are that President Bush would actually listen to her?

Frank: I think that Laura Bush could follow Sally Quinn's advice and speak to her husband. The prospects of him listening, however, are *pretty slim*. And the reason is, that he cannot

tolerate what we call "cognitive dissonance." He cannot entertain conflicting ideas in his mind. So, as for instance, the famous time when Diane Sawyer said to him: "Well, what if it turns out there are going to be no weapons of mass destruction?" And he said, "So what?" He dismisses anything that contradicts his fixed belief, and he right away switches to something else, like, "Who cares about this, the real problem is that." He is unable to hold onto conflicting ideas.

The issue is not whether Laura can talk to him, it's whether she can get through to him. The difference is that Reagan really listened to his wife. His wife had a *huge* impact on him. I think Bush may listen to some extent to his women, but mainly he uses them for comfort and solace. And Laura wrote that she learned over 20 years ago, never to criticize one of his speeches, for instance, because he would become enraged.

So, I don't think that he *could* listen to her, because to him, changing would mean admitting responsibility; changing would compromise a world built on the need for certainty; and therefore, listening to her would be a huge threat for him—for his manhood, for his entire mental functioning. So, I don't see it happening.

Maybe Sally Quinn's husband Ben Bradlee listens to her, and Nancy Reagan's husband Ronald Reagan listened to her—but this person is not going to. Because he can't. He blocks things out. He doesn't take in things, just like his mother who said she didn't "want to disturb her beautiful mind" by watching soldiers coming home in body bags on television. I mean, that's the way he is: He does not want to take in anything that's unpleasant.

He's never fired anybody. He doesn't do it. He hasn't vetoed a bill. He's not strong that way. He doesn't want to have confrontations, because that will really make him anxious. He's a very weak man, although many still think he's so strong. He's strong in terms of dressing up, like that article in *Vanity Fair* last month, the title of which was, "Dressed To Kill," and it had a picture of him in a flight jacket. His only confrontations involve freezing people out or walking away.

So, the open letter by Sally was a great idea. And the idea also contained in that letter, that some women are able to help their bull-headed husbands become less bull-headed and have a longer view, because women have a longer view.

I think this is different: I just don't see him as able to, or interested in listening to her.

EIR: Any brighter prospect, if Barbara Bush were to take a stab at it, or Barbara and Laura combined?

Frank: Yeah, if Barbara Bush would, she could get through to him. I mean, he would hate it, and he would be furious. What you are talking about is a family intervention, the type done with alcoholics. Bush is an alcoholic who has never been treated. He's an alcoholic who stopped drinking, and people can stop drinking, and he did turn to faith, and people can turn to faith to help them sustain their not drinking, but basically, he needs an intervention. And he needs to be surrounded by



White House/Paul Morse

Will Laura Bush whisper into her husband's ear that he'd better change policies at the White House? She might try, says Dr. Frank, but "the prospects of him listening are pretty slim."

a group of people, including Barbara Bush, Laura Bush, his father, his children. I just can't imagine that happening. And Karl Rove, you think he would intervene to stop it? Or Andy Card? I just don't see that happening. An intervention by anybody else, like some outsiders, or even Republican Senators, or Democratic Senators, he would just tune it out. I mean, he would walk out.

So, I don't see any hope to change him. I think the only way to deal with him, is to isolate him, and neutralize his behavior, which would mean blocking everything he proposed, and refusing to go along with it: Sanctioning him, quarantining him, censuring him—and impeaching him. He needs to be *removed* from office. He's a very destructive man, who is not in touch with his destructiveness.

He's like a teenage boy, who's in the midst of a prolonged fight against his father. The terms are basic and familiar: who has the credit card, who has the car, and who can do whatever he wants. It was like this when he was a child, a teenager, a President who didn't need a permission slip from the UN, and now a President who, if he disagrees with a bill he feels forced to sign into law, issues "signing statements" which give him the prerogative to do what he wants.

Well, to me the signing statements are about a person who refuses to obey the law. That's true. And it's about Presidential power, and he's got support from a few of his legal experts, like Gonzales and Alito, now. But the signing statements, essentially, are the same thing as a two-year-old, who is not going to go to the toilet when his mother wants him to. He is just going to do it, when and where he wants to. And it's the same thing as a person who says, "You can't tell me I can't drink. I'm going to make a false ID. I'm going to go and

become the supplier." "You can't tell me I can't play baseball! I'm going to be the commissioner of a stickball league." "You can't tell me I can't do this; I'm going to brand pledges in a fraternity—" In other words, "You can't tell me, I can't invade Iraq. I don't need a permission slip from the UN."

In other words, the law to him is a straitjacket, and there's a line that is direct and easy to follow in him, from his earliest childhood. And the irony is, now, he's the President who *executes* the laws, and yet, he still rebels against the law.

EIR: You commented the other day that he is of the view that the Constitution is advice with no obligation to listen to it.

Frank: That's right. It's what kids do with their parents. The Constitution for him is like a parent saying, "Now, I want you to call me at 10 o'clock"; "I want you to do this"; "I want you to study"; "I want you to park your car on the side of the street"—all of these things. And all Bush hears is "Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." That's how the Constitution is to him.

When I was travelling years ago, in Turkey, I remember, we used to joke that red lights in the street were treated by the Turkish drivers as "suggestions" rather than the law—you know, "You might want to stop." But that's how he views the Constitution. And that's what the signing statements mean.

EIR: Now, in a March 19 TV interview, Vice President Dick Cheney discussed his relationship with the President, and essentially boasted that his key responsibility is to give the President private advice, and that they both agree that the relationship must be kept totally secret. How do you currently appraise the Bush-Cheney relationship? Would you put Cheney on the list of one of these people who is an Attention



White House photo

Dick Cheney is the President's "coach," says Dr. Frank. "Bush is a person who has a problem implementing things. They are hunters and implementers: Bush is not at all an implementer. Cheney is, apparently, and not a very good hunter from what we've seen recently. And so, he and Bush, I think, do have a very special relationship."

Deficit Disorder coach of the President?

Frank: Yes. Cheney is a coach of the President, and Cheney is a person who is an implementer of the President's ideas. In other words, Bush is a person who has a problem implementing things. They are hunters and implementers: Bush is not at all an implementer. Cheney is, apparently, and not a very good hunter from what we've seen recently. And so, he and Bush, I think, do have a very special relationship, where he can talk to Bush, tell him what he thinks. Cheney can also help Bush be strong, and be tough, and face things; and say, "Don't give up now, George. Don't cave. You have this position." So, Cheney is very much like a coach, and the helper of Bush, in that way—that's my sense of their relationship. And Cheney certainly was chosen by Bush because of his, Cheney's, own political beliefs.

There's another part of it, which is, of course, money and corruption, and that is, that the Bush family has been *very* closely tied with Saudi Arabia, for generations. They're like a second family to him. And Cheney, certainly, while not tied to Saudi Arabia, is certainly tied to oil and Halliburton and big oil money. And so, the two of them have a very close relationship aimed at protecting their financial interests.

Today, on Meet the Press, for instance, Condi Rice—she was unbelievable!—she talked about how Saddam Hussein bilked the Oil-for-Peace program out of all this money, and I was thinking she was unconsciously talking about Cheney and Halliburton, much more than Saddam Hussein.

So, when Bush made his comments after the first invasion of Iraq, he said, "Now don't mess with the pipelines"—that was clearly instructions from Cheney.

Cheney is very tough, and very strong, and I know you and I have had discussions over the years, about who's running the show. And my view has always been that Bush is: If he is a puppet, he's a puppet who chose his puppeteers. And my view

is, that Bush really does run the show. At the same time, I also think that Cheney exerts a powerful influence, but Bush is just not a cipher for him. They both do it together, and there's a good cop/bad cop quality, where Bush can charm audiences, charm people, and Cheney can be the kind of gruff guy.

So, he does give him advice. But the main advice—I'm getting a little bit off your question—but the main advice is, to help him stay on track (just like your questions which help me stay on track). He does not stay on track, unless he has somebody around him like Cheney. And the job of Cheney, I think, and Rove, and Laura Bush, really, is to keep the President on track. And the track is what he's made, not what they've made for him. But even though he's made it, he can still get off the track, because that's the nature of his particular deficit. It takes a village to keep a President on course.

I don't know at what point we call in the 25th Amendment here, about a President who's incapable of being President. But, I really think we're pretty close to it. He's incapable of visualizing the effects of what he's doing.

EIR: Now, in the context of what we've discussed so far, I've got two questions which you may choose to answer separately or together. First, what would be your assessment of the best course of action for Democrats, particularly Democrats in the House and Senate? And secondly, assuming that there are *many* Republicans—and I think there's growing evidence of this, in the House and Senate—who are deeply disturbed by the behavior of the White House, Bush and Cheney—what is your advice, as well, for how the Republicans can deal with the deepening dysfunctionality at the White House, presuming that they're looking out for the best interest of the country? But if not, even if they're looking out for their own political survival, and the survival of the Republican Party?

Frank: First of all, for members of both parties—and anybody in politics at this point who’s dealing with Bush—the hardest thing is to put their country’s interest ahead of their own, when their own might be at odds with what the country’s is. In other words, their own interests might be to have no taxes for the rich; their own interest might be to just stay comfortable and stay in power. But what’s best for the country may be very much at odds with what’s best for them privately, at least—and that’s a huge dilemma about long-range versus short-range visions. And I think that goes back to the Sally Quinn letter, too, which is that she thinks that some of the wives have had long-range vision where the husbands don’t.

My advice separately: The Democrats are in a tough position and it’s different from the Republicans. The Democrats have, for too long, gone along with him, or complained privately, and are very cowed by the media, by all kinds of people. So, they are uncomfortable criticizing him, because they will be seen as either being political opportunists or unpatriotic. And he’s managed to convince them, so that they believe that! So the few people who do criticize him openly, like Congressman [John] Conyers, and there’s a few other members of Congress, and then Sen. [Russ] Feingold, and a few others, are ostracized by the rest of the party, because people are uncomfortable being connected to them. It’s similar to the McCarthy-era idea, except this time the stakes are the future of our country.

So, my advice to Democrats would be to not be so afraid to stand up. They act like they don’t understand that in unity there is strength. I thought that’s what the Democrats were about in the first place, and I thought that’s what unions were about in the first place. And they need to rally *with* Feingold, not isolate him. And if they disagree with his approach, they should talk about it with him directly and in private, and make a concerted approach on a united basis.

As far as the Republicans go, I think their only option is—uh—I don’t know what their option is! Other than to work with the Democrats, and try to impeach him. I don’t see any other option, because when they criticize him, he will marginalize them. I mean, [Sen. Chuck] Hagel gets less air time; [Sen. John] McCain has decided to just join him and be like him [Bush]. There’s a few of the Republicans who’ve stood up—even [Sen. John] Warner has criticized him a little bit. But, I think it’s very risky for them, for their political future. And they, again, would have to put their country’s interest, and their own principles as Republicans, ahead of what they are asked to do. Many are aware that Bush has really gone against the Republicans, who once were the party of “fiscal responsibility” and a balanced budget. They also opposed government invasion of privacy, which requires big government. And he is really in favor of big government; he’s against privacy, Bush; and he is against having a balanced budget. And those are anathema to any thoughtful Republican. That’s what Republicans are supposed to be about.

I don’t know what else they can do. They can’t get through

to him, because he will just tune them out—look what he did with Richard Clarke (who was not really a Republican); but look what he did with Paul O’Neill. Anybody who might disagree with him is just out.

And people don’t understand that. They don’t understand that he can’t listen to logic. He’s not going to listen. He can only listen to somebody who says, “This is it. I’m taking away the car keys. You can’t drive any more, you’re a danger on the road.” “This is it, I’m taking away your credit card, it’s over.” That’s what has to happen.

And that’s the only way things are going to change. And other people are just hoping, “Well, maybe it won’t be so bad by 2009.” Meanwhile, the cover of *Time* magazine today, is polar bears slipping through ice—the world is really not in great shape with this President. It’s not all his fault, but he is the person whose indifference and tone-deafness, and inability to visualize what’s happening has just led us down a *very* slippery slope.

EIR: It’s been noteworthy that in the last several weeks in particular, Bush has been on a kind of a perpetual public speaking tour, including even a very, I would say, bizarre White House press conference, in which the main event was the fact, that I think for the first time in *three years*, he called on Helen Thomas—

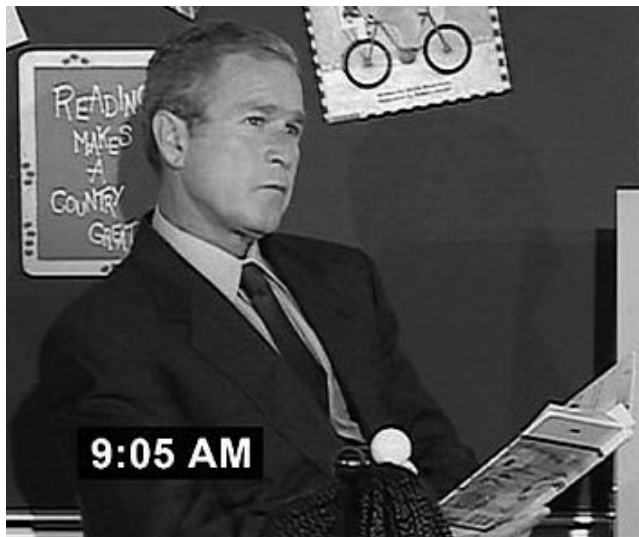
Frank: Yes!

EIR: I wonder if you could give some psychological insight into that event. Because it was such an anomalous occurrence.

Frank: Well, I had two thoughts about it. One, is calling on Helen Thomas is a brilliant maneuver on his part, which is that he is going to re-isolate her, and re-equate her with the liberal press. So, if she starts attacking him, and criticizing him, even though everything she says is right to the point, and *very* true, and *very* important for us to look at, and for him to respond to, she can be isolated by him, and then lumped with the *New York Times* and all members of the so-called liberal media. And so, I think that it’s actually pretty clever to call on her. I don’t think it’s a sign of him breaking down *at all*. I think it’s a sign of him trying to seduce people by inviting them in, and then isolating them.

In the campaign of 2000, I wrote that Governor Bush was doing to the left what Muhammad Ali did to his opponents: “rope-a-dope.” And he leans back against the ropes, like he’s going to fall apart, and then he comes out and just knocks you out.

What was most disburbing to me about that press conference was that he treated every question as if he were taking an oral exam in college. Every time he answered a question without falling apart he would be proud of himself, proud that he got through it. He would get sort of a twinkle. And it was as if getting the right answer were more important than the question itself. He completely lost sight of our dead and dying soldiers, of our dead and dying health-care system, of our



President Bush continues reading the story of My Pet Goat to schoolchildren on the morning of 9/11, in a visibly dissociated state, after having been informed of the attack on the World Trade Center.

dead and dying civil liberties. In other words, his goal is to get through a question and answer—not to understand what the question is about or to grapple with it. And that is not only the way children behave; it is also the fundamental issue of an alcoholic. He is so focussed on trying to manage his anxiety and get through what he does manage, that he acted gleeful. I just thought it was disgraceful to our dead in Iraq, to the seriousness of the questions that are being asked him.

The other thing I noticed, was that, at times, he seemed indifferent. His focus on getting the right answer and needing more time to think of one revealed how truly indifferent he is to his Presidential responsibilities. He was sent out by his handlers to fight back against mounting criticism of his policies and I don't think he's that into it. I think it's not that important to him. I think he's lost interest. It's disturbing: He's disconnected. The only thing that keeps his attention is worrying about getting the right answer.

I remember when I read to my kids at bedtime, that sometimes my mind would wander while I was reading and I wouldn't have any idea of what I was saying. But my kids hung on every word. I feel the press conferences are similar—that he doesn't know or care what he's saying, so he is comfortable saying just about anything. That means to me that he's completely tuned out.

EIR: You commented to me, the other day (this is not a verbatim quote, but a kind of a general point): Selling Bush short by thinking that he's stupid, is like turning your back on him, only to be stabbed in the back. He is a competent killer.

Frank: Yes. Well, I'll stand by that. It's not exactly what I said, that he's a competent killer, but yes, he knows how to

wield a knife; he is amazingly like a bird of prey, and I would never turn my back on him—ever. And if I confronted him, I would be *very* much afraid of retaliation, immediately, swiftly, and accurately.

But ironically, I've never been afraid, because of this book. That is partly because my book is entirely based on public information—there are no smoking guns other than psychological insights. In other words, I don't have records of his secret dealings, say, with financial people; or his secret relationships with Abramoff; or how much he planned in 9/11, or whether he had anything to do with it at all, in terms of foreknowledge. People like Clarke and other people who know him, and know about him, are really at great risk.

I mean, look at [Harry] Whittington, who gets shot in the face, and then he says, "Oh, I'm so sorry, it was an accident." And he apologized to Cheney—when he's the one who was shot in the face! I mean, that's really stunning. That the President and the Vice President could have *that* much power. To get a really tough guy—Whittington's not exactly a little nothing: He's a very strong political man, even at 78, he's powerful, he's financially powerful; he's smart, he's tough—and he just said, "Yassuh, boss." It was amazing.

So, I think that Bush is comfortable in hiding; he can export or outsource his killing for the most part, but he just says, "Take care of it." At first blush sort of like a Tony Soprano type; except Tony Soprano is more comfortable fighting than he is hiding. He loves the face-to-face. Bush doesn't.

EIR: Two final questions. One, I guess it's a bit of a hypothetical: But, were you in a position to provide clinical assistance to President Bush, what kind of approach would you take?

Frank: First of all, if Bush wanted assistance, that would be half the battle, because it would mean that he knew something was wrong. This is a person who doesn't think there's anything wrong. That's also what a teenager is like: "Why should I go to a psychiatrist? There's nothing wrong with me."

If he were brought to my office, and I were then in a position of trying to help him, I would have to try to break through to his anxiety. And that's a very difficult thing, because he is so well-defended. That's a very hard thing to do without feeling like you're using a sledgehammer. I might say to him, "How does it feel, to be a con artist? What's it like to be able to fool so many of the people? Do you enjoy it? Do you enjoy lying? What do you feel when you know you can get away with doing whatever you want? What's it like for you?"

In other words, I would want to get into his grandiosity, and get through to his destructiveness: "What's it like to know that you can let people drown in New Orleans, and enjoy it? How does it feel to you? Do you really enjoy it? What's it like? What goes through your mind, when you look at those pictures? What do you think about?"

I don't know at what point we call in the 25th Amendment here, about a President who's incapable of being President. But, I really think we're pretty close to it. He's incapable of visualizing the effects of what he's doing.

In other words, I would pick one selected fact—I don't know which one, it would depend on what was happening in my meeting with him. I would pick something that he would say, and then I would stick with it, and not let go of it; I'd be like a dog with a bone. And that's what nobody seems to do with him, whenever anybody's questioning him.

That's how I would have to work. In other words, you have to get through to his anxiety, so he can start looking at himself. And that's a long process, and I don't think our nation can afford the time. He has to leave office, or be stopped while he is still there. I had hoped that people could see how dysfunctional Bush is before the election. I even wrote that he was "poised on the brink" of his greatest failure yet, which is the future of our nation. And people either aren't able to see that, or don't want to.

EIR: Final question: Do you have plans for a new book?

Frank: Well, my basic plan for a new book, has been really to try to understand, as best I can, how we as a country, enable people like Bush—and we have a long history of this, way before Bush, but certainly now—who are destructive, and how we turn our backs on their destructiveness: Is it just because we're selfish? Or, do we turn our backs on it, until we all have to become like Cindy Sheehan, and have horrible loss before we speak up? Is that what it's going to take? Or, maybe, Bush really does understand our collective vulnerabilities—that he isn't the only person with compromised imagination. So, I want to write about, shall we say, the psychopathology of American political life, and I'm working on an outline for that, now.

I'm also writing columns that will become a kind of "On the Couch" series—things like "The Media on the Couch," which I think would fit into this book.

For too long we have not paid attention to the psychology of our own willingness to collude with destructive leadership. Thomas Frank, a namesake, but no relation, wrote a great book, *What's the Matter With Kansas?*, as an attempt to understand why people vote against their own best interests. He said religion and faith played a central role, and that Bush understood enough that people didn't want to go against their own belief systems. I think it's deeper than that. It is about the unconscious power of parental abuse, that children who are abused often become abusive as adults. They deny how abused they actually are, crying out that "Nobody loves me as much as my violent father or violent mother does."

EIR: I guess the upcoming November elections represent a kind of psychological test for whether or not enough Americans have reached the point where they can see the reality of the consequences of their votes in 2000 and 2004—

Frank: Yes. The problem is whether people will be willing to act on the reality of the consequences of what it means to vote out the Republicans. One consequence I think of immediately—that we will have to raise taxes to keep our government functioning. And I think that that reality is going to be very difficult for people to face. And I think that that's one of the things that people like Bush can count on: And that is, it's one thing to vote Republicans out of office, and it's another thing to vote people in office who want to raise your taxes. For the past 30 years, taxes have been seen as the enemy and a bad thing. When I was growing up, taxes meant better schools, better roads, and people were happy to pay taxes. Those days are gone!

EIR: Well, as you know, we're trying to revive the FDR legacy as a political reality, today

Frank: Yeah, I know you are. It would be *great* to do that. He was a person who was born to the same kind of money as Bush, and had the same kind of privileges, and the same kind of everything. He didn't have a learning disability, and he knew how to read. So, those were big differences. The other difference was, he had an extremely intimate relationship with his mother. But later in life came another huge difference: He was struck down by polio which paralyzed him from the waist down, and he had to struggle to overcome that. Bush had to overcome his alcoholism, which he did—but he just jumped from one addiction to another without pushing through to face the many consequences of his drinking. But he's not really grown from any of these things.

EIR: He's not Roosevelt.

Frank: He's not Roosevelt. He's not even his father, who was also not Roosevelt.

EIR: Well, Dr. Frank, I want to thank you very much for taking time out of a very busy and fruitful schedule, to talk with us today. And I look forward to continuing this, and look forward to the new edition of the book, coming out in England, which will have an even more updated Epilogue, and of course, particularly look forward to your next book.

Frank: Thank you!