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Theocracy Alert

Musings of an intellectually shell-shocked Kansan

By Jason Miller

Online Journal Contributing Writer

May 27, 2005—Life in Kansas can be as surreal as the landscape of a Salvador Dali painting. Critical thinking is a scarce commodity. "Scopes II" provided me with ample evidence that Kansans are proudly waving the banner of anti-intellectualism.

Last week, the 6-4 conservative Christian majority on the Kansas State School Board contrived a 21st century reenactment of the Monkey Trial of 1925 to "prove" that evolution is a flawed theory. How did my home state time warp past the Age of Reason?

Farcical would be a generous description of "Scopes II". Three moderate school board members and the entire mainstream scientific community boycotted the charade.

John Calvert, a conservative Christian who leads the Intelligent Design Network of Kansas, stood in for William Jennings Bryan. Calvert questioned "expert witnesses" in a quest to disprove evolution. Many of the witnesses, whose purpose was to validate the board's desire to introduce Intelligent Design (ID) into the school curriculum, were from the [Discovery Institute](#).

Founded and funded by Christian fundamentalists, the Discovery Institute is a think-tank created to advance the concept of Intelligent Design. Intelligent Design essentially says that in merely observing the complexity of the world, one cannot help but conclude that there was an intelligent designer. Evidence, research, and peer review are irrelevant to the purveyors of the ID "theory", a thinly veiled form of Creationism. For more on the hypocrisy of Discovery and their ID "theory", see the "[Wedge Document](#)."

Pedro Irigonegaray, Clarence Darrow's counterpart in "Scopes II", is a Topeka defense attorney who generously donated his time to the support of the Theory of Evolution. He questioned the "experts" with a tenacity that revealed their true agenda. He also exposed the fact that most of them had not even read the science standards proposed to the board. He so effectively embarrassed the opposition that his antagonist, John Calvert, refused to shake hands at the end of the proceedings.

Later this summer, the board will vote on potential changes to the science standards in Kansas Public Schools. Holding the majority, it is a foregone conclusion that the conservative Christians will decide to accept the recommendations of John Calvert and his group. Employing their infinite Biblical wisdom, the board will introduce Intelligent Design into the classroom, de-emphasize evolution (which has withstood rigorous scientific scrutiny since 1859), and introduce its own definition of science. As a parent with a child in a Kansas public school, I simultaneously experienced perplexity, bewilderment, and frustration as this insane scenario came to a close.

Only a Symptom

As I pondered, it dawned on me that "Scopes II" is merely a symptom of a much deeper disease gripping our nation. As Thomas Frank concluded in *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, American voters have been brain-washed into voting against their own economic interests in an obsessive drive to legislate "Christian values" into our nation. "Scopes II" validates his point. Contemplating the conclusions of Mr. Frank,

integrating the observations of others, and infusing my own analysis, I surmised that the root of America's decay is the insatiable lust for power and money by the ruling class. Our republic is crumbling while our standing in the world community has disintegrated to the point that America is the object of global fear and hatred.

During the Gilded Age, America experienced a similar period of laissez-faire capitalism, inequitable distribution of wealth, and imperialistic endeavors. However, the government of that era lacked the propaganda machine to sustain the over-indulgence of the elite. Today's government media empire has the capacity to lull our citizenry into surrendering their individual freedoms in exchange for the comfort of the protective bosom of Big Brother.

Will the Real George Bush Please Stand Up?

Who is George Bush? Does the "*aw shucks, just listen to how I say the word nuclear,*" folksy persona he projects square with the real man? Is our beloved "W" truly a man of the people, as he would like Americans to believe? Old Hickory is probably turning in his grave. Strolling through life with at least \$9 million in inherited wealth, our president could not begin to fathom the plight of the working or middle class, let alone the poor. He has failed or underperformed at virtually every endeavor of his life, but that is not a problem. Wealthy friends and family have been there to bail him out nearly every step of the way. His alleged empathy for the plight of the common man is a fraud.

With his MBA from Harvard, I am betting that W. is not nearly as ignorant as he portrays himself to be. He is strong and resolute in his beliefs, but given his power, money, and support network, how difficult is it to be "strong and resolute"? While it was his appearance of strength and resolution that captured the hearts and minds of many foolish American voters after 9/11 rattled their psyches, what they failed to realize was that Bush would use those very qualities to advance a cause that undermined many aspects of their well-being. Middle and working class Americans who support George Bush need to awaken from their intellectual slumber. Jozef Hand-Boniakowski has much more to say about this in [The Fascist Ego and the Future](#).

George Bush exists to advance the interests of the rich and the elite. Early in his reign, the events of 9/11 shattered the security of many Americans. Seizing upon this opportunity, which they may have actually [master-minded and perpetrated](#), Bush and his henchmen employed this powerful tool to manipulate many Americans. Preying upon America's deep sense of fear, Karl Rove, the Minister of Truth and a man who could take Joseph Goebbels to school, forged the image of George Bush as God's chosen savior to America and to the "free world". He nurtured the notion that America was under constant threat of attack by a murky enemy called Terrorism. Such an abstract enemy enabled Bush and Rove to keep the American people in a perpetual state of war and insecurity. The new paradigm of the "good" US against the "evil" Terrorists, laid the foundation for Bush's long coveted invasion of Iraq. As the administration rushed the USA PATRIOT Act through Congress, few congressmen had time to even read the legislation before rubber-stamping it for fear of being branded "unpatriotic" by John Ashcroft, America's newly anointed Minister of Love.

Bush's Reign

Over three years have passed since 9/11, yet many Americans still dangle from the marionette strings of The Ministry of Truth. Rove's propagandists and the mainstream media have enabled W. to propel the United States into an illegal, imperialistic invasion of Iraq to perpetuate corporate and big oil interests. Tax cuts for the wealthy have shifted the tax burden to the middle and working class, whose numbers are dwindling thanks to corporate overseas job outsourcing. Under a crushing national debt of \$7.5 trillion, America is now the reigning king of debtor nations, a title once arrogantly bestowed upon developing nations. How can we saddle our children and grandchildren with that burden? At the rate America is going, future generations will become the indentured servants of China and Japan. Social welfare benefits for the poor are substantially diminishing. Government-endorsed discrimination against gays is increasing. The line between church and state delineated by our Constitution is disappearing. Chasm is the new word to describe the gap between the rich and the poor. Inconceivably, many Americans still

adore W., somehow managing to disregard a mountain of evidence of his incompetence, disregard for the working class, and deceit. If one whispers a sweet little lie to oneself long enough, one starts to believe it.

Jason Miller is a freelance writer who lives in Kansas. Contact him at willpowerful@hotmail.com.

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