

**THE BLOG****State of the Outrage**

By Marty Kaplan

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Because Barbara Bush taught him to “use your words, George,” her son the president, rather than actually mooning some Senate Democrats at the joint session of Congress on Monday night as he would like to do, will instead call them terrorist-lovers for refusing to give retroactive immunity to lawbreaking telecoms in the FISA bill, and he will call them partisan obstructionists for wanting to extend unemployment benefits in the economic stimulus bill now pending.

Because the political media’s machismo depends on admiring cynicism as realpolitik, when the Clintons claim victory in the Florida primary this Tuesday, the mandarins will pronounce it a brilliant chess move, rather than revealing it as a desperation-borne contempt for the rules of the nomination game they had previously agreed to, and as condescension toward those who still naively care about playing by them.

Because there is no accountability in punditry — outside, that is, of Jon Stewart and Keith Olbermann — Rudy Giuliani’s flameout in Florida, like Fred Thompson’s before him in South Carolina, will occasion no reminders and no regrets for the jock-sniffing musk-addled crushes once harbored toward them by the Chris Matthewses and Bill Kristols of the political locker room.

Because there is nothing like necrophilia and hagiography to prolong our national addiction to historical amnesia, this week’s Republican debate at the Reagan Library will prompt no admission that the sub-prime meltdown now dragging Americans into a painful recession, except for the nouveau gazillionaires insulated from it, is the godchild of the Reagan religion of faith-based deregulation, fundamentalist market worship, and a massive government-engineered transfer of wealth from the middle to the top.

Because “the surge is working” — because, that is, of the indefinitely long presence of more than 150,000 American troops in Iraq, paid for by trillions of dollars that even the Bush administration no longer has the nerve to put in its budget, combined with the absence of any meaningful progress toward the administration’s own benchmarks for political success, coupled with the media’s inability to cover the war as anything except the kind of occasional traffic fatality story found on local TV news — a presidential campaign that might have been a referendum on Republican deceit and incompetence, and a frank conversation about America’s real security interests in the world, will instead be a moronic barrage of empty slogans about change.

And because the Framers were unable to anticipate the genius at gaming the Constitution possessed by the power-mad viceroys of a future King George named Cheney and Rove, nor could the Founders conceive of a corporate press hooked on revenue-generating junk and intimidated into abandoning its role as Fourth Estate, the year of onanistic Legacy coverage and good-poodle bipartisanship that will be kicked off this week by the State of the Union address will be left unspoiled by erased emails, unmarred by unenforced contempt citations, unsullied by unacknowledged high crimes and misdemeanors, and unblemished by disgraces that cannot be rectified by pardons for the past and pay packages for the future.

But hey, it's gonna be a great Super Bowl, Romney sure is good-looking, I wonder what kind of cake Jenna and Henry pick, Joe Lieberman really understands how to reach across the aisle, and did you know Obama's middle name is Saddam?

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Marty Kaplan 

USC Annenberg professor and Norman Lear Center director