



THE BLOG

# “Marty Kaplan, Republican Strategist”

By Marty Kaplan

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I think I’ve figured out how to make a noise.

Until now, if I’ve wanted to say that Bill Donohue’s Catholic League is a bully-boy front for bigotry, and that any network news producer who’d give him airtime is a disgrace to the profession, my views would have carried scant gravitas. Sure, I might be contributing color commentary to the slice of the entertainment industry formerly known as journalism, but the only real punch to my point would be the Punch of a Punch-and-Judy show. I might want to shout, “Look, people, this is serious, this is witch-hunting, it’s hurting our democracy, it has consequences!” But all I’d really be doing is playing my part in a *commedia dell’arte*, wearing the mask of the Democrat or the Academic or whatever stock role the producer’s playlet cast me in.

Or: I am reading the coverage of the Iraq deadlock in the Senate. “Many Voices, But No Debate,” headlines the New York Times; “Dueling Agendas Stifle Senate Action on War.” The Washington Post headline is equally mesmerized by process, and anvil-tied to a doofus notion of neutrality: “Senate Leaders Continue Squabbling Over Iraq.”

Wait a damn minute! I yell to my shredded wheat. “Many Voices”... “Dueling Agendas”... That’s exactly what the “Intelligent Design” movement wants our schoolteachers to do: “Teach the Controversy.” The MSM has been turned by the right into the Kansas School Board, reframing a choice of the highest moral and historic seriousness into The Tale of a Tussle. Mitch McConnell is Karl Rove’s tool, and their goal is to deny two-thirds of the country its demand to support our troops by not sending more of them to die in Cheney’s civil war-of-choice. But as I reach for my keyboard to rant, I am dispirited by the knowledge that the most I can hope to accomplish is to be seen as contributing a few more kilobytes to moonbat side of the scale.

Or: I am driving into work and listening to Rush Limbaugh, just to test how much I can take before I turn him off and swear never to do this to myself again. This particular morning, Limbaugh, who accuses liberals of *foaming* and *frothing*, is himself *foaming* and *frothing*, and *spewing* and *upchucking*, about and against the international scientific community’s report that we humans are largely responsible for global warming. Limbaugh is so upset about this that if he were, actually, the cartoon character that he is, virtually, we’d see his head come off.

As a liberal, I would defend with my life Limbaugh’s right to his unhinged opinions, and the right of the companies involved to sponsor and broadcast them, but when it comes to the environmental dangers our kids and grandkids are

likely to face, I ask myself: "Would you really defend this with your life?"

"Yes," the patriot in me answers. But then I have as tough a time with myself in this context as I do with Limbaugh and the people who finance and profit from him. Why am I so protective of his free speech, when the reaction of him and his ilk to our exercise of it is to call us traitors, terrorist-emboldeners and anti-Americans? Why is my call for social responsibility by Big Media so reflexively reduced by the captains of capitalism, and the mouthpieces they give airtime to, into an intolerable infringement on their beloved First Amendment?

But then, just the other day, I think I figured it out. I was watching Tucker Carlson on MSNBC (I know, I know, it's like getting high on cough syrup, but acknowledging my sickness is the first step toward recovery). There on the panel, sitting next to Pat Buchanan, was Dan Gerstein, the former flack to Joe Lieberman. He was saying that the problem with Democrats — the reason they oppose the President's Plan for Victory in Iraq - is that they just don't understand the threat that global jihadism poses to civilization. And Pat was nodding, and Tucker was nodding, and everyone was having a good ol' time, and Tucker was saying, "Wow, I so rarely agree with a Democrat, but I'm with you a hundred percent" and right there on the screen, Gerstein's lower-third chyron comes up announcing his affiliation: DEMOCRATIC STRATEGIST.

Suddenly it hit me. From now on, I'm going to be a REPUBLICAN STRATEGIST.

As a Republican Strategist, when I say that Cheney is a bigger stain on our country than Agnew was, and that he should immediately resign, my words won't be merely partisan punditry; they'll be a *crie de coeur*, a selfless call to conscience. When I proclaim that any '08 hopeful will be dead meat in the general election unless he splits from the President on Iraq, my position won't be dismissable as DNC talking points; it will be proof that the right's stranglehold on the center has ended.

As a Republican strategist, when I say that McConnell is a sanctimonious sock-puppet, I won't be a moonbat; I'll be a maverick. When I criticize Rush, Donahue and Dobson for indecency, irresponsibility and imbecility, I won't be a whining liberal; I'll be a courageous conservative, calling back my Party to its prevangelical roots.

As a Republican strategist, when I say that Disney and CNN and Clear Channel are hurting America by giving amplifiers to Michael Savage, Glenn Beck, Sean Hannity, and the rest of the demagogues, I won't be dismissed as a crypto-communist; I'll be hailed as a TR-style trustbuster.

And unlike David Horowitz or Dick Morris, I'm not going to play the Democrat apostate. No was-blind-but-now-can-see amazing grace for me. Nope, I'm a rock-ribbed Republican. Always have been. That Mondale stuff in my past was like, you know, Reverend Ted Haggard experimenting with homosexuality. Or Reagan voting for FDR. A youthful indiscretion. Me, I'm mainstream GOP.

Hey bookers, lookit me! Cut taxes! Cut government! Impeach Bush!

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