

**THE BLOG**

Oedipus Wrecks

By Marty Kaplan

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I wonder what Bush thinks of us.

I don't mean us as in, left blogistan; I mean us as in, America. Day after day, the president sees polls saying that at least 70% of the country consistently believes that he's, oh, put the country on the wrong course, mired us in a hopeless quagmire, politicized the justice system, handed over the regulatory reins to the corporate sector, transferred massive wealth from the middle to the robber barons, obliterated civil liberties, and so on.

Along with our view of what he's done to the country, we 70-percenters also have our pet theories of his character and psychology, of why he's done it. When pollsters ask Americans what words come to mind to describe the president, terms like "delusional," "ideologue," "stubborn" and "idiot" top the charts, suggesting the kind of explanations that Americans use to account for his behavior, to motivate his disastrous persistence.

But surely, when the president looks at his approval numbers, he, too, must have his own pet theories about why we Americans put him in the cellar. How might he explain our overwhelming rejection of him?

WE'RE NAIVE. Americans are victims of the media. The Enemy has gamed our free press, and its fifth-column of blame-America-firsters has brainwashed us. Despite the best efforts of Rush, Fox and the rest, we are puppets being played by skilled propagandists.

WE'VE HAD IT TOO GOOD. All our lives, we've been privileged by material abundance and unparalleled freedom. No wonder we've become spoiled, unappreciative and unwilling to earn the gifts we enjoy.

WE'VE FALLEN IN WITH A BAD CROWD. People are weak by nature. With our Democrat neighbors so morally lax, it's too hard for us to resist the lures of moral relativism, secular individualism, and all those other forces that say live-for-the-moment instead of meet-your-Maker.

DRUGS, SEX AND ROCK & ROLL. GRAND THEFT AUTO, TOO. When people aren't hooked on God, Satan steps in. Addictions of the flesh destroy discipline and undermine democracy.

ENDLESS ADOLESCENCE. Americans are unwilling to face the responsibilities of adulthood. We're afraid to take on the burdens of leadership; we're not ready to wear the mantle of our legacy.

WE'RE NOT THAT BRIGHT. Let's face it: the average IQ is 100. That means half the people fall below it. You have to swim in the gene pool you have, not the one you want.

No doubt the president has additional explanations for Americans' failure to give him 70% support. But looking at this list, I'm struck by how similar it must have been to the theories his own parents developed to explain their son's behavior through the years. How could such a privileged child, born to such an illustrious clan, gone on to be such a disappointment, such a wastrel? He's fallen in with bad friends... he believes what people tell him... those Yale professors have caved to the hippies... he plays cards all day... he's lazy... he doesn't go to church... God knows what drugs he takes... he won't grow up... they say blue blood runs thin...

In other words, in a cringe-worthy manner that many of us will find terrifyingly familiar, George W. Bush — despite his relentless efforts to the contrary — has become the one thing on earth he most wanted to avoid.

To account for the record-high disapproval he now finds himself not enjoying, 43 has reached the same conclusions about the American people that, years ago, 41 and Bar were reluctantly forced to accept about the character of their own little Oedipus, who one day would grow up to be Rex.

George W. Bush has become his parents. And the tragedy's on us.

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