

**THE BLOG****Commuter-in-Chief**

By Marty Kaplan

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My, what a clever boy he thought he would be. He wouldn't *pardon* Libby: oh no, that would be repeating Gerry Ford's Nixon mistake, and who'd want to risk that? Nah, he'd *commute* the sentence, that's the ticket. The base would cheer, the libs would scream (don't they always?), and the media would praise him as prudent, as searching for common ground, putting our long national nightmare behind us the right way, not the wimp way.

But I think most Americans will see this move for what it actually is: jury nullification, cronyism, Cheney puppeteering. It's a signal to all future witnesses, in Congress and in court, to take the Fifth, bide their time, and hold out for a presidential rescue.

Yes, what Bush did is within his power. But is there anyone in the world besides Tucker Carlson's father who believes that W is intellectually, morally or legally qualified to parse the niceties of federal sentencing guidelines and come up with a more appropriate punishment than the trial judge?

America is not just a nation of laws. It is a nation of trust. You can't govern unless you have the trust of the people. If before today he retained an ounce of that trust, George W. Bush no longer does. If it weren't so tragic, it would be laughable.

The only good that will come of it is the necessity now for every Republican running for President to put out a statement praising Bush's Solomonic decision... though maybe Ron Paul will say that in this case, it would have been better to slice the baby through the middle with a scimitar.

UPDATE: Commenter SwampWater is right: "jury nullification" (however much I want it to) doesn't mean nullifying the work a trial jury did. A more accurate term for what's happening here might be "Junior nullification."

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