

Review of *The Case Against George W. Bush*

by Steven C. Markoff (Rare Bird Books, Nov.2020, 356p Hardcover)
100 Footnotes plus about 600 quotes throughout the book

The book presents [Mr. Markoff's] case—told through almost six hundred sourced quotes from published books, writings, transcripts, and government documents and reports—that George W. Bush committed three crimes while president: criminal negligence over what became 9/11, the torturing of prisoners post 9/11, and using fraud and deception to take our country into the unnecessary and devastating 2003 war against Iraq.

From book Preface (p. 16)

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Steven Markoff is a prominent native of Los Angeles who was in the precious metal business to 2005, He also founded several public service educational websites (>procon.org< & >SecondAmendment.org<) and has a dozen producer/director movie credits. *The Case Against George W. Bush* is his first book and all the author proceeds will be directed to the nonprofit National September 11 Memorial & Museum in NYC >www.911memorial.org<.⁵

The subject was of personal interest to me because back in 2008 ten of us, mostly veterans, filed *criminal* complaints against a Congressman and a Senator for dereliction of duty in regards to condoning the Iraq War. Our action was based on findings of an International Court and Vincent Bugliosi's *The Prosecution of George W. Bush for Murder*. After the Justice Department ignored the complaints most of us became disillusioned, which is better than being "illusioned," but we would never have full faith in our country again.

Steven recognizes that the semi-official line is to look at George W. Bush (hereafter Bush) as some sort of elder statesman, but says that if you have a neighbor who murders people and afterwards brings in stray dogs or seems a nice person, he is still a murderer. He adds *"...I believe that one of the reasons that Donald Trump was able to attack our democracy in the way he did, is that he looked back at George W. Bush and said to himself 'Look at all the terrible things that guy did, and he's never had to pay for it.'"*

Such advocacy books often have facts on the other side, but in all material Steven went through—130 published books plus various government reports— there was no data to counter the quotes in the book. He offered the book to the ninety people he had quoted (Condoleezza Rice, Dick Cheney, Bush, etc.) and presidential libraries. He hasn't heard back from any.

Ralph Nader noted *"Censorship comes in many forms. One of [them] is a colossal moral indifference to official crimes at the highest levels of our government."*

To be sure, this is not a comprehensive history. It is a collection of concisely presented notes told mostly by quotes of a hundred knowledgeable authors—from Hans Blix to Bob Woodward—with insights added by Steven for context and interpretation. The book certainly presents facts to resolve some conflicting theories about the Bush presidency. It dispassionately examines three major war crimes that the former president committed by invading Iraq. That's a modest goal that started with the 35 Articles of Impeachment against Bush that were introduced by Representative Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) on 9 June 2008.⁶

The subsequent Judiciary Committee hearings on "Limitations of Executive Power" on 25 July, were partly based on these 35 articles. The corporate media ignored that very powerful two-panel hearing.⁷ It was finally published in 2009 by the Government Printing Office in 2009⁸ (472p). It is not referenced in the book. Vincent Bugliosi, who testified on 25 July, had done a book (366p) on the same subject and it later became a film.⁹ Steven references neither. Two *Neo-conned* volumes (2005) were an especially rich source of expert commentary.¹⁰ Other documents,¹¹ books, and films also deserved prominent mention.¹² The brevity of the "Overview" chapter reflects these omissions.

Unlike an over-enthusiastic prosecuting attorney, Steven limits his focus to three major crimes. **Crime 1:** Bush was criminally negligent after he entered office (Jan. 2001) in ignoring ample intelligence that terrorists were mounting an imminent assault on the U.S. homeland.¹³ **Crime 2:** Bush authorized both torture and the "rendition" to achieve it beyond the reach of U.S. law. **Crime 3:** Bush

Please listen to the 17 April 2021 *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* as a good introduction to this review.⁴ The book was featured for the entire broadcast.

was “an enthusiastic participant” in encouraging the invasion of Iraq. It criminally wasted 4,400 American lives at a direct cost of \$2 trillion, with about 32 thousand wounded and more psychologically damaged U.S. soldiers. Iraqi casualties exceeded 500,000 and they could be included under an international military tribunal.

For *Crime 1* this shocking and important book lists 379 speeches Bush gave between his inauguration and 10 Sept. 2001. Neither Al-Qaida nor Osama bin Laden (OBL) is mentioned, but he talks about oil 41 times and warns of Iraq’s imaginary threat (nuclear/chemical) of mass destruction 143 times. It’s virtual proof that Bush cared about Iraq’s oil or about Saddam Hussein more than he did about the risk from Al-Qaida or bin Laden. So, despite being warned about 9/11 and OBL, Bush did nothing to prevent it and when it happened, as OBL escaped, he used it as an excuse to grab Iraq’s oil reserves.

In terms of damage inflicted in lives or treasure, my view is that Crime 2 is a relatively minor indictment.¹⁴ Compare it to nine articles listed by Amnesty International in their pamphlet: *Bringing George W. Bush To Justice - International Obligations of States to Which Former US President George W. Bush May Travel*.¹⁵

On Crime 3, Steven could have made the criminal motivation clearer. He was obviously urged by Cheney and Neocons, but WHY did he buy their game. The seizure of Middle East oil goes back to the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations (when a friendly Iraq got U.S. military aid and intelligence against Iran). What motivated this self-professed Christian to commit murder? Was it merely “family” business as usual? This Big Deal profoundly affected America culture and swings it toward a Nazi tradition. The former head of the National Security Agency, General William Odom, called the invasion the biggest blunder of the century. The “shock and awe” gripped whole world, and millions marched to stop the bombing of Iraq. Wasn’t it part of a pattern that made the nation numb to Trump. How did it get “All better?”

Steven’s book does not opine about a bad president’s relative incompetence or that he was somehow a puppet of Cheney or a Neocon cabal. It cites de-classified memos; transcripts of hearings; public records, public quotations, etc., to prove criminal intent with evidence that can be cited by a trier of fact. It offers irrefutable proof to convict both Bush and Cheney of murder, a crime for which there is *no Statute of Limitations*. In evidence, Steven presents reputable scholars, eyewitnesses, and journalists. Why not also delve deep into probable guilt of the Neocon cronies? The list of these war architects¹⁶ is long and most of them are still alive. Why simply end with “Did he [Bush] think he was above the law or did he care?”

This book penetrates the bodyguard of lies around the Bush administration by someone outraged by injustice. Steven’s product was a project of years of scrupulous research. The scope of “reckless, dishonest, and tragically unnecessary” offenses is presented in a timeline that builds a compelling case in failing to anticipate the 9/11 attacks. It then documents intentional deceit in shifting the US pursuit of OBL to an invasion of Iraq in defiance of international law. The devastating case against Bush *et al*, is mostly based on a dispassionate collection of facts presented in a way that encourages critical thinking. A lot of money went missing but that is not a focus of these crime charges.¹⁷

The book is highly recommended for its historical significance in understanding the “War on Terror” and why the U.S. has lost credibility overseas. However, it’s often like reading a compendium from the Nuremberg Tribunals. It is not smooth to digest unless you like reading

legal briefs and encyclopedias. I give it 4 of 5 stars, not because of its sometime awkward format but because its narrow context missed key co-conspirators. This is my one big issue with the book. Were the Nazis evil because of a few dozen bad apples at the top or because millions went along? Why pile guilt on Bush rather than spreading it to minions, who also took an oath to defend the Constitution against enemies, foreign and *domestic*.¹⁸

The book’s Foreword is by Richard Clarke, former U.S. National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Counter-terrorism (1998-2003). Steven wasn’t physically or emotionally involved in the run-up to the war until he read Clarke’s book *Against All Enemies: Inside America’s War on Terror* (2007), which calmly offered disturbing facts, including that Bush and some of his senior staff had ample warning about the dangers of OBL and Al-Qaeda. Clarke later strongly confirms that Bush took us into Iraq (2003) without having credible intel of Hussein’s WMDs. He ignored OBL’s real threat while planning to remove Hussein mainly to get Iraq’s oil.

So who is this book for? Steven stated the goals in the Preface. He wanted to document and explain three crimes of President Bush and show how those crimes caused the unnecessary deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, as well as bringing untold destruction to our people, our country, and others. He wanted to explain how Bush’s thirst for oil (for his friends and maybe for our country) may well have been the substantive or primary reason why he attacked Iraq in 2003. He sought to chronicle how Bush, as president and commander-in-chief, used secrecy, fraud, and deceit to scare our nation into the Iraq War.

Steven accomplished these goals. This book will help all who study it better understand the potential danger of misplaced loyalty. He hopes that the lessons learned will help protect this nation from again falling prey to such presidential trickery. I feel that the space taken for the section on torture could have been better used, but it’s his book and, as it stands, there’s plenty here to serve as a springboard for broader public effort.

In one exhaustively researched concise summary, the book compiles damning evidence for anyone who wants to dig a deeper into facts available before 9/11; for anyone who wants to see the narrative that justified invading Iraq; and for anyone who wants to see how torturing was being spun by the Bush gang. The *Deep State* leads by diversion deception, deconstruction, and disinformation. If nothing else, it might awaken Americans to see beyond illusions.

I really like the book, but only give it 4 stars because of the lack of context; not the need for added “polish” in the format (a minor distraction). Too many details could have been used for deconstruction. The three crimes now offer a springboard in combination with other works.¹⁹ Many feel that Congress also has blood on its hands and needs to be held accountable in order for the country to heal.

The betrayal of the true 2000 presidential election by judicial royalty probably deserved more attention.²⁰ Carter has called the United States an oligarchy and “*the most warlike nation in the history of the world.*” Oligarchy “*means not only rule of a small group, but a group that is not responsible to the many, that is corrupt, or that has otherwise excited disapprobation.*” Plato considered it corruption of aristocracy “*as tyranny is the corruption of monarchy and mob rule the corruption of democracy.*”²¹ Whether they rule as legitimate political party, a class, clique, or group in any form (monarchy, empire, dictatorship, theocracy, etc.), the question is if they are responsible to the many. It *is not* if a small elite or wealthy group rules that mainly distinguishes oligarchy from democracy.

As noted, even in full democracy, only a few individuals exercise actual power. Responsibility is the central point: does leadership derive its power from freely given public assent and conform to true public opinion.²² The Bush Presidency showed that no matter how highly leaders talked of precious principles, bad ones could empower the dark side of our national nature. The goals of American democracy now seem unreachable, even if we steady the ship. We can indict bad actors and hope for more responsible leaders. Given the blind pursuit of oil, maybe the problem will narrow to into “oily-garchy.”

Even with sufficient motivation, the cure for global oligarchs (*führer*, *Duce*, emperor) is beyond reach unless we pin down the true “enemy”. The excess power of rich oligarchs like Bush and Cheney could be solved by proper impeachment hearings if Congress doesn’t abdicate its oversight responsibilities. It certainly allowed war crimes in Iraq. The “Four Freedoms” of World War 2²³ led to the United Nations, an International Criminal Court (ICC), and a UN Declaration of Rights. Since modern oligarchs are part of a global network staffed by lawyers, maybe we can find more of them to exercise human rights on our behalf. We might also seek a fifth *Freedom from Lies*.

At risk of digression, earlier killing could be traced to nuclear examples by a former senator from Pendergast as described by *Covert Action* magazine.²⁴ Also, given his repeated attempts to obstruct justice, prosecutors have many potential crimes from which to choose when it comes to again indicting the twice-impeached Trump, but his incitement of the 6 January Capitol riot and efforts to overturn the Georgia election results are minor compared to crimes by the Bush Crime Syndicate.

One way to convey deterrence to future presidents is for the Justice Department to prosecute Bush for murder. There is also time to demand accountability of the Neocons.²⁵ None of them has ever been held accountable for their crimes, *not one of them*. We can add Nancy Pelosi. Let’s ask her about her rapid dismissal of W. Bush’s impeachment immediately after Democrats swept them into both Houses of Congress (2006); after the Bush crimes motivated that victory. The Democrats *Won Both Houses of Congress* in 2006. In a stunning political switch the morning after, Nancy Pelosi made her now infamous declaration that **“impeachment was off the table”**. The hope of holding the W. Bush Crime Syndicate accountable was arguably why Democrats won both houses of Congress; so what did Nancy do the day after the election? She blocked impeachment. What was she hiding? Was there some conflict of interest with a husband in construction? Maybe *take her off the table* as activists work to prepare a readable indictment for a new generation. What’s next?

Even if most civilians don’t participate, about a seventh of the families in the country include a veteran. Many of them remember the oath they once took and might be willing to issue a “Summons” to the their member of Congress to *stand and deliver* an indictment against the Bush crime family and its Neocons. Let’s remind them that *war is war* and *murder is murder*.

Errors, misconduct, and crimes rise when citizens reject democratic norms. As prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi showed thirteen years ago in *The Prosecution of George W. Bush for Murder*, and Steven now warns more directly, if we allow such killing, then lying, cheating, and stealing will easily follow, as it has with Donald Trump.

Of course, some of this goes beyond what Steven suggested in the book. Dereliction of duty and murder are enough to start with. The silence of patriots enables

criminal public officials to avoid accountability. I very much agree with Steven’s starting quote by Einstein:

“...the world is more threatened by those who tolerate evil or support it than the evil-doers themselves.” (1953)

How many devils dance on the point of our political pyramid? A reluctance to prosecute former minions may be based on legitimate concerns about politicizing the justice system, but filing such charges is not a radical step. Other democracies routinely prosecute former politicians without sliding down a slippery slope. Allowing unpunished murder sets a far more dangerous precedent. It now seems necessary to show that no person, particularly the president, is above the law. Will you help?

☆☆☆☆

Notes follow:

- ¹ This is slightly edited to fit the space. The subscripts indicate the book page numbers.
- ² The legal concept that one needs to act responsibly depending on one’s circumstances and situation, but this is far short of an exact legal definition.
- ³ This was more commonly called “The 9-11 Commission.”
- ⁴ My writing background is in the “Author” page of www.valorww2.com
- ⁵ Steven offers free copies: **“if you know of others who may be interested in this book, we’d appreciate you telling them about it.”** See <http://thecaseagainstgeorgewebush.org/>
- ⁶ See www.congress.gov/110/bills/hres/1258/BILLS-110hres1258ih.pdf (167p) See Elizabeth de la Vega’s *U.S. v. George W. Bush et al.* (2008) for short version.
- ⁷ It is still available on C-Span and parts can be downloaded from YouTube. The *Pentagon Papers*, about Vietnam, had a similar impact on exposing the lack of national credibility.
- ⁸ “Hearing Before the Committee on the Judiciary House of Representatives, One Hundred Tenth Congress, Second Session, JULY 25, 2008, Serial No. 110–200”
- ⁹ Famed Charles Manson prosecutor and NYT best-selling author Vincent Bugliosi presented a meticulously researched legal case proving Bush took our nation to war in Iraq under false pretenses and, is guilty of murder under US law for the deaths of 4,500 young American soldiers. The unlawful war also cost the US over a trillion dollars; alienated our allies; caused death of over 500,000 innocent Iraqis; and pushed a relatively tranquil nation into unending atrocities civil war, and chaos. The largely censored film: *Prosecution of an American President* repeats his non-partisan book argument was based on hard, objective facts whose searing indictment also outlined a legally credible pathway to hold high government officials accountable. Bugliosi’s book was sent to over 2100 county-level prosecutors for their consideration.
- ¹⁰ For example, see *Neo-conned Again: Hypocrisy, Lawlessness, and the Rape of Iraq* (edited by D.L. O’Huallachain & J. Forest Sharpe, 2005, 881p) is a collection of articles by 50 prominent authors and academics about the evil of the invasion. The following also deserve honorable mention: *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them* (A Franken, 2004), *Worse Than Watergate* (J. Dean, 2004), and *Confessions of an Economic Hitman* (J.Perkins, 2004). *American Dynasty...* (Kevin Phillips, 2004), *The Price of Loyalty* (2004), *House of W. Bush, House of Saud. The Secret Relationship Between the World’s Two Most Powerful Dynasties* (Craig Unger, 2004), *Static* (Amy & David Goodman, 2006). Many of the mentioned films also appeared as books and both prompted talks on YouTube.
- ¹¹ For example, the Downing Street (smoking gun) memo could have been given more emphasis. See www.pbs.org/newshour/show/text-of-downing-street-memo
- ¹² Michael Moore surely deserved a few paragraphs for first bringing these crimes to general attention. Here’s a list of related films. *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004, 122m), *Unconstitutional: War On Our Civil Liberties* (2004, 67m), *Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers* (2006, 75m), *No End in Sight* (2007, 102m), *Taxi to the Dark Side* (2007, 106m), *War Made Easy* (2007, 74m), *W* (2008, 124m), *Vice* (2018, 132m), *Prosecution of an American President* (2014, 101m), and *Official Secrets* (2019, 112m).
- ¹³ OBL declared *jihad* against “the west” in 1989; a whopping 12 years to get the message!
- ¹⁴ A self-righteous justification for torture probably does not deserve 70 pages of attention. If you leave out egregious crimes like others mention by Kucinich. His deception about global climate science as indicated by a failure to prepare for and respond to Hurricane KATRINA I personally would have liked these pages spent on a context listing of other related crimes like the nine Articles listed by Amnesty International in 2011:
- ¹⁵ See www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR51/097/2011/en/ (33 p & 136 endnotes).
- ¹⁶ Planning aggressive is a Nuremberg Tribunal indictment. See the 1928 Treaty of Paris.
- ¹⁷ Billions of public dollars will never be accounted for, even if Bush is tried for murder. America might morally recover if the Bush people are held accountable.
- ¹⁸ Most Europeans considered Nazis more evil than communists. As a *country*, the United States has not been in a war since the slaveholder rebellion of 1861 (I pray it never will). They may not understand the nature of the evil that seeks to enslave others.
- ¹⁹ Dr. Noam Chomsky stated that most American presidents since 1945 are war criminals www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdD9uSrNFT4 “if the Nuremberg Laws were Applied...”. (12m, 2015) so focusing on Bush shouldn’t diminish a bigger picture. He later covered Obama’s crimes. Also see www.projectcensored.org/the-most-important-article-youll-never-read-how-western-media-support-state-terror-while-millions-die-and-how-this-article-was-killed/. Trump, the *lyin’ king*, is credited with over 35,000 lies!
- ²⁰ For example, there is ample evidence of the 2000 stolen election in Florida, where Bush’s brother was governor. The politically biased *selection* (5 to 4) of the son of a former president in 2000 can also be viewed as an example dynastic *primogeniture* in an aristocratic Bush family that traces its European origin to 17th century English and German descent. There was also a major question with the 2004 election.
- ²¹ From *Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, Edited by Gould Julius & William L. Kolb (Ed.) for U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (1964), pp 131-34 & 141-142. Robert Bierstedt compares several other definitions provided in text below.
- ²² See Spitz, D. *Patterns of Anti-Democratic Thought*, NY: Macmillan Co., 1949, p. 74).
- ²³ See WW2 Victory Medal for list. It’s one of the most numerous U.S. military awards.
- ²⁴ See <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2021/06/10/how-organized-crime-infiltrated-american-business-after-ww-ii-and-corrupted-national-politics-from-truman-to-trump/>
- ²⁵ Besides the policy makers (Dick Cheney, Richard Perle, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, and Donald Rumsfeld, The Neocons are primarily those associate with the 90-page document **REBUILDING AMERICA’S DEFENSES: Strategy, Forces and Resources For a New Century**. The Principal Author was Thomas Donnelly and Project Co-Chairmen were Donald Kagan & Gary Schmitt. The following individuals participated in at least one project meeting or contributed a paper for discussion: Roger Barnett, Alvin Bernstein, Stephen Cambone, Eliot Cohen, Devon Gaffney Cross, Thomas Donnelly, David Epstein, David Fautua, Dan Gouré, Frederick, Donald & Robert Kagan, Robert Killebrew, William Kristol, Mark Lagom, James Lasswell, I. Lewis Libby, Robert Martinage, Phil Meilinger, Mackubin Owens, Steve Rosen, Gary Schmitt, Abram Shulsky, Michael Vickers, Barry Watts, Paul Wolfowitz, and Dov Zakheim.