

Transcript from Keith Olberman's (MSNBC) Sept 25, 2006 Televised (and now-famous) rant:

The headlines about them are, of course, entirely wrong.

It is not essential that a past president, bullied and sandbagged by a monkey posing as a newscaster, finally lashed back.

It is not important that the current President's portable public chorus has described his predecessor's tone as "crazed."

Our tone should be crazed. The nation's freedoms are under assault by an administration whose policies can do us as much damage as al Qaida; the nation's marketplace of ideas is being poisoned by a propaganda company so blatant that Tokyo Rose would've quit.

Nonetheless. The headline is this:

Bill Clinton did what almost none of us have done in five years.

He has spoken the truth about 9/11, and the current presidential administration.

"At least I tried," he said of his own efforts to capture or kill Osama bin Laden. "That's the difference in me and some, including all of the right-wingers who are attacking me now. They had eight months to try; they did not try. I tried."

Thus in his supposed emeritus years has Mr. Clinton taken forceful and triumphant action for honesty, and for us; action as vital and as courageous as any of his presidency; action as startling and as liberating, as any, by any one, in these last five long years.

The Bush Administration did not try to get Osama bin Laden before 9/11.

The Bush Administration ignored all the evidence gathered by its predecessors.

The Bush Administration did not understand the Daily Briefing entitled "Bin Laden Determined To Strike in U.S."

The Bush Administration did not try.

Moreover, for the last five years one month and two weeks, the current administration, and in particular the President, has been given the greatest "pass" for incompetence and malfeasance in American history!

President Roosevelt was rightly blamed for ignoring the warning signs—some of them, 17 years old—before Pearl Harbor.

President Hoover was correctly blamed for—if not the Great Depression itself—then the disastrous economic steps he took in the immediate aftermath of the Stock Market Crash.

Even President Lincoln assumed some measure of responsibility for the Civil War—though talk of Southern secession had begun as early as 1832.

But not this president.

To hear him bleat and whine and bully at nearly every opportunity, one would think someone else had been president on September 11th, 2001 -- or the nearly eight months that preceded it.

That hardly reflects the honesty nor manliness we expect of the executive.

But if his own fitness to serve is of no true concern to him, perhaps we should simply sigh and keep our fingers crossed, until a grown-up takes the job three Januarys from now.

Except for this.

After five years of skirting even the most inarguable of facts—that he was president on 9/11 and he must bear some responsibility for his, and our, unreadiness, Mr. Bush has now moved, unmistakably and without conscience or shame, towards re-writing history, and attempting to make the responsibility, entirely Mr. Clinton's.

Of course he is not honest enough to do that directly.

As with all the other nefariousness and slime of this, our worst presidency since James Buchanan, he is having it done for him, by proxy.

Thus, the sandbag effort by Fox News Friday afternoon.

Consider the timing: the very weekend the National Intelligence Estimate would be released and show the Iraq war to be the fraudulent failure it is—not a check on terror, but fertilizer for it.

The kind of proof of incompetence, for which the administration and its hyenas at Fox need to find a diversion, in a scapegoat.

It was the kind of cheap trick which would get a journalist fired—but a propagandist, promoted:

Promise to talk of charity and generosity; but instead launch into the lies and distortions with which the Authoritarians among us attack the virtuous and reward the useless.

And don't even be professional enough to assume the responsibility for the slanders yourself; blame your audience for "e-mailing" you the question.

Mr. Clinton responded as you have seen.

He told the great truth untold about this administration's negligence, perhaps criminal negligence, about bin Laden.

He was brave.

Then again, Chris Wallace might be braver still. Had I in one moment surrendered all my credibility as a journalist, and been irredeemably humiliated, as was he, I would have gone home and started a new career selling seeds by mail.

The smearing by proxy, of course, did not begin Friday afternoon.

Disney was first to sell-out its corporate reputation, with "The Path to 9/11." Of that company's crimes against truth one needs to say little. Simply put: someone there enabled an Authoritarian zealot to belch out Mr. Bush's new and improved history.

The basic plot-line was this: because he was distracted by the Monica Lewinsky scandal, Bill Clinton failed to prevent 9/11.

The most curious and in some ways the most infuriating aspect of this slapdash theory, is that the Right Wingers who have advocated it—who try to sneak it into our collective consciousness through entertainment, or who sandbag Mr. Clinton with it at news interviews—have simply skipped past its most glaring flaw.

Had it been true that Clinton had been distracted from the hunt for bin Laden in 1998 because of the Monica Lewinsky nonsense, why did these same people not applaud him for having bombed bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan and Sudan on Aug. 20, of that year? For mentioning bin Laden by name as he did so?

That day, Republican Senator Grams of Minnesota invoked the movie "Wag The Dog."

Republican Senator Coats of Indiana questioned Mr. Clinton's judgment.

Republican Senator Ashcroft of Missouri—the future attorney general—echoed Coats.

Even Republican Senator Arlen Specter questioned the timing.

And of course, were it true Clinton had been "distracted" by the Lewinsky witch-hunt, who on earth conducted the Lewinsky witch-hunt?

Who turned the political discourse of this nation on its head for two years?

Who corrupted the political media?

Who made it impossible for us to even bring back on the air, the counter-terrorism analysts like Dr. Richard Haass, and James Dunegan, who had warned, at this very hour,

on this very network, in early 1998, of cells from the Middle East who sought to attack us, here?

Who preempted them in order to strangle us with the trivia that was, “All Monica All The Time”?

Who distracted whom?

This is, of course, where—as is inevitable—Mr. Bush and his henchmen prove not quite as smart as they think they are.

The full responsibility for 9/11 is obviously shared by three administrations, possibly four.

But, Mr. Bush, if you are now trying to convince us by proxy that it’s all about the distractions of 1998 and 1999, then you will have to face a startling fact that your minions may have hidden from you.

The distractions of 1998 and 1999, Mr. Bush, were carefully manufactured, and lovingly executed, not by Bill Clinton, but by the same people who got you elected President.

Thus, instead of some commendable acknowledgment that you were even in office on 9/11 and the lost months before it, we have your sleazy and sloppy rewriting of history, designed by somebody who evidently read the Orwell playbook too quickly.

Thus, instead of some explanation for the inertia of your first eight months in office, we are told that you have kept us "safe" ever since—a statement that might range anywhere from zero, to 100 percent, true.

We have nothing but your word, and your word has long since ceased to mean anything.

And, of course, the one time you have ever given us specifics about what you have kept us safe from, Mr. Bush, you got the name of the supposedly targeted Tower in Los Angeles wrong.

Thus was it left for the previous president to say what so many of us have felt; what so many of us have given you a pass for in the months and even the years after the attack:

You did not try.

You ignored the evidence gathered by your predecessor.

You ignored the evidence gathered by your own people.

Then, you blamed your predecessor.

That would be a textbook definition, Mr. Bush, of cowardice.

To enforce the lies of the present, it is necessary to erase the truths of the past.

That was one of the great mechanical realities Eric Blair—writing as George Orwell—gave us in the book “1984.”

The great philosophical reality he gave us, Mr. Bush, may sound as familiar to you, as it has lately begun to sound familiar to me.

"The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power...

"Power is not a means; it is an end.

"One does not establish a dictatorship to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship.

"The object of persecution, is persecution. The object of torture, is torture. The object of power... is power."

Earlier last Friday afternoon, before the Fox ambush, speaking in the far different context of the closing session of his remarkable Global Initiative, Mr. Clinton quoted Abraham Lincoln's State of the Union address from 1862.

"We must disentrall ourselves."

Mr. Clinton did not quote the rest of Mr. Lincoln's sentence.

He might well have.

"We must disentrall ourselves and then we shall save our country."

And so has Mr. Clinton helped us to disentrall ourselves, and perhaps enabled us, even at this late and bleak date, to save our country.

The "free pass" has been withdrawn, Mr. Bush.

You did not act to prevent 9/11.

We do not know what you have done to prevent another 9/11.

You have failed us—then leveraged that failure, to justify a purposeless war in Iraq which will have, all too soon, claimed more American lives than did 9/11.

You have failed us anew in Afghanistan.

And you have now tried to hide your failures, by blaming your predecessor.

And now you exploit your failure, to rationalize brazen torture which doesn't work anyway; which only condemns our soldiers to water-boarding; which only humiliates our country further in the world; and which no true American would ever condone, let alone advocate.

And there it is, Mr. Bush:

Are yours the actions of a true American?

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