

The Road To Baghdad

by Robert Crisman

In late summer 2000 Dick Cheney held a secret strategy meeting in a hunting lodge deep in the hills of southeastern Wyoming. It was Cheney's own place, bought with the money he'd ripped from the trough with both hands through decades of what he laughingly referred to as public service. It was classically rustic, with stuffed heads of moose, wolves, and lawyers lining the walls. The bar was well stocked.

Three men lounged on couches placed in a circle in front of the fireplace, which crackled away while the wind whistled softly outside. The three men smoked crack.

The carp-mouthed crustacean sprawled at the end of one of the couches was George Bush, the Republican presidential candidate. To his right sat Donald Rumsfeld, Rummy the Dummy, a shovel-faced bandit if I ever saw one. To Bush's left was Cheney, a poisonous toad with a permanent smirk on his face, especially after he spit on somebody.

Bush passed the crack pipe to Rummy who horked a big blast, then lay back and giggled. 'Ooo-*weeeeeee*! Crack attack, Jack! I'm all the *way wack*! This is some good shit, Junior!"

He belched and giggled again. "Where'd you pick this stuff up, George? Some of your dad's Langley pals?"

"Uh uh," Bush said. "Jeb's kids. They know everybody down in Miami. Some of 'em, you know, the same guys, I guess, worked for Dad. What's cool is, we get a family discount and stuff. Good shit, huh?"

"Yeah, buddy!"

Cheney grinned at Rumsfeld and laughed. "I guess it is. You're happy as a sissy in a dick factory, Donald."

Rummy passed the crack pipe to Bush, who sucked it so hard his lips started bleeding.

Cheney said, "Don't hit that stuff too hard, Junior. You've got a meeting tomorrow."

"I know," Bush said. "Jackboots For Jesus, 11 am." He beamed like he just got an A on a quiz that he'd paid somebody to take in third grade, which, by the way, kicked off a pattern that got him through Yale, albeit by the skin of his teeth.

"Uh huh, the Jackboots. Here, give me that." Cheney reached over and snatched the pipe out of Bush's mouth and set it down on the table. "Right now we've got those nazis locked up. If they ever get wind about this kind of stuff, though, they'll *unlock* in a hurry, believe it."

"Ah, I don't know, Dick," Rummy said. "The rank and file sure. But Reed and those guys? Robertson? Falwell? Shee-it. You could traffic in sex slaves as far as those pricks are concerned. They're all about money. Tell 'em you're gonna slash taxes to nothing, and keep trashing welfare, abortion and that shit, and they'll kiss your ass all the way to term two, watch and see."

Rumsfeld picked up the crack pipe. Cheney gave him a sour appraisal.

"Yeah, Don, all that we know. You promise Robertson a seat in the first wave of bombers to Baghdad and he'll raise the dead to vote for us, right? All well and good. But this kind of shit can get out and then what? Drop bombs you're on God's team, smoke dope you're a commie or worse. Bad mojo, baby. Can't have it."

Rumsfeld passed Cheney the pipe. Cheney took a small toke.

"This thing tomorrow," Cheney said, "we want Junior to get to that meeting and sit in his chair without falling face down in the snack plate. And plus, the last time he sucked up this much he looked like they'd had him celled in a nuthouse for *years*. Can't have that, man! Those clowns are votes!"

Rumsfeld just rolled his eyes. "Dick, they're not gonna vote for Gore, for Chrissake!"

"They'd sooner vote for Ruby the Queen Of the Dyke Pirate Legions," Cheney said. "So what? Seeing as Hitler's not on the ticket this time around, If George fucks it up, what those morons'll do is sit on their ashcans this time around and wave to his ass on his way down the toilet. There's always '04, that's what Falwell will tell 'em."

We gotta be careful."

They all sat a moment in silence, brows knotted in thought. Except for Bush's.

Bush raised his hand. Smiling brightly he said, "You know, I bet you Jesus smoked dope."

Cheney and Rummy just looked at the dummy.

"George" Cheney said.

Bush said, "What, Dick?"

"I've got two words for you."

"What words are those?"

"Shut the fuck up."

"But, Dick!" Bush said, distressed, "that's three words!"

Rummy laughed like a banshee.

Cheney snarled, "What the fuck is so funny?"

"Dick," Rumsfeld said, "he's gonna be fine. Check him out. Like that press conference last week? He's up there talking, some foreign language, tripping over the two syllable words as usual, and who knew the difference? *I* sure couldn't tell."

He laughed again. "Hey, Dub, were you loaded at that press conference last week?"

"Huh?" Bush blinked.

Cheney gave Bush a stink-eyed appraisal. "You know, much as I hate to admit it, I think you got something, Don. Sober, stoned, in Texas, on Mars, I can't tell either."

Cheney grinned. Birds fell out of the sky. "Forget I said anything, Junior. You're cool. Here, suck some more."

He handed the crack pipe to Bush.

"Hell yeah, come to papa!" Bush croaked. "Gee, thanks, Dick!"

Cheney and Rummy rolled their eyes.

"Yeah, George," Cheney said, "you go in there tomorrow and bungle your syntax like always, keep your face off the floor and, what the fuck. Those yoyos'll think you're a player. Man's man from Texas, all that good shit."

"And Gore?" Rumsfeld said. "Who the fuck's he? Some tree-hugging faggot. That's big points for you with the peckerheads, man,

and meanwhile, Jeb's got his hands on those chads in Miami and, this election? Cinch domino, baby!"

Rummy and Cheney swapped high fives.

Bush toked again and coughed half his lungs up.

Ten minutes later, his spew all over the floor, the coughing subsided.

Cheney said, "Okay, Junior, you done? Good. Now listen up. You with us here?"

"Uh, yeah, I think..." Bush shook his head like his ears were full of bees.

"Okay," Cheney said. "Now. did Wolfie give you those papers I told you to read?"

"What papers," Bush said.

"Ah shit," Cheney said. "I fucking knew it. The *papers*, dummy! The ones we wrote on Iraq!"

"Oh yeah. Those ones."

"Oh yeah. Those ones," Cheney mimicked. "Did you read 'em?"

"Well, uh..."

Cheney rolled his eyes in disgust. "And who didn't know that. Okay, well, listen up Einstein, 'cause we're gonna go over 'em now. It's three months before the election and you've gotta have some dim idea of just what it is you're gonna be doing the next four years of your life. Eight if we luck out and steal the one in '04 like we're gonna do this one. So, let's get to it."

"Sure, but first can I..." Bush held up the crack pipe.

"Put that goddamned thing down!" Cheney, exasperated now to the point where his heart was beating out rhythm in stomp time, said, "Jesus Christ, Rum, we need a keeper for this guy!"

"No shit," Rumsfeld said. "Here, George, gimme."

Bush, abashed, handed Rumsfeld the pipe.

Rumsfeld toked, grinning. Smoke blew out his ears.

"Okay, George," Cheney said. "Remember back in '92? Your old man was the Big Dog and he'd just got done pimp-slapping Saddam, am I right? We talked about it back then, remember?"

"Yeah, sort of..."

"Yeah, sort of. You thought Saddam was a Japanese import. Doesn't matter, though. I also told you that Daddy was gonna fuck things up royal, remember?"

"Well--"

"Never mind. I did. We told him then that we needed to go into Baghdad and blow the place up and then parcel out the oil concessions. He wouldn't listen. He had the election coming up and he was down in the polls. The economy's fucked up. Clinton was on him like stink on a skunk. He wanted to look good to the *pee-pul*, can you believe it?"

Cheney snorted and spit on the rug. "He never gave one rusty fuck about *them* in his life before then, but now, the *pee-pul*, they're saying that since the Russians are toast, we don't need bombs. Let's build some schools or some fucking thing. And old George, your daddy, goes pussy! He doesn't wanna piss off the pee-pul! I showed him our paper." Cheney whipped out what looked like a phone book. "This paper right here. The one Wolfie wrote and I signed off on: *Prospects For Conquering the World And Then Some By 2008*. I'm gonna quote it: 'Now that the Soviets are scrapped and the Cold War is over, America's the Big Dog--with teeth, and need to *use* 'em on all the tinpot Saddams who think they can piss on our shoes. This world is *ours*, we're the good guys, ho ho, so get ready, we're coming.'"

"Wow, cool!" Bush exclaimed. "I never thought about it like that but--"

"Neither did your daddy. You know what that cocksucker said when he got done reading this thing? He tells me shitcan the fucker! People will think we escaped from the zoo! Can you *believe* it?"

"Wow, Dick," Bush said, "I don't know what got into Dad but..." He shrugged. "He gets like that sometimes. Maybe the Saudis told him to hold off or something. Worried about getting too many people pissed off, I don't know."

"Piss people off? We've got the guns, for Chrissake! Jesus Christ! Anyway, all that peace shit didn't help your daddy. Clinton stomped him like Gallo stomps grapes. And then, the next eight years, there's Willie, 'containing' Saddam. He's bombing him every so often, in

between blowjobs under the desk, but so what? All that oil under Iraq, you could suck it out with a *straw*, and Saddamn's going, 'Nyah, nyah, nyah, go ahead and bomb stuff. I'll go gas Kurds. And thanks very much for the anthrax, you guys.'

"See what I mean? Eight fucking years of pooping around and Asshole's still sitting in Baghdad! I mean, what the fuck, huh?"

Cheney's face had turned purple, like the steam blowing out of his ears.

"Dick, calm down!" Rummy said. "Your heart, remember?"

"Yeah, yeah, I know," Cheney said, "but it pissed me off. And-- anyway, eight fucking years of Clinton and bullshit. He won't get the job done. Monica's breathing too hard or something. Me and Wolfie, we're still writing papers. Then, hey, you come along. You're tired of Texas. You want the White House. We check you out. Saddam gasses Kurds? You like to gas retards in Huntsville. Or lethal injection, whatever. It looked good to us."

Bush said, "Well, thanks, Dick--"

"Anyway, then," Cheney said, "it's, how do we burgle you into the White House? We've got Florida, chads, and all that, and Jeb's got that covered, but still, there's some problems. Me and Wolfie, we've got this new paper. One problem we noted right off, and I'll quote it. 'Americans, man! All they wanna do is eat, sleep, get laid, take their kids to the ballgame, watch Oprah... Suppose Saddam shits in our water supply? What'll they do? Hold their breath until they turn purple? What's it all gonna take, a new Pearl Harbor to snap 'em awake?'"

"Wow..." was all Bush could say.

"No shit, wow," Cheney said. "And that's still the problem. I mean, we can sneak your ass into the White House no sweat. The jackboots all think you love Jesus, the rest of the peckerwoods think you're a player, and the oil guys love you with all the money there is in this world. And meanwhile, old Gore's a quaalude and those dumb fucking liberals don't know if they're driving a school bus or having a sex change the government paid for. They haven't got a clue what they want. Social justice and Beamers or some goddamn thing." He

snorted. "And tax write-offs up the yazoo like the rest of us, man, as long as it won't fuck up their conscience.

"So, Gore and the liberals, and plus we got chads. All that shit's easy. It's what we do after we get there, my man. That's what we've got to finesse."

"Sounds good to me," Bush said. "How do we do it?"

Cheney smiled. Lawns died for miles around. Well, Junior... All I can tell you right now is, look to the skies."

Rumsfeld fell on the floor laughing. "Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's--"

"Hey, Don," Cheney said, "throttle down. Not yet, okay? This is supposed to be a surprise."

Cheney took the crack pipe from Rumsfeld. "Here, Dub, have a blast."

"Thanks, Dick!" Bush burbled. He sucked away on the pipe--and then hacked, choked, and barfed all over the lodge.

Rumsfeld laughed.

