

All the way to Wyoming:

Hey, I have a great idea. What do you say we send one or two of the useless creatures who have guided America's government over the last eight years directly to jail? Don't let them stop at "GO" and don't let them collect their government pensions. It might help us feel better about having voted for the bums in the first place and it might help us make the necessary break from their cold vision of the world run by a bully, us.

There are so many to choose from. The most daunting part of the undertaking would be choosing among the sheer number of players. You couldn't possibly send them all away; the effect on the D.C. real estate market would be devastating. There would be empty homes and condos and offices all over town. While hubby was cooling his/her heals at Camp Leavenworth their families would be hopelessly flopping about in the currents of a ruined mortgage market.

And the number of participants is only the first problem. The second is that these things have to be done according to Hoyle. It can't be that we just don't like them or that they eked out a couple of elections or that they have made millions by the blood of others. Those things are legal. There have to be real laws broken. When the righteous went after Clinton it couldn't be because he was a womanizer. It was because he lied about it. The impeachable offense was lying under oath.

Maybe we need to rank both the players and the crimes in some sort of descending order. Descending order sounds rather Dante-like, don't you think? I like it.

Okay, players first. I'm not at all sure this would be the final lineup. Let's think of this as a spring training exercise, just getting the team figured out. I'll go with Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Bush, Rove, Gonzalez, Miers, Goodling and Libby. I know, I know, I'm leaving out some of your favorites. It's a problem that confounds every manager; so much talent and so few positions to play them in. In our case there are so many offenders and a critical shortage of jail space.

Hey, know what would be fun? Let's do one of those 'match up' test questions where you get to draw lines between the items on each side of the ledger, items which are related to each other. Remember, some of the names in the left-hand column can be connected to more than one crime in the right hand column.

Dick Cheney	Contempt of Congress
Donald Rumsfeld	Outing a CIA agent
Paul Wolfowitz	Perjury
George Bush	Libel
Carl Rove	Obstructing Justice
Alberto Gonzalez	War Crimes
Harriet Miers	Torture
Monica Goodling	Warrantless wire taps
Scooter Libby	Political hiring and firing

OK, get your pencil and ruler ready. Start drawing those lines from one side to the other. Hey, this is fun. Oops, I can see a problem with the format already. I have so many lines connecting Cheney to punishable offenses that I'm running out of room for the others. It's a good thing that the right hand column is limited to legal offenses. If it included character flaws and unpleasant traits this exercise would resemble a bowl of spaghetti. We elected this guy twice? I mean, seriously folks, if you can connect him with four or five of these crimes why the heck is he still on the payroll? If someone working for you had a rap sheet like that he wouldn't last a minute. But the V.P. is in his eighth year of working for us. Maybe it's those "Get out of jail, free" cards he piled up during the Regan-Bush years that are keeping him on the streets.

On the positive side, it's nice to see a couple of females breaking into the lineup. There is no reason, here in the twenty first century, that women should be excluded from the ranks of top level government wrongdoing. No reason whatsoever for men to keep all the lying and cheating and conniving to themselves. There are plenty of qualified women. We should thank Harriet and Monica for stepping up to the plate, for leading the way so that others might follow. They're leaving a light on at Alderson for you.

So, with apologies to Dostoevsky, we'll close this chapter of Crime and Punishment. In his novel the criminal had a guilt driven need to revisit the scene, subliminally trying to get himself caught. My sense of our cast of characters is that they have no feelings of guilt at all, in other words, no conscience. They have the vacant stare of the amoral, the smirk of the protected, as if Gordon Liddy were their life coach. It's not as easy to see the conclusion of their story. I imagine there will be a boatload of pardons as President Bush leaves office, pardons that will cover current and future charges. I guess we'll have to content ourselves with match up quizzes and newspaper columns.

But who knows, maybe the Veep's next heart episode will trigger in him some long lost sense of values. Maybe he'll tell all in a soulful memoir in which he pleads for our understanding and forgiveness. Maybe he'll pay war reparations to the country he blew apart, or donate his Halliburton windfall to our maimed veterans or ask his henchmen to come clean with America.

Or maybe he'll laugh all the way to Wyoming.