

Watch Out

Mary Cheney is starting a consulting firm. It will operate in and around Washington D.C. It will be one more in the vast armada of lobbying, advising, marketing and PR enterprises that pretty much determine what Congress does in our names. These firms, more than any other single factor, will shape American politics and your place in it for the foreseeable future. It's been that way for a long time and is only getting more so.

Mary's firm will have an edge however. The name on the door will be Cheney. There will be three principals in the firm, all of them named Cheney. This is the way of business, tried and true. First: be born to a famous family. Second: put the famous family name on the door. Third: give the corner office to the most prominent member of that famous family. Fourth: call everyone who has ever benefitted from famous Dad's influence (start with Halliburton). Fifth: count the money. Clients will line up with buckets of it. Even before they say "Hello, is your dad in?" they will write big retainer checks. The first large check will get their calls answered. The second larger check will get them an appointment with Himself. The third enormous check might even get them invited to one of dad's hunting weekends. Sorry, but it's the price they have to pay.

If you think for a minute that Mary Average Citizen's new company has the same chance in D.C. as Mary Cheney's new company, you're sorely mistaken. Cheney and Associates starts with a three touchdown lead and two minutes left on the clock. Game over.

Liz Cheney, the older sister, who is smarter than a whip will also come on board. She is getting more and more air time these days as she and dad tidy up his legacy. She is becoming a star for the red meat crowd which is ramping up for a run at the Dems in '10 and '12. She will probably run for the Senate in Virginia or maybe Wyoming seeing as how Virginia has not been politically reliable lately. She's tough and only a fool would debate her live. Liz actually makes the case, with a straight face, that invasion is liberation and torture is interrogation. It's not easy following a dad who redefined half of the Standard English Dictionary to suit himself but she tries, she tries.

They will be formidable, a powerful combination of youth and maturity, ambition and the experience of being at the top for a long time. And there's always that name on the door. There are Insurance Industry Execs and Pharmaceutical Top Guns and Think Tank Gurus and Oil Conglomerate Big Wigs who are lined up turnstile fashion vying to be the first to open the money spigot for Cheney, Cheney and Cheney.

The only constituency that may have a problem with the firm will be the Hellfire Fundamentalists who don't know quite how to handle Mary Cheney's choice of lifestyle. She is expecting her second child with her long time partner who is, gasp, female. Dad has made it clear that he supports citizens' rights to do whatever they choose in the area of marriage and relationships. Good for him but the Self Righteous Right does throw a lot of money around. Maybe the cash that the Family Values folks don't spend will be made up for by Log Cabin Republicans, GO Proud and the like. Yes, there are gay conservative political groups, really, there are. Besides, when the chips are on the table, when a Bill is before Congress that is going to affect your bottom line, money talks and principles tend to walk.

That is the business of these consultancies. They take in money and turn it into influence. Money on this end becomes phone calls and promises on that end. Do you remember the game "Six degrees of Separation"? The idea is that no matter who you name, anyone in the world, you are no more than six connective people away. Well, Dick Cheney makes the game "Two Degrees of Separation". He knows everyone. His connections and influence make it a no-brainer for clients to write those huge checks.

The three of them together will be something with Mary Cheney the PR whiz, Liz Cheney all over TV and maybe in the Senate and Dick Cheney pulling strings that only he can pull. Yup, when Mary and Liz and their dad get this train rolling, watch out world. Watch out.