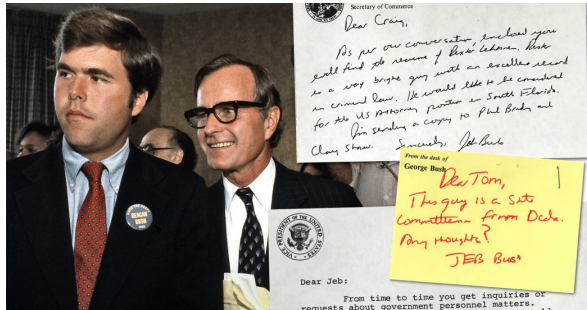


Personal Post

Sunday, February 15th, 2015

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As Dynastys Son, Jeb Bush Used His Connections Freely

The stream of requests to the White House from Jeb Bush, a young but well-connected Republican leader in South Florida, ranged from the weighty and urgent to the parochial and mundane. In 1985, he sent an emotional letter pressing his father, Vice President George Bush, to investigate the detention of Cuban children in Texas, asking, Shouldn't there be some compassion? (The vice president's reply: Heartbreaking.) In 1989, after his father became president, Mr. Bush offered his recommendation for the next Supreme Court opening. (Your suggestion will be given thoughtful consideration, a senior aide responded.) In 1990, Mr. Bush lobbied the White House to meet with executives of the telecommunications giant Motorola, fostering a relationship that would later aid his own political ambitions. (The chief of staff did meet with Motorola, as did President Bush.) For the 12 years that his father held national elective office, Mr. Bush used his unique access to the highest reaches of government to seek favors for Republican allies, push his views and burnish his



Republicans, the Religious Right and Evolution

GOD had a busy week. Alabama alone was a heavy lift, what with all those God invocations by state leaders trying to cast out the demon of gay marriage, then London called as well. Scott Walker was on a trip there, and he tugged God into the picture when he was asked about evolution and declined to answer, as if embracing it would be a heathen outrage. In a subsequent tweet, Walker insisted that there wasn't any conflict between faith & science, which, he wrote, go

political profile in his home state, a review of presidential library records shows. In the process, Mr. Bush carefully constructed an elaborate and enduring network of relationships in Florida that helped lead to his election as governor in 1998 and, now, to his place as a top contender for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016. It was a period when Mr. Bush, a real estate developer and entrepreneur in his late 20s and 30s, made his debut in regional politics, parlaying his family name into the chairmanship of the Dade County Republican Party and emerging as a sought-after figure for anyone trying to reach the White House. The letters from Mr. Bush kept at the George Bush and Ronald Reagan presidential libraries show him to be sometimes compassionate, occasionally demanding and always conscious of his status as a member of a prestigious and powerful political clan. He thought nothing of making requests big and small, but acknowledged an underlying anxiety about coming off as something very un-Bush-like: an overeager local party boss, another bad breath county chairman, as he wrote in a request to President Reagan. Even within a family long steeped in politics, Mr. Bush stood out to White House aides for the frequency of his communications and the intensity of the opinions. Jeb, we all sensed, had a strong interest in a political future of his own, said John H. Sununu, who fielded a number of Mr. Bush's inquiries during his tenure as chief of staff to the first President Bush. The son's words, Mr. Sununu said, carried the extra weight of lineage. We listened to him. Mr. Bush's activities during this period drew him closer to a father who already viewed him, fondly, as heir to the family's political legacy. Early in his term, President Bush shared with his senior staff a withering letter that his son had written to a newspaper columnist in Orlando, Fla., holding it up as a model for the aggressive approach that should be taken in response to attacks on his administration. This happens to be Jeb defending his father, President Bush wrote. But we ought to have machinery that

hand in hand. That's debatable. This isn't: Faith and government shouldn't be as cozy as they are in this country. Politicians in general, and Republicans in particular, shouldn't genuflect as slavishly as they do, not in public. They're vying to be senators and presidents. They're not auditioning to be ministers and missionaries. No one told that to Rick Perry as he ramped up for the 2012 presidential race and gave God a workout to be remembered. I've certainly never forgotten it. He was then the governor of Texas, and in April 2011, as wildfires ravaged the state, he signed a gubernatorial proclamation denoting one 72-hour period as the Days of Prayer for Rain in the State of Texas. The following month, reflecting on the array of problems confronting America, he said, I think it's time for us to just hand it over to God, and say, God: You're going to have to fix this. And three months after that, he gathered some 30,000 people, most of them evangelical Christians, in a Houston stadium for an event called The Response: A Call to Prayer for a Nation in Crisis. As Manny Fernandez noted in his coverage of that rally in The Times, Perry used his office's prestige, letterhead, Web site and other resources to promote it. I don't see much of a separation of church and state there. Remarkably, none of this was a drag on his aspirations for the Oval Office, not at all. He remained a serious contender for his party's nomination until a debate performance that was less than celestial sent him tumbling to earth. Faith is a serious matter, and an important one, but it's trivialized when it's trotted too readily and stridently into the political arena. And while a creed can rightly be a personal compass, it's wrongly deployed as marching orders or a governing strategy. Politicians' religions and I use the plural on purpose, because there's no one religion that gets to trump the others should be a source of their strength and of their empathy, not of their agendas. But that's not the way it works out in this country, especially not among Republicans, who can't quit their fealty to the religious right and who, because of that, drive away many independent voters who are otherwise

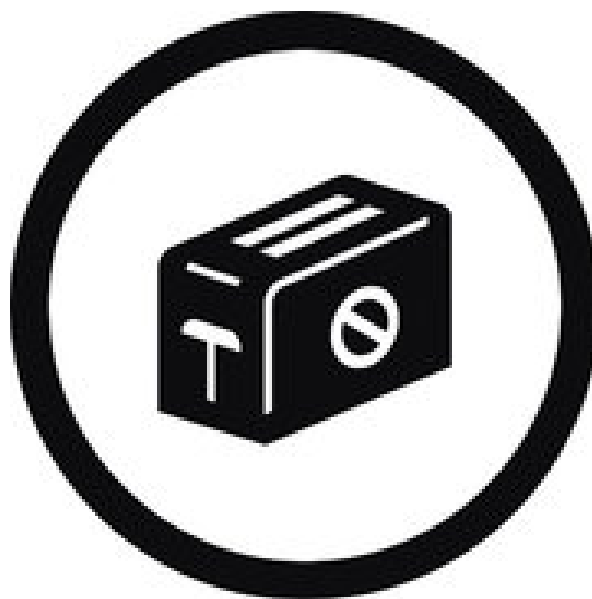
goes into automatic when lousy editorials are written. In the scores of messages that Mr. Bush sent to his father and White House staff members, there are echoes of the themes that have dominated his career in both government and business: a fruitful reliance on his family name, a fascination with the mechanics of government and a willingness to delve into the gritty art of political favors. Kristy Campbell, a spokeswoman for Mr. Bush, said in a statement that from time to time, Governor Bush of course passed along information or requests to the White House, which were routed to appropriate channels. There is nothing odd or inappropriate about that, she added. Mr. Bush's reliance on written communications presages his habits as an elected official. As governor, he was known to spend up to 30 hours a week on email and so adored his BlackBerry that he insisted on featuring the device in his official portrait. The archives at the Bush and Reagan libraries contain more than 1,200 pages of documents relating to Mr. Bush, capturing dozens of exchanges between him and the White House staff. But even that may represent just a fraction of his messages, since the archives are incomplete. While Mr. Bush's father welcomed his input, staff members did not always share that enthusiasm. The archives reveal polite but firm attempts to rein him in. Jane Kenny, special assistant to Mr. Bush's father when he was vice president, twice wrote to ask Mr. Bush to route requests for appointments through her instead of contacting an agency or office directly. That way, Ms. Kenny wrote, there will be no chance for misunderstanding. Recommending Allies Jeb Bush had run out of patience with his father's staff. The White House had yet to officially nominate an ally, Dexter Lehtinen, as United States attorney for South Florida, as Mr. Bush had repeatedly recommended. His letter to C. Boyden Gray, the White House counsel, was blunt and emphatic. Boyden, its time to act, Mr. Bush wrote. The case demonstrated how doggedly Mr. Bush advocated for those close to him, deploying a growing self-confidence and an increasingly

receptive to an ideology of limited government, personal responsibility and muscular foreign policy. These voters just can't stomach all the moralizing that comes with that ideology. They can't take the placement of divinity above Darwin. And there's a heavy dose of divinity. Mike Huckabee, who is an ordained minister in the Southern Baptist church, put God in the title of a new book that he wrote and just released on the cusp of what may be another presidential bid. He ran previously in 2008, when he won the Iowa caucuses. The book is called God, Guns, Grits, and Gravy. These are a few of his favorite things. During a recent appearance on a Christian TV program, he explained that he was mulling a 2016 campaign because America had lost sight of its identity as a God-centered nation that understands that our laws do not come from man, they come from God. The way he talks, the Constitution is a set of tablets hauled down from a mountaintop by a bearded prophet. HE later added that the only thing worse than not being elected president would be to be elected president without God's blessing. I can't think of a worse place in the world to be than in the Oval Office without God's hand upon you. Last week he injected religion into politics in a different way, recalling President Obama's recent reference to the Crusades and questioning the president's respect for Christianity. Huckabee said that Muslims are the one group of people that can know they have his undying, unflinching support. That's ugly and absurd. While I agree that Obama's digression into history was ill-timed and unnecessary, I'm offended by Huckabee's extrapolation. Huckabee is an extreme case within his party, but the Republican courtship of the religious right and its fear of giving offense to Christian fundamentalists are pervasive. Republican presidential candidates, even relatively moderate ones, run from the subject of evolution as if it were a ticking bomb. And they routinely polish their religious bona fides. But we should be wary of politicians who are too eager to talk of religion, which is an easy rallying cry and,

assertive tone that might have invited scorn if he had had a different father. When the United States attorney job came open in 1988, Mr. Bush, who by then had begun his ascent in Florida politics, moving from Republican county chairman to state secretary of commerce, made his preference well known. He called Craig Fuller, his fathers chief of staff, and followed up with a handwritten note. Dexter is a very bright guy with an excellent record in criminal law, Mr. Bush wrote. The Reagan White House appointed Mr. Lehtinen as interim United States attorney, a status that eventually left Mr. Bush dissatisfied. In 1990, after his father had become president, he wrote to Mr. Gray that Mr. Lehtinen was being treated unfairly by the press and that the Bush administration had been unfair to leave him in limbo. (The Senate ultimately rebuffed Mr. Lehtinens nomination.) In his correspondence, Mr. Bush did not elaborate on his ties to Mr. Lehtinen, which had grown deep: He had managed the successful congressional campaign of Mr. Lehtinens wife, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. Mr. Bush did not limit his advice to suggesting potential appointees for United States attorney. Seven months into his fathers presidency, he aimed much higher, offering his suggestion for a Supreme Court appointment in a letter to the White House. He enclosed the rsum of Peter T. Fay, a federal appellate judge. Judge Fay is respected by his peers and the many people who know him in Miami, Mr. Bush wrote. Mr. Gray replied that if there were an opening, Judge Fay would get thoughtful consideration. The ambition of the request fit a pattern for Mr. Bush, who also recommended allies seeking other major positions, like head of White House security and Internal Revenue Service commissioner. In doing so, Mr. Bush typically mentioned a key credential: service to the Florida Republican Party. When he contacted the White House on behalf of Rex J. Ford, a lawyer who wished to become I.R.S. commissioner in the Reagan administration, Mr. Bush appended a note on his fathers stationery From the desk of

frequently, a diversion or even a disguise. It can cover up private misdeeds. It can put a rosy glow on political calculations. Obama, for example, framed his past opposition to gay marriage as a deeply personal matter of faith. But as David Axelrods new book, Believer, makes clear, it was a deeply expedient matter of evading some voters wrath. He more or less supported gay marriage, at least when he was away from the podium, all along. We should be even warier of politicians and other leaders who wrap policy in dogma, claiming holy guidance. Thats a dangerous road to take. At the far, bitter end of it lie theocracies and brutal extremists. We should listen hard to whats being said in Alabama, where opponents of gay marriage arent merely asserting that it runs counter to what Alabamians want. Theyre declaring that it perverts Gods will, which was the position that some racists took about integration. Last week, the chairman of the Alabama Republican Party wrote that the state would reap Gods wrath if we embrace and condone things that are abhorrent to God, such as redefining marriage. And in an interview with the CNN anchor Chris Cuomo, Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore the man who once put up a granite monument to the Ten Commandments in the rotunda of the Alabama Judicial System building said, Our rights, contained in the Bill of Rights, do not come from the Constitution, they come from God. Thats your faith, Cuomo replied. But thats not our country. Cuomos right, and God should be given a rest. Even in Genesis he got one.

George Bush noting that Mr. Ford was a member of the Florida Republican committee. Mr. Bush's willingness to reward loyal Republicans in Dade County was part of what endeared him to many within the party, who had at first viewed him with skepticism but came away impressed by his hard work and connections. If you treat people nicely and you remember your friends on your way up, they'll be there on the way down, said Barry Schreiber, a former Dade County commissioner whom Mr. Bush recommended for a presidential commission in the 1980s. Jeb Bush fit that mold. Special Requests At times, Mr. Bush sounded like a corporate pitchman. By the summer of 1990, after Mr. Bush had left state government and plunged into a corporate career, he had a very interesting meeting with Christopher Galvin, a senior executive at Motorola and Mr. Bush shared his enthusiasm with his father's chief of staff. I urge you to visit with Motorola at your convenience to see first-hand how the Motorola experience can help our country (including agencies in the federal government), Mr. Bush wrote, appending a 14-page presentation from the company. In the following months, not only did Mr. Sununu, the chief of staff, meet with Motorola executives, but so did the president himself. Soon, the Bush family's relationship with Motorola, a major donor to the Florida Republican Party, and Mr. Galvin, who became its chief executive, blossomed in ways that benefited both sides. As governor, Mr. Bush honored Motorola with a Sterling Award, a prestigious honor for Florida businesses. His brother George W. Bush, when he was president, appointed Mr. Galvin to a committee advising him on national security in telecommunications. Mr. Galvin, who is now a real estate investor, has in turn become a reliable supporter of Mr. Bush. On Wednesday, Mr. Galvin will co-host a Chicago fund-raiser for Mr. Bush's potential presidential campaign. Asked about the White House meeting, Mr. Galvin said he had sought nothing from either the president or his son and, in his discussions with both, merely sought to exchange ideas



The Lies Heard Round the World

DURHAM, N.C. LYING may be an age-old part of politics, but its becoming easier to spot the fibs, fictions and falsehoods. A growing army of fact-checkers around the world is busy debunking falsehoods from presidents, prime ministers and pundits and if their results are indicative, 2014 was a banner year. Some of the claims were so absurd that fact-checking groups honored them with awards, like Australia's Golden Zombie and Italy's Insane Whopper of the Year. Such lies are fun to read, but identifying them is serious business: Misinformation, unchecked, can turn elections, undermine public health efforts and even lead countries into war. Nigeria, you can read about it on Wikipedia: 60 percent of its territory is controlled by Boko Haram, the remaining part is Ebola. This ridiculous claim, made by Alessandro Di Battista, vice president of the Committee on Foreign Relations in Italy's Chamber of Deputies and a rising star in the Five Star Movement party, won the Insane Whopper of the Year award from the website

for improving government operations. It was not the only time that Mr. Bush used his access to the White House to nurture relationships. In 1984, Mr. Bush aggressively lobbied for an exemption from federal airport noise regulations for another supporter, George Batchelor, who owned a Florida-based airline. Mr. Bush and a former Florida congressman met with James A. Baker III, Mr. Reagan's chief of staff, who advised them several times that the White House could not become involved. (The Federal Aviation Administration partly approved the exemption, records show.) Mr. Batchelor became a financial supporter, giving \$5,000 to a PAC for Mr. Bush's father in 1985, and donating \$500,000 through one of his businesses to the Florida Republican Party in 2000, when Mr. Bush was governor. It was the largest donation in the history of the Florida Republican Party. I know George Batchelor, Mr. Bush told *The St. Petersburg Times* after the donation. At this stage in his life, I don't think there's anything he wants. Mr. Batchelor died in 2002. Mr. Bush seemed to relish his close ties and ready access to his father's administration, inviting major figures from Washington to Florida for his favored causes. It was a considerable plus having the son of a vice president as your person, said Andrew E. Grigsby, a Republican ally who in 1987 sought Mr. Bush's help in finding surplus government helicopters for a client. The White House complied when Mr. Bush sought signed photos of his father, once for Walter Payton, the football star. On another occasion, he asked his father for a letter of condolence for a woman he had met on a flight to Washington, where she had been headed to bury her husband, a serviceman, at Arlington National Cemetery. Mr. Bush's letters often took a playful tone, even on serious issues of governance. A cut in the bureaucracy wouldn't be a bad idea. In fact, our great President would become a hero! Mr. Bush wrote to his father's staff in 1989. Later, he shared his disdain for perceived abuses of the legal system. Tort reform anyone? he asked. But Mr. Bush's most pointed pleas

Pagella Politica. Fact-checkers found that while the terrorist group Boko Haram has spread, it does not control a single Nigerian state, let alone 60 percent of the entire nation. And the number of Ebola cases in the country was tiny just 20. The E.U. wants to ban double-slot toasters. This claim about the overreach of the European Union came from newspapers in Italy and Britain. The *Daily Express* said: The British way of life is under fresh threat from the E.U. as it targets the nations' kettles, toasters and even lawn mowers. FactCheckEU, a watchdog group, dug into the details and found no plans to ban toasters, only to improve their energy efficiency. It rated the claim rather daft. Ebola is cured by eating kola nuts or bathing in warm, salty water. The fact-checking group AfricaCheck included several claims about Ebola cures and other quackery in its 2014 review compilation. Blogs and text messages in Nigeria had spread claims that a warm, salty bath would cure Ebola, while a newspaper spread rumors that eating kola nuts would stop the disease. AfricaCheck said, The cures being touted online and in newspapers are little more than cruel and unethical hoaxes. Over six years, Labor ran up a \$667 billion debt. This statement won ABC Fact Checks Golden Zombie, which the Australian Broadcasting Corporation gives to the year's most persistent falsehood that, despite being killed off by fact-checkers, lurches back to life. The claim was made by Prime Minister Tony Abbott, who accused the previous ruling party of leaving the country drowning in red ink. But the fact-checking group found that that statement relied on some misleading math: It is a 10-year projection from 2013 that even includes debt already on the books when Labor took over. Exaggerations about Ebola. Rather than name a single falsehood, PolitiFact (which one of us, Bill Adair, founded) honored the many falsehoods and exaggerations about Ebola, including the claim by the columnist George F. Will that the disease can be spread by sneezing or coughing (false), the claim by Senator Rand Paul, Republican of Kentucky, that Ebola is

focused on the plight of Cuban exiles, an increasingly influential group by the time he arrived in Miami in 1980. Mr. Bush, who spoke fluent Spanish and had married a woman he met in Mexico, was quickly welcomed by Cubans, and he adopted their causes as his own, espousing their hard line against Fidel Castros government. Mr. Bush sought to arrange a meeting between his father and exile leaders. He called for economic sanctions that would tighten the noose on Castro. And he questioned the Justice Departments prosecution of a Cuban militant who had already been incarcerated in Castros jail for 23 years. Mr. Bush, who had no military experience, also sought a promotion for an Army colonel who he noted could become the first United States general of Cuban origin. The presidents staff thought better of acting on that request. Armed Services promotion board reacts very negatively to any sort of political pressure, perceived or otherwise, wrote Thomas Collamore, one of his fathers top aides. I really think it is best to leave this one to run its natural course. Winning Over Aides Barely a month into George Bushs presidency, Jeb Bush made sure that the White House staff knew that he planned to remain among his fathers priorities. I hope we can continue to get the president down to Miami as much as we used to when he was a mere VEEP, Mr. Bush wrote in an effort to lure his father to Florida for a commencement speech at Miami-Dade Community College. Even as Mr. Bushs requests flowed, he deftly worked to win over the coterie of staff members surrounding his father, developing a rapport through his unsolicited messages of appreciation and congratulations, the archives show. Dad is lucky to have someone of your caliber with him, Mr. Bush wrote to Mr. Fuller after Mr. Fullers appointment as his fathers chief of staff. Many on the presidents staff saw Mr. Bush not so much as meddling as fulfilling a duty to the familys profession. It is sort of the family business of extending the political network, Mr. Collamore said in an interview. So members worked diligently to carry out his requests

incredibly contagious (mostly false), and a Georgia congressmans statement that there were reports of people carrying Ebola across the southern border of the United States (so ridiculously wrong we rated it Pants on Fire not remotely true). That Evan Jenkins, a Republican running for a House seat in West Virginia, vowed to repeal black lung benefits. FactCheck.org said this claim, from a liberal super PAC, was a common tactic used by Democrats in congressional campaigns asserting that a Republicans support for repealing the Affordable Care Act meant that he also opposed every provision of the law. In this case, the repeal of the act would not repeal black lung benefits. It would have changed the eligibility requirements for people suffering from black lung disease, not ended the program. In fact, Mr. Jenkins said he supported those benefits. Today Uruguay is the first country in Latin America without overcrowding in prisons. The readers of the website UYCheck chose this claim by Luca Topolansky, a senator and the wife of President Jos Mujica, as its lie of the year. UYCheck found that there had been some reduction of prison populations, but that the country had a long way to go before it could eliminate overcrowding. Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, did meet with ISIS, and had his picture taken, and didnt know it was happening at the time. Senator Paul, a possible 2016 Republican presidential candidate, repeated this Internet rumor during a September interview with The Daily Beast. But the photo actually showed Mr. McCain with members of the Free Syrian Army, an enemy of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS. Glenn Kessler, who writes The Washington Posts Fact Checker column, gave the claim four Pinocchios, his worst rating. Argentina has practically eradicated indigence. Readers of the fact-checking site Chequeado chose this claim by Jorge Capitanich, the chief of the Cabinet of Ministers, as the biggest falsehood of the year. While poverty has declined, it is still a nationwide problem.

even if some were out of the ordinary. In one case, an entrepreneur who had attended a fund-raiser for a George Bush PAC in 1985 handed his son a letter requesting a contact at the Department of Agriculture to advance her business plan: increasing the consumption of domestic rabbit meat. Mr. Bush, sounding a bit embarrassed, pursued it nevertheless. The enclosed letter is a bit unusual but it is serious, Mr. Bush wrote in a letter to Mr. Collamore a few days after the fund-raiser. Can you get to me a name at U.S.D.A. to help her out? Mr. Collamore dutifully tracked down the right person. If anything else is needed, please don't hesitate to let me know, Mr. Collamore wrote to Mr. Bush. If such an odd request left Mr. Collamore annoyed, he never let on. Years later, he traded a series of admiring emails with Mr. Bush during the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York, where Mr. Bush's father, brother and son George P. Bush had gathered. Mr. Bush could not make it, so he asked Mr. Collamore to give his son a hug in his place. Mr. Collamore did one better: He arranged for Mr. Bush's son and daughter-in-law to attend the United States Open tennis tournament. A nice break, he wrote Mr. Bush, from all this convention stuff.