

George W. Writes a Letter

By William Nicoson

The envelope bore the crest and name of the Governor of Texas. Inside was a handwritten, two-page letter beginning with my name and signed “George” – at least that’s what I assumed was the indecipherable signature. Throughout the letter, in fact, were numerous words difficult to decipher except from the context. I therefore spent considerable time figuring out George’s message for me. How clever he was to suppress my wastebasket reflex.

Of course I assume that neither “George” nor anyone else put pen to the sheet of paper mailed to me – though I admit it looked authentic. It must have been one of millions of copies made from a single sheet with computer-generated salutations drawn from a variety of data bases, including contributors to some past GOP campaigns and schmucks known to be easy marks for fund-raisers. I qualify on both counts.

I was put off by a letter that I assumed pretended to be something it wasn’t. I was also troubled by the use of the Texas Governor’s crest on a letter designed for political fund-raising. Then I noticed a printed legend at the bottom of the first page: “NOT PRINTED OR MAILED AT TAXPAYER EXPENSE. PAID FOR BY BUSH FOR PRESIDENT, INC.” Well, I thought, no wonder he needs contributions to pay for his millions of fund-raising letters, and, as to the crest, he is, after all, the Texas Governor.

I also noticed a legend on the enclosed contribution card: “Corporate and foreign national contributions are not permitted under federal law.” This made me wonder whether similar legends appeared on fund-raising materials distributed by the Clinton-Gore campaign and the Democratic National Committee in 1996. Did Johnny Chung, Charlie Trie and John Huang make this point to generous contributors in the Chinese military, Buddhist monasteries and Indonesian conglomerates? Makes you wonder, in particular, what Chinese government officials expected in return.

Bush’s letter failed to ask any of these questions, failed even to mention the multiple-felony conviction of Gore’s longtime associate and fund-raiser, Maria Hsia. Ms. Hsia never revealed what Gore knew about her felonious activities undertaken for his benefit. Makes you wonder whether Justice Department prosecutors thought to ask.

Bush’s letter focused instead on issues facing the next President, beginning with social security. He’s proposed voluntary investment accounts for a minor portion of individual benefits, a position once supported by Gore. Gore now calls this innovation “risky.” What’s risky here is a possible political backlash from seniors who love only the status quo.

Bush then turned to national security: “For eight years, Clinton/Gore multiplied our military’s missions while cutting its capabilities.” Certainly the adventurist missions into the Balkans,

where no threat to our national security existed, have limited our capabilities to respond elsewhere in defense of national interests. Even the humanitarian objective of restoring peace in ethnically diverse communities has eluded us both in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Bush also addressed education and taxes with concision and force (to the extent I could read his handwriting). You guessed it: I sent him a contribution.

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