

# Matt Geiger on election year coverup

Matthew Geiger

Columnist

Over the course of the last few days, President Bush has named the committee that will investigate the intelligence gatherers and whether any incorrect information led to our war with Iraq.

Before I go any further into this, I want to relay a few facts about this commission just so we all can be clear about what this commission is about.

-The President appointed this committee himself.

-Aside from William Studeman, a former deputy director of the CIA and director of the National Security Agency, no member on this committee has any background in the intelligence community.

-None of the conclusions from this committee are going to be made before the November election.

Does anybody see anything wrong with this?

To me, it looks like there is something rotten in our nation's capital.

One of the first things that is striking about this committee is what exactly they are going to investigate, but more importantly, what they are not going to investigate.

The goal of this committee, as reported by the *Washington Post*, is to

"study the information about Iraq that was available to the White House before the war, in an effort to determine whether an intelligence failure contributed to Bush's as-yet-unproved assertions that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction."

Fine, but what is missing, I believe, is the most important thing. This is to say that the committee is not investigating how this information was going to be used. What if in March of 2005, when the committee's report is due, it shows that the intelligence was good, but the use of it was bad?

For Bush, this is pretty much a win-win situation. If he loses the next election, the next president is left to clean up the Iraq intelligence mess. If Bush wins, he might take a few hits, but he thinks more blame will be assessed to his advisors. Plus, since he would have already won re-election, do we think he would really care?

To take away from the credibility of this committee even more is that the members of this committee are having their qualifications deeply scrutinized.

Also from the *Washington Post*, "Loch K. Johnson, a Political Science professor at the University of Georgia and an authority on the CIA, said he is disappointed that the panel members "have not been deeply involved in con-

temporary intelligence issues. Where are the people who know about intelligence but have no axes to grind or institutional biases to reflect?" he said. "I don't see those people there."

So the question we have to ask ourselves is this: "Is this administration capable of putting together a fair investigative committee to investigate themselves?" This motley crew was put together by the same man (Bush) who authorized the use of push polls in South Carolina during his campaign in 2000 to suggest that his opponent (Senator John McCain who is also, coincidentally, a member of this committee) had fathered an illegitimate black child. Classy, no?

Of course the answer is no, and really to be fair, could we say that any president, Republican or Democrat, would authorize a fair and balanced investigation into themselves? Doubtful at best I do believe.

My only wish is that when this investigation is being conducted, is that there is a serious look into the people that were using this information to make important decisions and ask some serious questions about said

leaders.

Were this president and his cabinet dead-set on war with Iraq from day one in office?

Did they knowingly use incomplete intelligence to make a case for war?

Was Saddam Hussein ever a real threat?

Was it weapons of mass destruction or the possibility of one day having weapons of mass destruction?

I want to end this with a passage from

the June 5, 2003, *Washington Post*:

"Vice President Cheney and his most senior aide made multiple trips to the CIA over the past year to question analysts studying Iraq's weapons programs and alleged links to Al Qaeda, creating an environment in which some analysts felt they were being pressured to make their assessments fit with the Bush Administration's policy objectives, according to senior intelligence officials,"

If you close your eyes, you can almost see our president covering his own butt.



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# Adventures in second floor English

Will Groves

Staff Writer

Clogged commodes, cash, crap, and lettuce on second-floor English.

On Feb. 4, I and other residents of second-floor English Hall were called to a mandatory hall meeting to inform us that we all were facing fines from the Office of Campus Life of \$250 for something that, by and large, was none of our faults.

All year our bathroom situation has been terrible. People constantly clog the toilets with trash bags, toilet paper - basically anything that would stop a toilet from functioning.

In addition to the constantly overflowing toilets, our hallway have seen

such varied substances as lettuce, cigars and cigarettes, bottles with tobacco spit, and a half-full can of tuna, to mention a few.

Oh, we've gone through three new panes of glass in the windows at either end of the hall, too.

The living situation here has been pretty bad. It's not my fault; it's not our R.A.'s fault; it's not the housekeeping staff's fault.

The only person or persons at fault here are those who did this.

I know some of these things are to blame on the guys here that don't mind living in their own filth, or lettuce, as the case may be.

But the toilets? Why would someone clog up all four toilets on his own

floor? What has to be going through someone's mind to do that?

All kinds of theories as to who did this have been thrown out, mostly relating to either athletes on this hall, or athletes on the first floor of English, which is categorically unfair to them. This just shows the knee-jerk reaction around here that if someone is an athlete, they automatically suck at life.

My problem with second-floor English doesn't end here. The Office of Campus Life has handled this in a very poor way.

Campus Life is charging all the residents of the second floor \$250 apiece because of these incidents. They're charging us each \$250 for something we wish never happened in the first

place, and may not even be the product of the people who live here.

There are 29 guys living on this hall. If we all get charged \$250 apiece, that's \$7250. As much as I hate the fact that anyone on the school's staff had to deal with this by either cleaning up a mess, replacing a window, or fixing a toilet, I think \$7250 may be a little on the excessive side to cover damages or hours spent on maintenance.

It's stuff like this, both the fact that these things happened, and the way this was handled by Campus Life, that make me sincerely wish that I never again have to live in a dorm setting, especially not here on campus at Guilford, ever again.