

Tidepool Originals: VOICES

A Scrooged Bush

The Ghost of Christmas Future pays Dubya a visit

By Paul Larmer

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One of my favorite stories of the Holiday season is "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. What could be more inspiring than that moment when Ebenezer Scrooge, after enduring the long dark night of the soul, wakes up a new man. Scrooge's transformation from a fearful, angry tightwad to a joyful gift-giver always fills me with hope for humanity, even in these troubling times.

As a Westerner and a conservationist, it has been hard to find much to be hopeful about in recent years. This administration has shown little respect for our region's astonishing natural heritage. The not-so-subtle attacks on basic environmental laws and the constant push to hurry up and drill, mine and cut our public lands in the name of national security and corporate profits have made it hard not to feel a little stingy toward the man in the White House. So I have recently found myself fantasizing about how George W. Bush might redeem himself in his last few years of office if he were Scrooged.

Imagine the scene: The ghost of Christmas Future has just left the White House and George W., with his own mortality in mind, wakes with a start. He springs to the window and

cranks it open. Below, a few scraggly looking protesters trudge in front of the wrought-iron gate, holding up signs that say things like "Save the White House Turkey: Eat Tofu."

Shouts George: "Hey, you down there, you magnificent, long-haired, first-amendment loving patriot. What day is it?"

"Why it's Christmas day, Sir," responds a startled man, his rasta locks covered with "Impeach Bush" buttons.

"Goody! I'm not too late!" George exclaims. He pulls off the wall a gold-plated automatic machine gun, a post-election gift from a sheik, and tosses it down. "My good man, go hock this and buy yourself 100 tofu-stuffed millet turkeys to share with your honorably disheveled friends. And keep the change!"

Then George turns and tells a visibly stunned press secretary: "Assemble the cabinet in the Oval Office. I have finally come up with that vision thing Dad is always talking about!"

Fifteen minutes later, George addresses his cabinet. "Friends, I have been born again, and I know now that what was up is down, and what was left is right. We must act now to save what is left of my presidency.

"I am a Christian, so I revere all of creation. That means I care about all of those birds and bees and other endangered critters. Dick, go tell that Mr. Pombo that I will not back his bill to gut the Endangered Species Act, and that if he wants me to campaign for his re-election, he better double the funding for habitat protection and law enforcement. We will prosecute those who harm creation, but we will not execute them like a common Texas criminal. They'll just be required to attend an all-organic dinner party with Laura, me, Cindy Sheehan and the staff of the Center for Biological Diversity.

"Gale, let's pull the plug on Arctic Refuge drilling. What a waste of time that has been! And let's use that law old Slick Willy Clinton used to create a bunch of our own national monuments in Wyoming's Red desert, Colorado's Roan Plateau and New Mexico's Otero Mesa. Why should he get all the fun? Besides, that's what the local people want, and in a democracy, we respect the will of the people.

"Let's quadruple the investment in alternative energy and require auto manufacturers to double the mileage of their cars and trucks (it's for their own competitive good!). Our good work will make the Kyoto

Treaty look like a cheap suit,
and encourage the rest of the
world to help us stop this thing
called global warming."

For a moment, the room is
deadly silent. Dick Cheney and
Karl Rove look ill. A tear
trickles down George's face,
though he continues to smile
broadly. "Be of good cheer my
friends. If I can change, so can
you. God Bless us, every one."

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