

The unemployment rate is high around the country - but not for former Bush officials. A guide to who's cashing in

By Nick Turse

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In May, the U.S. economy [lost](#) 345,000 nonfarm jobs, pushing the unemployment rate from 8.9 percent to 9.4 percent. According to official statistics, 14.5 million Americans are now looking for work and, as a recent [headline](#) at Time.com put it, "The jobs aren't coming back anytime soon." In fact, a team of economists at the San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank recently [reporte](#)
[d](#) that "the level of labor market slack could be higher by the end of 2009 than at any other time in the post-World War Two period."

The news, however, is not altogether grim. While times are especially tough for teenagers (22.7 percent jobless rate) and blacks (14.9 percent jobless rate), one group is doing remarkably well. I'm talking about former members of the Bush administration who are taking up prestigious academic posts, inking lucrative book deals, signing up with speakers bureaus, joining big-time law firms and top public relations agencies and grabbing spots on corporate boards of directors. While their high-priced wars, ruinous economic policies and shredding of economic safety nets have proved disastrous for so many, for them the economic outlook remains bright and jobs are

seemingly plentiful. In fact, many of them have performed the eye-opening feat of securing two or more potentially lucrative revenue streams at once during these tough financial times. While it would likely take a small book to catalog the fates of all former "[loyal Bushies](#)," a look at just a few of these fortunate folks indicates that not everybody was harmed by the Bush era.

The memoirists

Many of the top figures of the Bush years are joining the ranks of (or reaffirming their credentials as) men and women of letters. Following in the footsteps of 2003-2006 White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan, who wrote the tell-some exposé "What Happened: Inside the Bush White House and Washington's Culture of Deception," is [former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld](#) (2001-2006). Now penning his life story for Sentinel, a conservative imprint of the Penguin Group, he has announced that he is forgoing an advance and donating all proceeds to charity. Similarly, 2006-2009 Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson is [reportedly donating](#) the "author's profits" from his forthcoming "insider's account of [his] experiences as Treasury Secretary." Many other former colleagues are, however, apparently intent on cashing in on their public service.

Last month, the New York Times [reported](#) that Rumsfeld's long-time pal, former Vice President Dick Cheney, "is actively shopping a memoir about his life in politics and service in four presidential administrations" and seeking multimillions. In the same way, back in 2007, Bush's right-hand man Karl Rove, aka his "brain," [agreed](#), for a reported seven figures, to write a memoir for Simon & Schuster's conservative imprint Threshold. Earlier this year, Bush's first-term national security advisor and second-term secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, signed a gaudy three-book deal, reportedly worth at least \$2.5 million, with Random House's Crown imprint.

Following her to Crown (also the publisher of Barack Obama's "Dreams from My Father" and "The Audacity of Hope") was former President Bush himself. His book, tentatively titled "Decision Points," will reportedly recount "a dozen of the most interesting and important decisions in the former president's personal and political life" for a cool \$7 million. Former First Lady Laura Bush has already [inked](#) a book deal with Scribner reportedly worth \$3.5-\$5 million.

Only one prominent Bush loyalist who cared to try appears to have been unable to cash in. In late 2008, the Wall Street Journal's Evan Perez [reported](#) that Alberto Gonzales, former White House counsel (2001-2005) and attorney general (2005-2007), "said he is writing a book to set the record straight about his controversial tenure as a senior official in the Bush administration," but could interest no publisher in the manuscript. This followed an earlier report in the New York Times that Gonzales had been "unable to interest law firms in adding his name to their roster ..."

Law and orders

One Bush administration lawyer who did land a job with a law firm was Gonzales' successor, Attorney General Michael Mukasey (2007-2009), who became a partner at Debevoise & Plimpton, a firm "offering sophisticated legal services" which "places the highest value on collaboration and interdisciplinary cooperation in order to provide clients with seamless representation across practice areas and across continents."

Tommy Thompson, Bush's Secretary of Health and Human Services from 2001-2005, is now a [partner](#) with Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, where he "focuses on developing solutions for clients in the health care industry, as well as for companies doing business in the public sector." Michael Chertoff, secretary of Homeland Security from 2005–2009, is serving as "senior of counsel" and a "member of the White Collar Defense and Investigations practice group" at the firm of Covington & Burling.

Meanwhile, Harriet Miers, who served Bush from 2001-2007 as staff secretary, deputy chief of staff, and counsel to the president -- and whose Supreme Court bid crashed and burned in 2005 -- returned to Locke, Lord, Bissell & Liddell in May 2007 to [serve](#) as a member of the law firm's "Litigation and Public Policy sections." That firm is also home to Karin Torgerson, a partner who served as special assistant to President George W. Bush, one of several White House positions she held from 2003-2005.

Speak easy

In addition to his book-writing duties, former President Bush recently signed on with the Washington Speakers Bureau, which already represents his wife. The Bureau is to arrange lucrative speeches for him worldwide. In fact, just last month, the New York Times [reported](#) that the former president had "earned more than an estimated \$150,000" to "discuss national and international policy" alongside fellow former President Bill Clinton at the Metro Toronto Convention Center.

Together the Bushes joined a speakers' roster of former administration heavyweights, including Richard Armitage (deputy secretary of state, 2001-2005), John Bolton (U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, 2005-2006), Andrew Card (White House chief of staff, 2001-2006), Ari Fleischer (White House press secretary, 2001-2003), Michael Mukasey, Colin Powell (secretary of state, 2001-2005), Condoleezza Rice, Tom Ridge (secretary of Homeland Security, 2003-2005), Donald Rumsfeld, and John Snow (secretary of the treasury, 2003-2006), as well as Bush family consigliere James Baker III.

Meanwhile, at Leading Authorities, another top-of-the-line speakers bureau, the list of ex-Bush loyalists includes Dan Bartlett (counselor to the president, 2002-2007), Christopher Cox (chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, 2005-2009), Ed Gillespie (counselor to the president, 2007-2009), Porter Goss (director of the Central Intelligence Agency, 2005-2006), Stephen Hadley (national security advisor, 2005-2009), Michael Hayden (director of the Central

Intelligence Agency, 2006-2009), Keith Hennessey (director of the National Economic Council, 2007-2009), Dana Perino (White House press secretary, 2007-2009) and Margaret Spellings (secretary of education, 2005-2009).

A third lecturers' stable, the Leigh Bureau, boasts John Negroponte, who served Bush as ambassador to the United Nations, ambassador to Iraq, director of National Intelligence, and deputy secretary of state.

Talking heads and lobbyists

Some Bush loyalists have nabbed other sorts of speaking gigs. Karl Rove, for one, took a job as an analyst for Fox News. (He also writes a weekly op-ed for the Wall Street Journal and, in 2007, signed a two-year deal to be a columnist for Newsweek magazine.)

Ari Fleischer was hired as a media consultant to the Green Bay Packers in 2008 and serves as the president of Ari Fleischer Communications, which bills itself as a "unique media training and consultancy company [that] brings to the world of sports the lessons of how to successfully handle the toughest situations with the most aggressive reporters." (Clients reportedly include Major League Baseball, the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, and "several other leading sports figures.")

Many more Bush loyalists, however, are involved in another lucrative form of communication. For example, Michael Chertoff quickly launched the Chertoff Group, a consulting firm that "will advise clients on a range of security concerns, including cyber security, terrorism, fraud, border protection and supply-chain security." Tom Ridge, when not serving as a keynote-speaker-for-hire (as he did recently at the 2009 CoBank Energy Directors Conference in Colorado Springs, Colo.) is now a security and crisis-management consultant for his own firm, Ridge Global, whose self-professed "expertise encompasses risk management and global trade security, leadership guidance and strategic business generation, event security, crisis management and communications, campus security, technology innovation and integration and more."

In fact, a [recent analysis](#) by USA Today found that "more than one in four members of President George W. Bush's Cabinet have landed jobs with consulting or lobbying firms in

which they can help clients navigate the departments they once oversaw." And it's not just heads of executive departments like Homeland Security who are cashing in.

John Ashcroft (attorney general, 2001-2005) co-founded the Ashcroft Group, a strategic consulting firm that advises and invests "in companies in the security and law enforcement marketplaces." Not surprisingly, the firm has become a home for Bush loyalists like Juleanna Glover, who served on the senior staffs of then President-elect George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, and was then "the registered U.S. government affairs advisor for Iraq's first post-Saddam Hussein ambassador to the United States."

Recently, [according to](#) the Quad City Times, Jim Nussle, Bush's director of the White House Office of Management and Budget (2007-2009) "formed a company that will offer consulting, government relations and lobbying services." The Nussle Group, its Web site proclaims, "specializes in recruiting a talented team and developing creative solutions to assist clients in navigating the complicated and challenging intersections of public policy, government relations, public relations, international relations and politics."

According to his company bio, the senior policy director at lobbying powerhouse Dutko Worldwide, Gene Hickok, "joined the George W. Bush Administration as Under Secretary of Education. He became Deputy Secretary in 2003 [and] was an architect of the No Child Left Behind Act." And he isn't alone. Kent Sholars, a senior associate at Dutko, "was a political appointee during both terms of the administration of George W. Bush, serving as the Confidential Assistant to the Controller for the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in Washington, DC," while Karen Yeager, a Dutko vice president, "serve[d] in the White House for President Bush in 2001."

Spin-mistresses

Karen Hughes helped George W. Bush get elected in 2000 and, for the first two years of his first term, served him as a "counselor." In 2002, she left the White House to spend more time with her family in Texas. In 2004, however, she was back at work on Bush's campaign and then, in 2005, signed on as an undersecretary of state. In 2007, she left again, the White House said, "to spend more time with her family." Nonetheless, in 2008, she was in an office yet again, this time as global vice chair at public relations giant Burson-Marsteller. In 2009, she was joined there by former White House Press Secretary Dana Perino, who now serves as chief issues counselor for the company in the U.S.

Here, too, Michael Chertoff has gotten into the act. The announcement of the formation of the Chertoff Group, [wrote](#) the Wall Street Journal, "was made by the communications firm Burson-Marsteller, which said it formed an alliance with Mr. Chertoff."

Board members

Bush Administration officials have also been popping up on various boards of directors. Richard Armitage is perhaps typical. He sits on the board at military-corporate complex member ManTech International. He also serves on the boards of oil giant ConocoPhillips, "pharmaceutical and cosmeceutical" company Transcu Ltd., and his own firm, Armitage International, which, according to its Web site, provides "multinational clients with critical support in the areas of international business development, strategic planning, and problem-solving."

In April, chemical giant DuPont announced that Samuel Bodman, secretary of energy from 2005-2009 (and before that, deputy secretary of the Treasury, 2004-2005, and deputy secretary of the Department of Commerce, 2001-2004) had been elected to its board of directors.

That same month, former CIA chief Michael Hayden became a member of the board of directors of the National Interest Security Company, an "information technology, information management, and management technology consulting services" provider serving the U.S. Intelligence Community and the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Energy. There, Hayden joined fellow former administration cronies Henry A. Crumpton (coordinator for counterterrorism at the State Department, 2005-2007) and Donald Kerr (principal deputy director of National Intelligence, 2007-2009).

Meanwhile, Andrew Card not only serves on the board of directors of railroad giant Union Pacific but has also turned up on the board of directors of the George W. Bush Presidential Library Foundation.

In the (think) tank

If you can't get a gig at a law firm, a PR agency, or on a corporate board of directors, there are always the nation's think tanks to fall back into -- and they've become a shelter for more than a few Bush administration refugees in the Obama era. For example, after serving as a deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor in the Bush administration, Elliott Abrams has now joined the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) as senior fellow for Middle Eastern studies.

Alongside Abrams at CFR are a number of officials who served during the Bush years, including Evan Feigenbaum, former deputy assistant secretary of state for India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and the Maldives; Paul Lettow, former senior advisor to the under secretary of state for Democracy and Global Affairs and the senior director for Strategic Planning and Institutional Reform on the National Security Council staff; and Dan Senor, an administration foreign policy advisor and senior advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq.

Meanwhile, the conservative Heritage Foundation is not surprisingly housing a large contingent of Bush loyalists, including Becky Norton Dunlop, who served as the chairperson of the Federal Services Impasse Panel (which handles disputes between government agencies and labor unions); Kim R. Holmes, assistant secretary of state for International Organization Affairs; Terry Miller, ambassador to the United Nations Economic and Social Council; Peter Brookes, deputy assistant defense secretary for Asian and Pacific Affairs; and Mike Gonzalez, who, in 2005, left the Wall Street Journal to join the Bush administration where, according to his Heritage Foundation bio, he "wrote speeches for Securities and Exchange Commission Chairman Christopher Cox, then moved to the State Department in 2006 as communications adviser and speechwriter on European and Eurasian affairs" and even "helped craft an op-ed column ... which appeared throughout Europe under the bylines of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates."

Ivory towers

While Gates stayed on to work for President Barack Obama, Rice is pursuing many different career paths. In addition to the lucrative book contracts and the speakers bureau gigs, she inked a deal for the William Morris Agency to represent her for "business initiatives in media, sports and communications." Rice also returned, as a professor of political science, to her old stomping grounds at Stanford University, where she had long taught and also, from 1993-1999, served as provost. Presumably in her spare time, she serves as the Thomas and Barbara Stephenson senior fellow on public policy at Stanford's conservative Hoover Institution.

Rice is actually following in the footsteps of Rumsfeld, who served a stint, beginning in 2007, as "a distinguished visiting fellow" at the Hoover Institution. But Stanford is hardly the only academic bastion of former Bush-ites. For example, this year, John Negroponte headed back to his old alma mater, Yale University, to become the "Brady-Johnson Distinguished Senior Research Fellow in Grand Strategy and Lecturer in International Affairs at the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies."

"Torture memo" author John Yoo, who served as deputy assistant attorney general in the Office of Legal Counsel at the Department of Justice from 2001-2003, is, of course, a professor of law at the School of Law of that bastion of leftist radicalism, the University of California at Berkeley. (As Liliana Segura of [AlterNet](#) recently reported, he also just landed a gig as a columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer.)

Hope on the horizon

Last year, for many Americans, Barack Obama became synonymous with hope. (And last year, Obama's "The Audacity of Hope" as well as his "Dreams from My Father" earned him an eye-popping \$2.4 million in royalties.) This year, for struggling job-hunters nationwide, it's former Bush administration officials who offer a glimmer of hope in tough economic times. Their ease in finding gainful employment suggests that, even if your prior work has been judged ruinous by many and been roundly repudiated, there's still hope for you on the job front.

Even former Vice President Cheney, a man about whom 55 percent of Americans hold an [unfavorable opinion](#), has realistic prospects of receiving a multimillion dollar book deal.

With only former Attorney General Gonzales still out of work, grant the men and women of the Bush administration one thing: the best unemployment rate in the land. In but a few short months, they've managed to prove that no matter how spectacularly you fail, you can always fail upwards.