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SF PERUSALS

Abrogate

by Larry Gelbart

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH

FOUNDED 1830

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CHARACTERS

THE VOICE

THE CHAIR

PROCTOR

FULSOME

JORDAN

DONE

DEBRITUS

WOMAN'S VOICE

DIAZ

CONDOLEEZZA RICE

LYNNE CHENEY

BARBARA BUSH (I)

HUGHES

THE VOICE. Good evening, and welcome to AGN, the All Gate Network, devoted to the endless scandals and excesses which White House after White House also seem so endlessly devoted to. Adding to our past retrospectives of Water, Iran-Contra, Flood and Port Gates, AGN has now assembled highlights of the recent hearings held by the special Senate committee that was charged by the present administration with the investigation of the extent to which the former administration was engaged in a campaign of secrecy and deception, as well as a thorough disdain for the law, the result of which was tantamount to a virtual second American revolution that threatened to undo the first, A nullification, no less, of over two hundred years of this nation's civil and social progress, as well as the alarming, arbitrary banishment of recognizable order or - as it has come to be known throughout and within the media - "Abrogate."

(Sound: A gavel. Crowd settling down.)

The opening of the hearings, which began the moment what had been the preceding minority became the present majority, was called to order by the venerable senator from Ohio, Senator Samuel Chippendale, the committee chair.

(Sound: A gavel.)

THE CHAIR. The chair firstly would like to apologize for the lateness of the committee's tardiness this morning, obliged as many of us were by the need to pass the body of Senator Skidmore, which was laid out on the floor of the Capitol Rotunda late last night. We have since been informed that the senator has sobered up and gone back on the program —with the pledge to cease being the obstacle he has for so long been to

the work of the United States Senate. As to the business at hand, the authorization of this Committee, as anyone who cannot escape the news well knows, has been empanelled and empowered by President Hillary Clinton, so that she might better determine the following: Did the powers-that-then-were, the previous Bush administration, the pursue with both malice, and perhaps some forethought certain actions which served to violate the letters and spirit of the laws of this land in a way never herebefore thought possible? And do the sum of these reactionary actions equal a total that smacks of a conspiracy? A neoconcert of acts based upon an agenda of such egregiousness they threatened the very deconstruction of the Constitution itself? The chief question in question before this committee is, of course, what in fact if any part did the former president of the United States, consciously or possibly even less so, as was his wont, play in this ongoing accumulation of so many abrogations?

What, if any, was his role in what amounted to no less more than a mini even-quasi coup? Whatever the causes, the unavoidable fact that the American people find themselves grappling with is still one more variation of what has by now become this nation's sixty-four trillion dollar question: That is to say: what did the President know? Aside from what the Vice-President told him he already did. Let me say at the onslaught here, that I am privileged at sharing the chair of this inquiry with one of my longest standing friends, a man whose public service career cuts across the gamut from the legislative to the executive, his having previously served in the capacity of Under Secretary of Oversight. Senator Oral Proctor.

PROCTOR. Thank you, Mister Chairman. Tempting as it is to be far from honest, I am irony-bound to comment on the majority's eagerness to so readily criminalize what were priorly considered patriotic acts which, when they comprised the minority, they were always

so quick to anywhere from half to wholeheartedly endorse. It never seems to fail, does it? Things always being different when the shoes are on the other foot? I daresay that if all the hearings we have so long endured teaches us nothing at all, it is that the less things change, the more they remain the same. I have nothing more to add, Mister Chairman.

THE CHAIR. My learned friend rarely does. Thank you, Senator.

PROCTOR. Only to say that I thank the Chair for his generosity in allowing me to condemn these proceedings in advance, in the event that I am called away and don't have a chance to do it later.

THE VOICE. The opening inanities dispensed with, the Chairman called as the committee's first witness, Mister Victor Fulsome, a member of the former administration and one of Washington, D.C.'s most popular and sought after witnesses.

THE CHAIR. You are Victor Fulsome?

FULSOME. *(quietly)* On the advice of counsel, I believe I'm allowed to attest to being who I am, Mister Chairman.

THE CHAIR. If the witness will please raise his right hand and his voice in that order.

THE VOICE. Victor Fulsome has a long record of governmental servitude, having assumed a great many positions under any number of lawmakers since starting as a Senate page while still in his teens.

THE CHAIR. *(fading up)* ...and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

FULSOME. So help me Him, I do, yes, sir.

THE CHAIR. Please have a seat.

PROCTOR. I thank the Chair.

THE CHAIR. I see that you are not as you otherwise indicated you might be represented here today with the actual benefit of your counsel?

FULSOME. Unhappily, he and I find ourselves in a legal gridlock, Mister Chairman, the two of us being simultaneous recipients of conflicting subpoenas.

THE CHAIR. Conflicting subpoenas being nothing to envy, I'm sure.

FULSOME. My attorney regrets any inconvenience his absence may cause the committee and has asked me, for the purpose of the record, to submit a list of interruptions which he had hoped to make had he been able to be here to make them himself, sir.

THE CHAIR. This committee welcomes all submissions. And please extend to your counsel what I know are all of our gratitude for what we can only hope will be his continued absence.

FULSOME. Thank you, Mister Chairman.

THE VOICE. Mister Fulsome's attorney, Manuelo Martinez, a former Independent Prosecutor for former Attorney General Manolo Menendez, has been summoned by present Attorney General Hernando Rodriguez to appear before Special Prosecutor Rodrigo Hernandez to answer charges of multiple counts of destruction of justice as well as a number of drug trafficking violations.

THE CHAIR. You served as a member of the prior administration, did you not, Mister Fulsome?

FULSOME. I did so, sir, in the aforementioned past, yes, sir.

THE CHAIR. An administration whose culpability in crimes committed against these United States this committee is seeking to establish?

FULSOME. Are we speaking of the guilt of that culpability?

THE CHAIR. We are, sir.

FULSOME. Then, yes, sir, I was. Not in the matter of being guilty, but rather yes, I did serve as a member.

THE CHAIR. According to the files you have provided us, you functioned in a good many roles?

FULSOME. Providing those files have been no further tampered with, I did, yes, sir.

THE CHAIR. You did, at one time, act as a spy, did you not?

FULSOME. It was my covert pleasure to do that, yes, sir.

THE CHAIR. You were a member of the Secretive Service?

FULSOME. Being a spy was merely my cover, yes, sir. Since the outing of CIA operative, Valerie Plame, a dozen years ago by someone in the former administration who has yet to be named, let alone confessed or prosecuted, it has become more and less common knowledge that anyone who was everyone was a spy in those days, Mister Chairman.

THE CHAIR. I'd like, if you would, tell the committee what exactly the nature of your duties were during the period in my last reference. Or shall we save time and have you tell us that, to the best of your ability, you just can't recall?

FULSOME. I pride myself, Mister Chairman, on having no problem whatsoever in ever recalling each and every minutia, real or imagined, that might in any way threaten the security of the very best America in the world, sir.

THE CHAIR. Then you are that rarest of men, Mister Fulsome: a committee witness who doesn't have to look at his driver's license to help him remember what his own name is.

FULSOME. In parry your query, sir, chief among my former duties in the former administration was to act as assistant aide to the acting adviser of the deputy head of the Center for Shame and Public Apology.

THE CHAIR. That was, I believe, a think tank, was it not?

FULSOME. We all thought so, yes, sir.

THE CHAIR. And what is it do you think it was that you all thought about?

FULSOME. I would have to say that majorly among our priorities was the creation of scenarios to promote and foist the image of the former president as being capable of delivering not only sound bites but sound policy, as well. That, in any case, was my first and primordial role as a director of POOP, sir.

THE CHAIR. POOP?

FULSOME. Our Photo Op Operations Program.

THE CHAIR. Would that be yet another operation that Congress overlooked in our oversight?

FULSOME. Our activities were pretty hard to track, Mister Chairman. It was part of our mission to fly below the radar in making as sure as we could that our even-then defunct-seeming commander-in-chief was always seen in the best, the most positive light imaginable. Especially whenever he finally managed to rush into one catastrophic situation or another, so often so tardy we once thought of having him show up with a note from his mother.

THE CHAIR. Catastrophes? Are we talking floods and flus, to name a few?

FULSOME. If I might explain what I mean before I answer that, sir?

THE CHAIR. Any order will do.

FULSOME. For the purpose of the President's re-electability chances to not only serve but to survive a second term, it was determined that our best bet right off the bat was to take a page out of England's Sir Winston Churchill's play book, sir, and to do everything we could to turn the president into the image of a wartime leader.

THE CHAIR. The first step of which would be the necessity of providing him with a war.

FULSOME. Those details were left to others to see to, Mister Chairman. Others who had done that sort of thing before. Others who were itching to do that sort of thing again. Our job was to project a leader with an even more fearful personality than the one the American people had come to accept. Watching the president acting from the depths of his intellect, plus the measured pace with which he responded to chaotic events other than those which he himself had created, we soon realized that what we had on our

hands was a chief executive with the unlimited potential for becoming known as a disastrous president, as well.

THE CHAIR. And the result of that realization was what?

FULSOME. A modus operandi, sir. That, and the subsequent issuance of an M.O. memo. Our first priority in any emergency which qualified for Oval Office attention – one that met the minimum requirement of at least four figures in casualties – was to immediately jump start the president's sincerity. Be it a tsunami, a quake, or any one of your pandemics, my people were immediately dispatched to wherever the president might be vacationing at the moment, make sure his shirtsleeves were rolled up to the approved level to signify he'd been informed of whatever the latest calamity when he was right in the middle of his working hour –

THE CHAIR. And then you swung into action?

FULSOME. Yes, sir. Starting with drawing straws to see which of us was going to have to tell the president that he was going to have to swing into action.

THE CHAIR. The president did not like hearing bad news.

FULSOME. This is a president who prefers creating it. That way, he feels he's got a better chance of knowing how something got started.

THE CHAIR. Is it true, Mister Fulsome, as part of the testimony you offered at the former president's impeachment proceedings, that one of your duties was to produce an assemblage, a DVD of news footage that would give him some idea of any disaster that did not go away in 24 hours or less?

FULSOME. The president hates disasters. Despite his talent for them.

THE CHAIR. Hence, these DVDs?

FULSOME. It was my job to load them into the monitor on the president's stationary bike inside the War Room.

THE CHAIR. This was a multi-tasking president.

FULSOME. Always give a busy man something he can assign other people to do, that's what he always used to say, yes, sir.

THE CHAIR. And his reaction, once the president understood the magnitude of one or another of these calamities that marked the wonderful times he always asserted the country was going through?

FULSOME. Allowing him a week to ten days to digest the impact of what he had watched to sink in, the president was then handed a standardized speech. This would be a prepackaged set of platitudinous promises and pledges, laced with the appropriate empathy. In addition, for blame-shifting purposes, he was also given a list of names, other than his own, who could be held responsible for what had happened, as well as a multiple choice of explanations for how long it had taken for him to do whatever it was that he was about to do, no matter how many untold billions might have to be spent, or how many untold further taxes might have to be cut. The speech served as the basis for a prime time address to the nation by the president – after the president was primed as to which nation it was he was addressing.

THE CHAIR. And from there?

FULSOME. From there, the former First Lady and the former First Pet on his arm, the president would stride to the Marine chopper parked on the White House lawn, strap himself into his stationary bike, and off he went to wherever the L.Z.D. – the Latest Zone of Devastation was.

THE CHAIR. And you accompanied the president all through this?

FULSOME. The Photo Op Unit followed in our own plane, sir.

THE CHAIR. Your own plane.

FULSOME. The W.C., sir.

THE CHAIR. The W.C.?

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