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The G in GOP Stands for Ghoul

By Mary Lyon

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I've heard of rooting for the bad guys, but this is ridiculous. John McCain's elite adviser Charlie Black opined to Fortune magazine that if there were another terrorist strike against our country in time for the general election, it "certainly would be a big advantage" for McCain's campaign.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/25357745/>

Wow. Nice. Which American city would you like to see take it in the shorts this time, Mr. Black? How many thousands of us are expendable for the sake of your candidate's success? Let's see, New York City has already been there. Same thing for Arlington, Virginia, home of the Pentagon. And don't forget New Orleans. No, that wasn't terrorism, per se, but it was still a disaster that needed - but did not get - government foresight and planning wisdom from seasoned, credible public service professionals as well as swift and effective response.

Is this the newest round of "October Surprise" paranoia? Or is it paranoia? A terrorist strike on American soil would be a major campaign boost for John McCain? Does it sound at all as though someone regards such a tragedy as a good thing? Really nice.

It does beg the question - how far will the Republicans go to make sure "their" White House stays theirs? Never mind economics, taxes, spending cuts, or earmarks. America's Biggest Entitlement Program is nothing that would cross the desks of the Congressional Budget Office or the Social Security Administration. America's Biggest Entitlement Program is the Republican Party's conviction that it alone has some sort of divine right to occupy the Presidency. Would the GOP in its sleaziest connivings wish a terrorist strike on the country - if that's what it took to ensure another Republican takes the Oath of Office next January? Would the party of Bush/Cheney/McCain really stoop that low - as to articulate a backhanded wish for

mayhem and murder because it might scratch America's fear itch in their favor at the polls?

Suspicious minds have already been having a Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and Super Bowl Halftime extravaganza with this. But wilder speculation aside, the very fact that it's being brought up just shows how sordid this whole campaign business has become. It used to be "the unthinkable" referred to a nuclear holocaust from an enemy superpower. Now it's global terrorism. And as Charlie Black's jaded statement indicates, it's obviously anything but "unthinkable."

I don't think it can, or should, be dismissed as mere idle chit-chat from a campaign insider impressing an attentive or flattering magazine writer. It shows what kind of cold, manipulative, political calculation is at work at Black's level within the McCain Machine and threatens to carry over into a McCain administration. I can't help but think this is a guy who is so Machiavellian, so at ease contemplating the subject of a terrorist strike helping the McCain campaign, so comfortable kicking this one around (even if only in his own mind) that he let one slip. Charlie Black tipped his hand. He gave away the mindset - basically the same chilling, dreadful policy-making mentality under whose influence we've already suffered for almost eight years.

So what if main financial hubs are sidelined for most of a week? So what if hundreds, maybe thousands of people are killed? So what if magnificent manifestations of art and architecture become reduced to so much dusty and toxic debris? Hey, as long as our guy wins?

You'd think if John McCain really wanted to be the "maverick" that avoided standard GOP low-blow operating procedure, he'd want to make sure the political party he now leads would stay as far away from even the appearance of this much crassness as possible. For heaven's sakes, he's actually seen serious wreckage and human misery up close. He knows something about paying a heavy price in the thick of the grossest extremes of international discord. He's certainly tried to make an issue of "the right kind of change" - in an attempted hijacking of the change theme that's long been Barack Obama's signature. McCain could do exactly that by asking Charlie Black to resign for trying to stir up the same old fear monsters again.

McCain could chart a new course for his party, and begin to rehabilitate the Republican brand from its low approval ratings and voter identifiability. He might actually become the Hope Candidate, AND the Change Agent. But I don't expect him to look beyond one dimension in the presidential arms race. Gotta show we're tough. Gotta

show we're tougher than "them" - whoever "they" are this year.

Ironically, McCain is running campaign commercials asserting his hatred of war. One would think if he really did hate war, and knew why from personal experience, he'd rule war out as an option in a McCain presidency, rather than matter-of-factly stating he's sorry but "there will be more wars." There will? Is someone already planning on it, looking for it, perhaps even counting on it? Republicans have been tweaking our fears and toying with our vulnerabilities for years now. They wear 9/11 the way a beauty pageant contestant wears her state's banner. They're into fearsome things. They're the war party. They've had a "war president" for several years now and evidently see no reason why that status should change. And they keep coming back to their number-one default position: Political Ghouls - literally scaring up votes.

It's not enough to claim to be distancing oneself from a colleague who may have spoken too candidly about favored party scare tactics. McCain should set a bold example by taking a giant step away from the Fear Thing that's just another cheap, soul-less, exploitive Republican shortcut to winning another election. The G in GOP is supposed to stand for Grand, not Ghoul. Unfortunately, Charlie Black has reminded us that the fear demons won't be buried but, rather, resurrected - and, yet again, shoved down our throats.

Authors Website: no website yet

Authors Bio: Mary Lyon is a veteran broadcaster and five-time Golden Mike Award winner, who has anchored, reported, and written for the Associated Press Radio Network, NBC Radio "The Source," and many Los Angeles-area stations including KRTH-FM/AM, KLOS-FM, KFVB-AM, and KTLA-TV, and occasional media analyst for ABC Radio News. She began her career as a liberal activist with the Student Coalition for Humphrey/Muskie in 1968, and helped spearhead a regional campaign, "The Power 18," to win the right to vote for 18-year-olds. She remains an advocate for liberal causes, responsibility and accountability in media, environmental education and support of the arts for children, and green living. In addition to OpEdNews, Mary writes for Democrats.us, World News Trust, and WeDemocrats.org's "We! The People" webzine. Mary is also a parenting expert, having written and illustrated the book "The Frazzled Working Woman's Practical Guide to Motherhood."

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