

re doing really great stuff. I'm very impressed with it." Greg Palast "Son

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Payback: The Bush Connection to Clear Channel Firing Howard Stern; It's Worse than You Thought.

By Dean Creekmore

OpEdNews.Com

I am surprised more people are not a more concerned about the connection between the Bush administration, Clear Channel Radio and Howard Stern. This could possibly the most frightening example of a government using party-friendly corporations to squash dissenting opinions I have ever seen.

Bush, along with other investors purchased the Rangers MLB team. Bush's investment was a little over \$600,000. Tom Hicks then purchased the Rangers for \$250 million. For his investment of \$600,000, George W. made about 14 million on the transaction.

Tom Hicks is now the Vice Chairman of Clear Channel Radio. Clear Channel went from owning 36 radio stations in the pre 1996 Telecommunications Act deregulation era, to owning over 1200 now. From 36 (two below the legal limit at the time) to over 1200! On June 2nd 2003, Michael Powell, son of Secretary of State Colin Powell, and the FCC voted to further loosen media ownership rules. Thus, opening the door for Clear Channel to move into the television arena as well. I wonder if Clear Channel is appreciative to George Bush and Republican deregulation. And since Tom Hicks essentially made Mr. Bush a multi-millionaire, I wonder if George might do him a favor every now and again?

Only after he became critical of Bush and the FCC committee investigations into broadcast decency, in the wake of boobgate, was Stern kicked off of the Clear Channel network. The offending conversation that got Stern booted was from a caller that used the word "nigger." Something that has happened on that show for ages (most of the time, the comments are directed at co-host Robin Quivers) and suddenly it is indecent enough to get him banned from the network.

Now, Stern is convinced, through FCC insiders, that fines are about to be levied against Infinity Broadcasting, a subsidiary of Viacom. According to Howard Stern, the last time that happened, while waiting for court proceedings, the FCC made it impossible for Infinity to do business. What used to take six weeks was now taking months. The same thing will happen again. When the FCC

comes down with their fines, if Infinity wants to go to court, business will cease. Not only Infinity Broadcasting, but Viacom as well. Viacom owns such companies as the CBS networks and MTV. They will not take the chance on being in the sights of the FCC for the sake of Howard Stern and will be forced to fire him.

So let's see if I have this correct. Have an audience and be overtly critical of the government, lose your job, or at least be beaten into impotency. On the grand scale our first amendment rights are non-existent. Doesn't it scare people one little bit that one of the most important and basic freedoms we have is being trounced right in front of their faces. Freedoms that American soldiers are dying for right now? Do tax cuts mean that much? Do party hard-liners honestly; have no problem with this kind of thing from an elected government? Do they just chalk it up historical corruption, governments have been corrupt forever, and nothing is going to change that now? Am I just a fringe lunatic that thinks this is inherently wrong and dangerous? I don't know anymore. It seems as if conservatives and the general public are content to let this blatant violation of the Constitution go unchecked, as long as it is their party doing the violating.

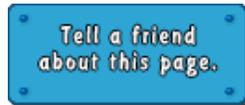
Howard Stern, you can love him or hate him. You can find him entertaining or a vulgar malcontent. But, what you should not be able to do, is shut him up and have him fired because you do not agree with what he says.

And yes, if a Democratic administration were doing this to Bill O'Reilly, I would scream the same thing.

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