



the "moron-in-chief." And then there are Bushorchimp.com and Smirkingchimp.com, which juxtapose images of Bush and chimpanzees. Again, such material might not seem worth taking seriously, but the kind of smash-mouth discourse one sees on the web can sometimes make its way into the larger political world. For example, last year Françoise Ducros, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's director of communications, was forced to resign after calling Bush a "moron" at a NATO summit. Ducros was cheered in some quarters of the web, where she was seen as bringing into the mainstream dialogue something that's said online every day.

BUSHOPHOBIA!

In April 1994, *Time* magazine's Nina Burleigh wrote a story titled "Clintonophobia! Just who are these Clinton haters, and why do they loathe Bill and Hillary with such passion?" (Readers might remember Burleigh for the brief celebrity she enjoyed in 1998, when she confessed her sexual desire for Clinton and told the *Washington Post* that she would be "happy to give him [oral sex] just to thank him for keeping abortion legal.") In the *Time* article, Burleigh quoted historian Alan Brinkley, who declared that Clinton was "the first president who has generated this kind of right-wing hatred" and suggested that a conservative president would not have had to suffer such attacks from his opponents. "Liberals tend to value tolerance highly," Brinkley said, "so there's a greater reluctance to destroy enemies than among the right."

There is now a conservative president, and Brinkley's dictum is being put to the test. It appears to be failing; one could wander through the anti-Bush world on the web for a long time looking for the liberal tolerance that Brinkley cited.

Furthermore, Burleigh classified as Clinton-haters those who simply raised questions about Whitewater or opposed the First Lady's health-care plan. If a similar standard were applied today, everyone who questioned the war in Iraq or opposed the president's tax cuts would be a Bush-hater. Clearly that's not the case. But there *are* Bush-haters out there. Just as there were people during the Clinton years who accused the president of murder or imagined him snorting cocaine in the White House, there are now those who see George W. Bush as Hitler and fantasize that his family is an international crime organization. Perhaps it will all somehow remain confined to the Internet. But experience tells us it probably won't, and, sooner or later, the ideas of Counterpunch and Bushbodycount and Presidentmoron will find their way into the political debate of 2004.

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