



THE CASE AGAINST GEORGE W. BUSH

by [Steven C. Markoff](#)

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A sharp prosecution against the former president for the disasters of 9/11 and the Iraq War.

As Christopher Hitchens did with Henry Kissinger, so Markoff does with George W. Bush—without the literary flair, granted, but with every bit of the righteous

indignation. In the manner of a prosecuting attorney, Markoff serves a brief that enumerates three kinds of actionable offense. The first is that Bush was criminally negligent in ignoring intelligence, from the moment he entered office in January 2001, that terrorists were mounting an imminent assault on the U.S. homeland. By way of evidence, the collective body of which is drawn from 600 annotated sources, Markoff analyzes the 379 speeches Bush gave between his first inauguration and Sept. 10, 2001, to show that *Al-Qaida* and/or *Osama bin Laden* turn up precisely zero times while *Saddam Hussein*, *Iraq*, and/or some combination of nuclear and chemical threats appear 143 times, *oil* another 41 times. “The numbers above,” writes the author, “seem at least close to courtroom proof that George W. Bush was far more interested in Hussein and Iraq’s oil than the risks to our country from Al-Qaida and bin Laden so often communicated to him.” Markoff’s second charge is that Bush—no puppet of Dick Cheney’s or some other master, he insists, but instead “an enthusiastic participant”—criminally wasted American blood and treasure in going to war with Iraq, at a direct cost of 4,400 American dead and \$2 trillion, to say nothing of American wounded and psychologically shattered, along with untold numbers of Iraqi casualties. Bush’s authorization of torture and rendition for torture constitutes the third charge. Throughout, Markoff restrains himself from hyperbole and rhetorical flourish, at least until the very end of the book, when he asks, pointedly, “Did he think he was above the law or did he care?” His answer, that we’ll likely never know, does not diminish his characterization of the offenses as “reckless, dishonest, and tragically unnecessary.”

A provocative, readable indictment for our time.