

## It's all in the family

Judging from the Jan. 18-19 developments in Florida, where George “Dubya” Bush’s brother, Jeb Bush, is governor, both racism and foul-mouthed outbursts are a family trait.

The Confederate flag fight in South Carolina was still raging — where 50,000 protesters gathered in Columbia on Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 17, to have the flag banned from flying over the state capitol — when, a day later, in Florida’s capital, Tallahassee, Gov. Jeb Bush “let it fly” against African-American protesters — without knowing a TV camera was rolling.

Infuriated over a sit-in by two leading African-American state legislators at the office of Lt. Gov. Frank Brogan, Bush ordered his staff, “Get their asses outta here. . . . We’re going to make their lives hell for this.” The remarks were recorded by a video crew, and the film was aired the next morning, making the national news.

The sit-in began on the afternoon of Jan. 18, after two African-American state legislators, Rep. Tony Hill (D-Jacksonville) and Sen. Kendrick Meek (D-Miami), met with Bush, asking him to alter his “One Florida” program,

which eliminates affirmative action in the state college system. Bush refused. They then started their sit-in. Bush was livid.

The tape of Bush’s outburst was aired on the 6 a.m. news on Jan. 19 by ABC affiliate WTXL, in Tallahassee. Soon after that, National Public Radio carried a spot on Bush’s quotes. By mid-morning, 20 state legislators had joined the 200 people protesting. The governor’s offices were closed and locked to anyone not having an appointment. Governor Bush, who was scheduled to deliver his budget for the state, insisted he would go ahead, regardless of the protesters.

Sen. Daryl Jones (D-Miami), head of the Black State Legislators caucus, is speaking out against Bush’s arrogant actions preceding the sit-in.

Jeb Bush now claims that the order to “kick their asses out” applied to the reporters covering the sit-in, not to the elected state officials. He also put out a ridiculous statement apologizing to his mother for using “the A-word.”

Lying double-talk and trying to rewrite the record is also a trait frequently observed in “Dubya” when he gets caught with his inherited “silver foot in his mouth.”

Meanwhile, “Dubya’s” wife Laura was touring South Carolina on Jan. 18-19, telling voters that the Confederate flag is “not a symbol of racism,” and that she knows this, because she comes from Texas.

edly told Democratic Rep. Gen Maxey, who led the CHIPs fight in the State Legislature, “You crammed it down our throats.”

This wasn’t the first time that Bush pulled such a “save the rich” stunt, but, significantly, in the CHIPs fight, Bush lost. His behavior was a repeat of 1995, when he vetoed the Patients Protection Act, which had passed both the Texas Senate and House by overwhelming margins. The act would have given patients “rights” to simple things like choosing their own doctor, that is, against the collusion between HMOs, for-profit hospitals, and other so-called providers who profit most when they *do not* provide health care. Bush explained his veto in a memo that said that the bill would “unfairly impact some health care providers”—though not named, Bush was referring to Rainwater’s Columbia/HCA.

This decision was corrupt. According to *The Buying of the President 2000*, a book released in January by the Center for Public Integrity, Bush was deriving more than 60% of his personal income from businesses in which he and Rainwater were partners when he became Governor, according to Bush’s 1994 financial disclosure statement. Rainwater had also designed the deal that netted more than \$14 million for “Dubya” in the sale of the Texas Rangers baseball team.

Perhaps even more to the point is the fact that Rainwater’s Columbia/HCA chain profits by looting hospitals, and imposing brutal austerity measures that cost lives. On Dec. 30, 1998, the U.S. Department of Justice joined in a lawsuit alleging that Columbia/HCA Healthcare Corp., the largest and most infamous health care provider in the nation, had been having defrauded the Medicare program and several other Federally funded health insurance programs for years.

The government’s action came after a two-year investigation into the chain’s bogus expense claims, and months after the government joined another suit that charged Columbia/HCA and a corporate cousin, Quorum Health Group, of defrauding Medicare for over 14 years for an estimated \$1 billion.

Columbia/HCA, which owned 300 hospitals in 32 states at the time the Justice Department joined the suit, skyrocketed to Wall Street prominence, becoming the world’s largest, “most successful” for-profit hospital chain, by using strategies such as radically cutting the number of hospital medical staff and registered nurses—or buying up the competitor hospitals in a community, closing down some of them, and forcing patients to utilize the remaining hospitals.