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## Big Sister is Watching

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A Graduate Student

My second stroll by the anti-Lynne Cheney activists was greeted with a “Hey, recognize that blonde?” with a finger wagging at a picture of Lynne Cheney. “Yes it’s Lynne Cheney,” I responded. “So what do you think?” asked the all-too-common activist in the center of campus. He was asking for my opinion of the large print reading, “Big Sister is Watching” above Mrs. Cheney’s picture on one of many placards they had on display. I knew what they were talking about so they missed out on that chance to misinform me. “Are you referring to ACTA (American Council of Trustees and Alumni)?” I asked. A smiling nod was followed with more gesturing, this time towards Bernard Goldberg’s book, “The Professors.” I hesitated to engage in a serious conversation with this person but I gave it a try anyway. I explained that Mrs. Cheney is not a government official and the label of “Big Sister” or “Big Brother” was a gross misnomer.

The American Council for Trustee and Alumni is a non-profit organization, whose founders include Lynne Cheney and Joe Lieberman, and which advocates for an end to indoctrination in college classrooms. They publish very interesting reports on university professors, courses offered and administrative rules that would probably outrage most people if they read it. One of ACTA’s goals is to ensure that students on college campuses have the ability to express divergent opinions without fear of reprisal from professor and administrators. The Ward Churchill fiasco was not a singular incident. Whether widespread or not, such instances need to be brought to light and scrutinized because education is the backbone of society and to allow corrupt individuals to continue in their roles as educators is done at our future’s peril. This is why George Mason University has safeguards that protect students. In the faculty handbook, the statement of ethics holds that “As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors.” Furthermore, professors must protect the “academic freedom” of their students. These are strong statements in support of the same ends as ACTA. When these rules are not enforced, ACTA’s imperative is to inform: inform the university administration, the students and the public.

So, according to this group, Stop Lynne PAC, or something to that effect, at the center of campus, “big sister was watching.” How clever! A short debate ensued with this one activist. He explained to me how Mrs. Cheney is the vice president’s wife. Thank you for that, if you’re reading. The vice president’s wife isn’t an elected official, however. The next response was very predictable: “But who tells Bush what to do?” I thought to myself that this was not only an eloquent question, but a solid argument! Of course Dick Cheney tells “Bush” what to do and by extension of this flimsy argument, Lynne Cheney is somehow “big sister.” I thought it was best to try and get a rise out of this group, so I told them that “God” told the President what to do, which was awarded with forced chuckles. I was genuinely laughing at them as I walked away. I could have stayed a while and tried to engage a serious discussion over the role of the vice president, special interest groups or free speech on campus (this one would have been great, no doubt). Debates like these, however, do not interest the common activist. They have a one-track mind driven by what I can only refer to as anti-Bush zombiism.

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