

Washington diary: Bush's turkey, by Matt Frei, BBC News, Washington

....I love Thanksgiving. It's like Christmas without the presents. This is a wonderful American tradition. The timing of the meal with its plethora of dishes is a small miracle of kitchen coordination. We give thanks every year that someone else is in charge.

You would be hard pressed to find this kind of hospitality in the UK.

But Thanksgiving also yields its own crop of Late Night jokes: "The National Turkey was pardoned by President Bush today. Later it was adopted by Madonna!" or: "Thanksgiving is a day we spend with relatives. Or, as Donald Rumsfeld calls it, acceptable torture!"

Family politics

I would love to have been a fly on the wall at the Bush Thanksgiving Dinner this year.

Most families have the inevitable row about whether to put auntie into an assisted living community or whether junior should be allowed a PlayStation for Christmas.

Perhaps the Bushes row about how to get out of Iraq. And when. So, does Barbara take the side of her embattled and beloved son? Does George Senior rub salt into Junior's wounds?

Does the current president storm off in a huff to consult "the father of a higher order" as he once told reporters?

Does Jim Baker, the family *consiglieri* aka *the Velvet Hammer*, say grace? Does Jeb bite his tongue?

And by the way, now that he is no longer Governor of Florida and another Bush White House would seem excessive, what will he do with the rest of his life?

Clash of generations

The future of America's involvement in Iraq, the most vexing question of the day is being played out by a family saga that - not for the first time - pits a wayward son against his disapproving father.

Sources close to "41", as the clan refers to Bush the elder, tell me that he is deeply troubled by events in the Middle East and fears that "43" may have squandered the family silver.

Recently he said that "if the Democrats win the House and the Senate my son's life will become unbearable!"

Was he referring to subpoenas and investigations or the spanking that he would administer?

The struggle between the cynical, risk-averse George Herbert Walker and the embed of conviction and faith George Walker is a clash of two generations and two Americas taking place behind closed doors in one family, with global consequences.

It is fascinating, impossible to predict, and if you wrote it up as a novel no one would believe you.