

**The Return of Karl Rove**  
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**By Michael Crowley**

When Karl Rove left the Bush White House in 2007, he was a battered figure. The President whose two elections he had engineered had become unloved by all but die-hard Republicans. Democrats had won back control of the Congress, and they would soon reclaim the White House in the 2008 election.

But after a brief hiatus from campaign politics, The Architect, as George W. Bush called him, is back. Today Karl Rove is the mastermind of a Republican money machine that is pummeling Barack Obama and the Democrats with hundreds of millions of dollars in attack ads. Fueled by a surge of giant conservative donations in the wake of the Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United ruling, Rove's American Crossroads, along with its allied conservative groups, are hoping to bury Democrats in money this fall. And as my colleague Michael Scherer writes, liberals are struggling to raise the money they'll need to defend themselves.

Recently remarried and paid \$40,000 or more per speech, Rove is loving his new life. "I'm having an enormous amount of fun," he told me in an interview at his rented office near Washington's Dupont Circle, where he spends the several dozen days a year he's not traveling or in his home town of Austin, Texas. Rove discussed his return to the center of American politics, how he helped to create the most formidable campaign advertising juggernaut in American history, and the liberals who still accost him in public to accuse him of "ruining" America.

"I'm not a human being," Rove says in wonderment. "I'm a myth."

Rove also recounted a dramatic encounter he had with the man he spends his days trying to put out of a job, Barack Obama, when he visited the White House in May for George W. Bush's official portrait hanging ceremony.

"You're working to get my picture hung prematurely," Obama said to Rove.

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