

# Democratic Candidates May Beat Themselves by Bashing Bush

By Richard Carter

*"Victory has a hundred fathers, but defeat is an orphan..."—Leo G. Carroll, "The Desert Fox" (1951)*

By now, it should be as plain as the nose on the collective faces of the whole gang of eight Democratic presidential candidates that George W. Bush has become irrelevant. He is history. He's a was. A used to be. The lamest of lame ducks.

Therefore, with only 14 months remaining before the 2008 election, why do these Democrats keep focusing on Bush's well-known negatives instead of their own positives? What this amounts to is running for the past instead of for the future.

Since President Bush is not a candidate, it makes no sense to run against him or his record to win their party's nomination. Everyone knows the Iraq War is a Bush-initiated disaster, including a lot of Republicans. So why keep harping on him and his role in it?

Yet, Hillary Clinton shamelessly accused Bush of treating American soldiers as "though they were invisible" in her new Iowa ad. Bush has many shortcomings, but this is not one of them. So aside from being untrue, why would she say it? And why would Barack Hussein Obama say our forces are "just air-raiding villages and killing civilians?"

Bashing Bush and his declining number of loyal minions instead of offering voters something different and genuinely better wastes time and could be self-defeating. It's akin to Republicans still bashing Bill Clinton and his sycophant apologists for his crude, immoral personal behavior with Monica Lewinsky—and others—in the 1990s.

Although truly smarmy, Clinton's sexual indiscretions—even those committed right in the Oval Office—no longer serve a useful purpose for Republicans to dredge up. On the other hand, it's fair game for the other Democratic candidates seeking to beat out Hillary for the party's nomination. The name of the game is to win. Period.

However, in opposing the Republicans, Democrats running for president should think of the old song that says: "Accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative..." They should focus on Republican opponents next year—not the outgoing president and Vice President Dick Cheney. They love to hate both, but it's time to forget about them.

Hey y'all, legitimate GOP targets are front-runners Rudy Giuliani, Mitt Romney and even Fred Thompson. A recent national Rasmussen Poll has Rudy leading likely nominee Hillary, so she should worry about Giuliani—not Bush, Cheney, or despised, departed GOP kingmaker Karl Rove.

And in case the Dem gang of eight hasn't heard, speculation about a Giuliani-Condi Rice interracial "dream-ticket" is again rumored. This would be their interracial race in the hole in the event Hillary selects Obama as her running mate. Food for thought?

On the other hand, another rumor concerns a possible Clinton-Gore ticket—that is Hillary Clinton and Al Gore. This would be a nightmare. As a lifelong Democrat-turned-Independent, I can't believe the party's current hierarchy is that stupid. But who knows?

For clueless, rank-and-file Democrats who get their kicks by ineffectively bashing the brain-dead Bush, take your cue from the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth—this is, if you understand how to mount a negative campaign. Remember?

When John Kerry unwisely chose his Vietnam record as the fulcrum of his dreadful 2004 presidential campaign, those boys pounced. They knew how to do it. As a result, Kerry fell chin-first on his stuck-up face and lost an election that was his for the taking.

While wising up about going against the GOP, Democratic candidates also must focus on beating our other Democrats for the nomination. Thus, kudos to John Edwards and Michelle Obama—Barack's outspoken wife—who last week took shots at Hillary.

Campaigning in New Hampshire, Edwards said: "The American people deserve to know that their presidency is not for sale. The Lincoln Bedroom is not for rent." Whew! Campaigning with her husband in Council Bluffs, Iowa, Michelle said: "Our view is that if you can't run your own house, you certainly can't run the White House." Whew!

Edwards' comment is self-explanatory. And it's clear Michelle was referring to the public marital discord in the Clinton household when Bill Clinton's sleazy infidelity became the biggest news story of the 1990s—almost leading to his impeachment. Hillary is fair game and such barbs are what big-time politics is all about.

No matter how you slice it, the Democrats have a lot of work to do. Although winning big in the off-year elections of 2006 to reclaim a majority in Congress, a recent poll showed the party with a mere 18-percent approval rating—the lowest in history.

And with the troop surge in Iraq meeting some success—grudgingly acknowledged by Hillary and just about everyone else—the Democrats no longer are a lock to reclaim the White House. What happens if, by November 2008, American troops are clearly winning "George Bush's war?" How will voters react?

George C. Scott, portraying a towering Gen. George F. Patton Jr., said it all in the memorable opening scene of the 1970s "Patton." His chest bedecked with

medals, Scott thundered: "Americans love a winner..." Indeed we do. And this includes winning wars.

So the handwriting is on the wall for the Democratic wannabe presidential nominees. Start shooting your popguns at other candidates in your party and your likely Republican foes. Forget about Bush, Cheney, and Rove. Otherwise, y'all may go down in history as another version of television's "Not Ready for Prime Time Players" from the 1970s. Remember now, you heard it here first.



Karl Rove pictured here with Barack Hussein Obama



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