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"Freedom of the Press belongs to those who own one."

A. J. Liebling of the New Yorker

June 9, 2002



Aw, To Hell With it...

Even though I voted for President Bush, the time has come to admit that I was wrong insofar as my enthusiasm for his candidacy was concerned. As a registered Libertarian I usually vote for the Republican presidential candidate but this time I am off the reservation. I usually vote Republican rather than "throw away my vote" but that is apparently what I did when I voted for President Bush. If I am going to throw away my vote, I will vote Libertarian in the future and at least feel better than the betrayal I feel today.

President Bush is Al Gore with a strong army. Everyone knows that there is not "a dime's worth of difference between the two major political parties" but today I am not certain there is a penny's worth of difference. I would rather vote my conscience in the future and take no blame for the flip-flops that follow.

It is not necessary to chronicle the problems I have with the Bush administration. I was ready to write this column after the steel bill was supported by the White House, angrier still when the pork-filled Farm Bill was enthusiastically supported, and now with the Global Warming fiasco...it is time to end my silence. Yes, he tried to disavow the letter as the result of a bureaucratic system – but he did not withdraw the letter!

Yes, the President is, apparently, prosecuting the war against terrorism. He has supported changes in the military infrastructure necessary to build a better-prepared military for asymmetrical warfare. We can only suppose that Al Gore

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might have done less, but we will never know. He might have done as well, or even better...I doubt it, but we are just guessing.

It is what we do know that is bothersome. I suppose that there is something to the theory that there is something in the water of the Potomac River that reorganizes the DNA of politicians who grace the region, or perhaps there is some genetic proclivity in the Bush family gene that goes haywire in the White house. Remember the "Read my lips, no new taxes."

Perhaps the problem is one of the Bush Administration supposed strengths – his staff. I thought it was a strength to have so many of the Bush Senior staff around the new President, but in retrospect that might be the problem. Senior staff with decades of experience means a staff with Washingtonites – greater exposure to mass spending and an close association with professional bureaucrats.

This "inside the Beltway" thinking leads to the usual conclusion: "You can change positions on anything you like – where are your voters going to go? Vote for a Democrat? I think not!" And, indeed that philosophy works quite well with the entrenched Republican base...where indeed are they going to go?

Well, for one, they can go nowhere...particularly on election day. They can sit on their hands. My vote for the current President was not one of conviction but rather one for the "lesser evil." Now that I realize it was for just a very minor delta, I do not have the enthusiasm necessary to bring me to support the President any longer. Is he better than Al Gore. Yes, but not sufficiently for me to give up my precious vote.

The President finds himself with a 70+% approval rating in the polls, but he is rapidly spending his good will to annoy the wrong side – those who supported him.

Campaign finance, the farm welfare bill, the education bill, and now global warming.

Enough! We have Al Gore with a Texas drawl.

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