

# Bush triumphs over fear

By Les T. Csorba

*Outside View Commentator*

Houston, TX, Nov. 10 (UPI) -- The great Roman statesman Cicero once said, "Trust no one unless you have eaten much salt with him."

A man frequently lampooned for being simple, George W. Bush was remarkably eloquent when he captured the essence of the election of 2004 in its finality. After casting his ballot on Nov. 2, the president walked up to the bank of microphones and condensed hundred of phrases and slogans of the campaign: "Who do you trust?"

On his judgment day, he placed it in "hands of the people," trusting that they would trust him again to the chair under the resolute desk.

A man known for his interpersonal skills, the president reached beyond the main stream media and appealed to the special relationship he built with the people of the United States during arduous times. He was appealing to a fellowship built at the national table of three years of crisis, trusting that Americans would see through the savagery waged on his character. And, without doubt, there was much to overcome.

For almost three years, the trust he built after 9/11 was tested by critics who sought to drive a wedge between friends and fellow warriors. The venomous attacks and forces arrayed against him were daunting, perhaps unprecedented. Bush-hating groups spent up to \$400 million to defeat him. For that, they won New Hampshire -- barely.

Move-on.org and the other 527s organized to defeat him, provided an outlet for commercials likening the president to Hitler, his administration to "brown shirts."

Then there was P. Diddy's not-so-veiled attempt to frantically register college students to unseat the president under the sober mantra of "Vote or Die." A series of best-selling books were strategically released to poke holes in the trust: Al Franken's "Lies and the Lying Liars who Tell them," David Corn's "The Lies of George W. Bush," Maureen Dowd's vindictive tome, "Bushworld," and Richard Clarke's "kiss-and-tell" which maliciously questioned the president's grasp of the terrorist threat prior to 9/11.

Then came the hate-mongers. Hungarian-born billionaire George Soros doled out millions and likened Bush to Adolf Hitler and the Gestapo. Filmmaker Michael Moore went on a worldwide tour promoting "Fahrenheit 9/11" insinuating that the president was in bed with Osama bin Laden and Saudi terrorists. Actress Cameron Diaz alleged that rape would become legal under a Bush second term.

Among other invectives from Hollywood's elite, at a fundraiser in New York, the president was labeled a "thug" and "killer" by comedienne Whoopi Goldberg. In attendance while she did, Democratic presidential nominee John F. Kerry, reporting for duty. He didn't repeat her ugly words, but he didn't disagree with them either, telling the audience that "every performer tonight ... conveyed to you the heart of soul of our country."

Alas, the politicians were equal to the task of dishing out the slime. Former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean speculated the president knew ahead of time of what was going to happen on 9/11 and sat on his hands. The distinguished Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., said the president was "brain dead." Kerry attacked the president's character promising to restore "trust and credibility" to the White House. And yes, he did in fact call him a "liar" to a New Hampshire editorial board (though he claimed he never used those words in the first debate).

Piling on, CBS and Dan Rather launched their bogus National Guard "60 Minutes" story based on falsified documents in apparent coordination with leading Democrats. Then, another journalistic bomb was dropped from the wings of The New York Times and CBS in their "October Surprise" explosives story a week before judgment day. And we now know that the MSM's negative media coverage of the campaign was lopsided against the president by a 2 to 1 ratio.

At times, the attacks on the president's character appeared to be having their desired effect. Frustrated, I began to wonder why the president didn't do more to defend his honor. In those debates, I had wished that just once he would have turned to Kerry in response to charges of "lies" and "deceit," and say, "Frankly, senator, I don't need a credibility lesson from you." But Bush knows the American people better than I do. He knew that real integrity and moral character, like honor or humility, requires no restatement or defense. It speaks for itself.

On Election Day, the president was so confident in the people of the United States, he could ask them, "Who do you trust?" He appealed to their sense of goodness, to their relationship forged in the crucible of 9/11, economic uncertainty, and war. Despite the hate-mongering, instinctively he trusted that his fellow citizens knew him better. That they wouldn't forget.

That they wouldn't forget his pledge that the terrorists "who knocked these buildings down would hear from all of us soon." That they wouldn't forget the tears they shared with him in the Oval Office days after 9/11, a time when the American people looked in the mirror on that day and saw a picture of themselves, a grown man, burdened with the grief at the loss. That they wouldn't forget that "buildings fell, but a nation rose." That they wouldn't forget because they have eaten salt together.

To determine the character of a man, Lord Chesterfield once wrote that you must look into a person as well as at him. Like an eagle, the symbol of the United States' strength and freedom, Americans have keen eyes. What they heard was the blather of invective. What they saw was the soul of a leader they knew and could trust. It is why he remains in the chair today.

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