

## Bush's evil twin is not gone, he's just in hiding



**BARB GUY**

So, political capital lasts two years. When President Bush narrowly won re-election in 2004, he was pompous and defiant. He famously sneered, "I earned capital in the campaign - political capital - and now I intend to spend it!"

There is hardly space to enumerate the parade of bad judgment that has marched past us since then. Thank heavens another election came around.

The George Bush of the past two weeks looks just like the old one, but he's saying things the old one would never say and doing things he would never do. It's like a low-budget movie in which everything is explained by the surprise revelation of an evil twin.

It's an odd reversal, but in our movie, the good twin arrives after six years of the evil twin.

The good twin says he is open to new ideas. The good twin will be meeting with a bipartisan group looking for solutions in Iraq. The good twin fired Donald Rumsfeld and put in his place a critic of the war.

The good twin invited Nancy Pelosi to lunch at the White House. The good twin told the media he and Pelosi love America equally. The good twin is confident Democrats and Republicans can work together. The good twin says he looks for common ground. The good twin says people can disagree on things like war and still be patriots.

Tide turning, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, sea change. The words echoing in newspapers around the world say it all. An awesome force of nature went through our country on Nov. 7, a force strong enough to bring the good twin to life.

In this bizarre new atmosphere where Democrats are winners and George Bush listens to other people and speaks words of friendship, it's tempting to forget about the evil twin. It's tempting to forget the hateful things he routinely did and said. But I remember the vicious smears Bush and his people levied against anyone and everyone who dared to question them.

If only George Bush had been on the ballot on Nov. 7, we'd be done with him now - both of him. In the aftermath of what everyone is calling a stunning referendum on the president, 85 percent of Americans say the major reason for the spectacular Democratic success was the evil twin's mishandling of Iraq.

I wish one more thing had been on the ballot the other day - the war. Then we'd be done with it, too.

Thomas Paine said if you start a war you open a vein that bleeds the nation to death. Smart man. He was a lot brighter than President Bush, but I'm pretty sure he had no conception of a figure like \$342 billion, which is what we've spent on the Iraq war so far. I doubt Paine could even fathom \$255 million, which is what we've spend on the war every single day, but I'm guessing he'd have some suggestions for better uses of the money.

And the waste of money is nothing compared to the wanton disrespect for human life.

Bush is approaching things like a grownup who has to get along with many different kinds of people. He's making overtures to folks who think differently than he does. He's admitting that he doesn't have all the answers.

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I never believed this twin existed. Now I don't quite know what to do with him. Should we welcome him with open arms or dress him down for the colossal loss of life and money he has presided over for the past six years? I may not have to worry - he might not last long. The evil twin could wrest control again at any moment.

How does the movie end?  
Where will we be in two years?

Only time will present the answer to us, but for the first time in six years, the evil twin is in hiding and Democrats can breathe. That's enough for now.

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*BARB GUY is a regular contributor to these pages. © Salt Lake Tribune.*