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## What do you say?

By Bill Burkett

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March 19, 2003—I've sat in total grief for the past three years, watching the institutions of America being spent as if they were lottery winnings.

I don't want to say it, "But I told you so."

In January of 1998 and what seems like a full lifetime ago, I was stricken by a deadly case of meningoencephalitis. I was returning from a short duty trip to Panama as a team chief to inspect the hand over of Ft. Clayton to the Panamanians. I had been 'loaned' from the senior staff and state planning officer of the Texas National Guard to the Department of the Army for a series of these special projects after angering George W. Bush by refusing to falsify readiness information and reports; confronting a fraudulent funding scheme which kept 'ghost' soldiers on the books for additional funding, and refusing to alter official personnel records [of George W. Bush].

George W. Bush and his lieutenants were mad. They ordered that I not be accessed to emergency medical care services, healthcare benefits I earned by my official duty; and I was withheld from medical care for 154 days before I was withdrawn from Texas responsibility by the Department of the Army, by order of the White House.

I was a pawn then caught in a struggle for right and wrong, but also caught within a political struggle between a man who would do anything to be 'king' of America and an institution of laws that we knew as America.

For five years, I have fought my battles around two fronts; the personal retaliation that was waged against me and the individual organizational unlawful acts and practices waged against our institutions.

But I first had to survive. Without a single bit of help, contact and in spite of threats against my life and that of my family, I have had to relearn to walk and to live. My daily pain is far worse than anything I could have previously imagined. I suffer from extreme constant headaches, body pain and even my hair hurts. I now have a severe seizure disorder which we are starting to gain slight control over.

My mother faced her final four years guiding and supporting me through my struggle to live. My wife, Nicki, and our four wonderful children totally reshaped their lives in support of this struggle as well. But, only three dear friends from those military days dared to help me. CW3 George Conn gave up his career and was released from duty for his support. He is now a civilian personnel specialist in Europe for the US Army. CW4 Harvey Gough actively fought for medical care for me. He received a court martial and was kicked out of the Army after an illustrious 28-year career. He filed suit for some of the comments made within their retaliation at him; including calling him a "Goddamned Jew" and threatening him with actions by making comments such as "we're going to treat you worse than the Jews in Auschwitz".

LTC Dennis Adams tried to operate within the system to get me medical support. When he was deposed and served as a witness within the district court case; Dennis was retired from service.

The only benefits that we have received have come at the end of a court order; and they have been under constant challenge. Needless to say, we know the White House counsel personally. We know Dan Bartlett, Karen Hughes, Joe Allbaugh, Don Evans, and many others very personally. Dick Cheney used to be a close friend. No longer.

So when asked by many "what should we do?" on this beautiful, but very sad morning, I can't help but remind everyone that for over three years, since the spring 2000 campaign, I have forecasted the actions that have taken place in great detail. I know GW Bush and his inner circle very well.

As I said, a UN vote would not stop GW Bush from attacking Iraq. Nor will anything else. And weapons of mass destruction will be discovered in great quantities; but the entire affair will stink to high heavens because it will be as staged as the White House press conference you just viewed.

The human death toll will publicly not be mentioned, yet in truth, it will far exceed 120,000. Our vast size and force will quickly break the back of any Iraqi resistance, yet we will not break their spirit. This is a society which has learned to live in troubled politics. They will go about their business while seething inside. There will be small uprisings, but they will quickly be crushed. The emotion and anger that we will have built will spill over into other countries and meld like an alloy with other problem areas of the Middle East, becoming a deeper seated problem. We will have insured that America's dynasty is nearing an end.

While GW Bush will be cast as a conquering hero by his political team and accepted by the population as such, history will treat him as Napoleonic. Bush will reach a new lofty level of acceptance by first fear and then staged triumph. Those who waited too long to gain their voice will lose their voice again.

America will over pledge economically in order to establish this new footprint; but the economic worth will not go to offset our fiscal investment, or to the Iraqi people. Iraq will be stripped by the vanquishers; the major corporations, who will then control not only the assets, but the cash flow. Their names will be Mobil, Exxon, Halliburton and the likes.

Our homeland warnings will again revert to 'fusia' a color only associated with confusion, and cosmetic image.

And America will again be asked to bow at the feet of this small man with big ideas.

Lost within a short time will be the name Saddam; for like Osama, he was never the purpose of this campaign. Never in the history of the world has a great society survived whenever its focus was allowed to magnetize to its most powerful. And here we will clearly have in view that there is little value accorded to the innocent 3-year-old Iraqi girl who will today be playing in the streets, or the 19-year-old soldier who will launch the missile that will kill her.

What do you do? Watching the sunrise on a beautiful morning, I used to feel hope. Before my illness, I felt exhilaration at the prospects of the day. After my illness, I felt hope that I might work hard to live. Now I feel sickness that today another massive group of people, held worthless by this anointed king, will be trampled upon like grapes. But their blood will not be rendered into wine. It will be spilled into the sands of this desert or another, or on the streets of Washington, or in the halls of the US Congress, or in the courts.

But there is a difference from any phenomenon previously faced by a spoiled American populace. With Teddy Roosevelt, we badgered and dented him into listening; with Franklin Roosevelt, we tenaciously talked until he listened; with William Jefferson Clinton, we crippled him through deceit and his own frailties. But none were anointed as king.

We must now revert to the history of Europe to discern what to do. We must study the nemesis of France and how Napoleon was felled before understanding the damage a tyrant does to a nation and society. We must examine the ruthless and dictatorial rise of yet another of the three small men— one whose name is not spoken out of fear of reprisal, but his name was Adolf. We must examine history, in order to not repeat it, and to understand the mesmerism of a public to a murderous scheme. Three small men who wanted to conquer . . . and vanquish. Each created a need for a balancing throng; history then recorded the damage from a far better perspective.

More than one French or German household now sits watching the US expending her virtue through the tools of greed, anger and vengeance. And they caution us. They caution that out of this strong arm tactic will bring about the rise of a United Europe or Asia to counterbalance an arrogant superpower.

I do not believe that this world can, or will, stand idly by. While many will rally to the side of this conqueror, there must be a steadfast collective group who hold their ground, their principles and the Constitution of this land. For there is never found the word "King" within that great architecture of Democracy, or as the Republicans like to say this "Republic". There is only the structure of an equally shared and responsible government "of, by and for the people" anchored within the principles of defense rather than attack.

Yes, we are on the edge. But there is no one who says that we have to help push this nation over the cliff. Instead, we must redouble our efforts. Being ever mindful of law and the tactics being employed, we must focus ourselves to what has been successful and keep it successful, while moving aggressively forward. We must withdraw the anger and be able to 'turn the other cheek,' for there will be many opportunities to do so. Our battles must be waged with resolve, not emotion.

We must be vigilant. We must be credible. We must be respectful of those [such as soldiers ordered to take the field of battle] who are entrapped within this immoral act. And we must be the best educators that have ever stepped forward on this earth. We must be teachers in the image of Peter, John and Mark; the disciples of Christ, or their equivalents within Judaism, or the Muslim Faith, or the great philosophers. We must grow a new generation of those who believe that war is the last resort, not the first. And we must call them patriots, for their battle is not protected by flack vests, armor plating, or armor piercing rounds.

The only thing that can be said this morning is that though we feel that our world is ended and that there will be many who will die within the coming days—die without reason or cause—we must dedicate ourselves to stop this action at a future point, so the carnage will not become even greater. As I have taught many young soldiers, at the end of the first battle you will be either elated and filled with yourself, or sickened to the point of vomiting. But in either case, you will have only completed a single battle. The war is yet to be won.

*Lt. Col. Bill Burkett completed 28 years of decorated service and was medically retired from the US Army National Guard in 1998 after suffering meningoencephalitis on return from an assignment in Panama. From 1995 until his illness, Burkett served as State Plans Officer for the Texas Army National Guard and Governor George W. Bush. After refusing to follow direct orders involving falsifying readiness reports, Burkett sought "whistleblower" status for reports involving anti-Semitic activity; personnel fraud; readiness fraud and the alteration of the personal military file of Governor George W. Bush. Lt. Col. Burkett is currently the plaintiff in his appeal to the US Supreme Court in the case of Burkett v. Goodwin, Taliaferro, Meador, et al, in regard to the retaliation against him following breaking the Bush records issue. Lt. Col Burkett served as a War Plans Officer during Operation Desert Storm and functioned as a senior trainer in conducting simulations exercises for deploying troops.*