

Dubya's Happy Message to Me

BY PENN JILLETTE

IS IT CRAZY TO THINK THAT GEORGE W. BUSH, president of the United States of America, has started to suck up to me, Penn Jillette, wackjob? There's no chance he's starting to slide happy little messages to me in his speeches, right? What's the opposite of paranoid? What if I see a clearly misguided and overtly evil policy that is out to destroy my country as secretly benevolent to me? Does that make me a whole new kind of nutty?

In 2000, I couldn't tell the difference between Bush and Gore. Really—I saw no difference at all. I voted Libertarian. I was happy because, in my mind, the Libertarians won. Everyone was voting for the “lesser of two evils.” No one voted for Bush or Gore—everyone voted against Bush or Gore and that's Libertarian. See? I've had this rose-colored psychosis for a few years now.

Even with my unstuck-in-reality positive spin on that horrendous election, I didn't lose my head enough to say anything good about Bush. I never gave him any reason to send me a happy little message. I admit it: I haven't been much of a cheerleader for our Commander in Chief.

I got worse. When Bush really started Commanding and Chiefting, and playing violent little boy dress-up on the aircraft carrier, I liked him even less. Our war in Iraq started as a religious war and it'll end as Viet Nam. There won't be a celebrating couple kissing in Times Square when this war ends. It'll be slow and miserable. No kiss right before the bang; this'll be a whimper.

Some of the people who are really fighting this religious war have been pretty open about their war over whose imaginary friend can beat up the other guys' imaginary friend. The three major Mediterranean religious cults of Abraham won't stop fighting and we all get caught smack dab in the Middle East.

General Billy Boykin pulls no punches for his personal god. When he's preaching to the converted, he's pretty upfront. He says we're in a holy war of Christianity again Islam. Boykin made it clear that even though Penn Jillette is a “bright” (a bright's worldview is free of supernatural and mystical elements; the ethics and actions of a bright are based on a naturalistic worldview—read more about it at www.the-brights.net), Penn's

doing his tiny part fighting a war for Jesus. (I pay a lot of taxes, but that's still a small part compared to all the ultimate sacrifices that others are making.) I don't have God on my side, but according to Billy, my country is on God's side. “We in the army of God, in the house of God, kingdom of God have been raised for such a time as this.” The nearest random Muslims “will only be defeated if we go after them in the name of Jesus.”

“We're a Christian nation ... and the enemy is a guy named Satan.” A guy? A guy? A guy named “Satan.” We can't even find a guy named Bin Laden, and now we're looking for an evil tooth fairy? Satan's not a guy, it's just someone else's imaginary friend. How did we end up fighting a war against a sock monkey?

Boykin hallucinated on: “My God is bigger than his God. I knew that my God was a real God, and his was an idol.”

Okay, my turn to make stuff up: I believe in my heart that Billy often dresses up in a big pot suit and calls kettles black.

He has the right to talk crazy—we all do. But Bush should certainly fire this psycho (I'll put on my pot suit and call this crazy kettle black) and let him babble on his own time. Yet Bush won't fire Billy's mentally ill butt. Maybe Bush will shut Billy up, but the administration still keeps onward our Christian soldiers, marching off to war.

So, where's the good news, Penn? Huh? Well, get this: My Bright newsletter quotes our president as saying in a press conference on October 28 in D.C., “In America, we love the fact that we are a society in which people can pray openly or not pray at all for that matter.”

That's really all I want. Religious nutbags can say whatever they want. They can build temples (I'd like them taxed equally, of course), and mumble to their imaginary friends in any goofy posture they want as long I can still be a fine American without playing that game. And that's what Bush said.

It was buried in the *New York Times* article, but it was there. It made me feel warm and fuzzy all over.

We're in a religious war, and our rights are going away ass over teakettle, but I'm getting little secret “Hang in there Penn” messages from our president.

It could be hope. Or it could be Stockholm syndrome. **R**



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