

George W. Bush's Finest Piece of War

Painting immigrants' faces and laughing on chat shows will not excuse the former US president's blood-stained past

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George W. Bush is back. He is back, this time not to bomb countries and cause the death of thousands. This time the man is back as an artist who advocates for the rights of immigrants, and the US media is on heat.

Bush, the former US president, recently penned [an Op-Ed](#) for The Washington Post, and received a round of applause [on 'Jimmy Kimmel Live!'](#) when the eponymous host complimented him on his painting of American politician Madeleine Albright. He appears on TV to speak about his new book of oil paintings of America's immigrants, 'Out of Many, One', he is not wearing handcuffs, and all rehabilitated. It is all normal.

What is also normal is how the starvation and deprivation of medication that caused the early death of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children because of the severe UN sanctions on the country in the 1990s, have fallen into oblivion. To Albright, speaking in a 1996 TV interview, the political price was "[worth it](#)", though she would later express regret for her wording.

Bush's grinning face seems to be traveling at a smooth pace from one TV show to the next. Kimmel admired his guest's reflexes when he dodged Muntadhar al-Zaidi's [shoe throw](#), and the two had a laugh about it. Of course, it slipped Kimmel's mind to ask his guest about his time ordering cluster bombs be dropped on my family's house in Baghdad to "liberate it". It also slipped the host's mind to ask why in the first place a man would want to throw a shoe at the former president.

For their part, the cheering crowd gave the impression that the next rich guy to oversee the annihilation of inferior beings overseas could as well re-emerge from the gutter and be celebrated as a cool, funny grandpa.

Bush's blood-stained past tells us the man is dangerous. If Richard Nixon – in [the words of the late Hunter S. Thompson](#) – "could shake your hand and stab you in the back at the same

time", you might lose a finger or two if you extend your hand to shake Bush's.

And with the way things are going, there's a big chance he will get away with it – again.

George W. Bush is responsible for the destruction of an incalculable number of innocent Iraqi lives. Have the decency to remember his victims

It is well known that columnists in the US [were at war](#) with Iraq even before depleted uranium was generously distributed among its citizens in 2003, but the slick anchors and [boring television hosts](#) of today seem to be suffering from amnesia.

In an [interview](#) after a tour of Bush's Texas ranch, CBS's Norah O'Donnell told the former president that she thought the paintings in his new book were "beautiful". And when she asked him about the 6 January storming of the Capitol, Bush [said](#) that it made him sick: "This sends a signal to the world, you know, like, we're no different, and this book says we are different, much different".

In the words of the great Iraqi poet Saadi Youssef:

"But I am not an American

Is it enough that I am not American for the Phantom pilot to send me back to stone age?"[1]

The entire charade reeks with hypocrisy. Even when preaching on immigration reforms, Bush failed to hide his 'us versus them' complex.

But the American exceptionalism is not what bothers me the most.

That death in Iraq is eliminated from the conversation makes it clear that to 'them Americans', 'us Iraqis' are non-existent. We are not worthy of receiving justice or of anybody at least bothering to ask Bush about that [long-forgotten 'blunder'](#), as Iraqi scholar Sinan Antoon reminds us.

Meanwhile, war is ongoing in Iraq. Its signs are unmistakable; walls and road signs riddled with bullet holes, concrete barriers blocking main streets, dead youth staring from faded billboards and military choppers occupying the skies above.

In Baghdad, militiamen nurtured under the lawlessness birthed by the US invasion still fire rockets on the airport and [the 'Green Zone'](#). They still roam the streets, armed to the teeth, terrorizing the city's traumatized residents who are left unprotected by empty promises from the Iraqi state.

While Iraq no longer receives aerial bombing from the West, death has become a permanent resident of Baghdad. The lethal failure of its subsequent 'post-liberation' rulers continues what George W. Bush started 18 years ago: non-stop civilian killings in Iraq.

The negligence behind the recent [al-Amiriyah-like incineration](#) of dozens of patients [inside Ibn al-Khatib's hospital](#) is an example of the consequences of war faced by the people of Iraq since 2003.

George W. Bush is responsible for the destruction of an incalculable number of innocent Iraqi lives. Have the decency to remember his victims.

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Notes

[1] From Saadi Youssef's poem, America America. Translated by the author of the piece.

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