



## Straight Talk

By Muriel Sluyter

## Dan, You're Kidding! Right?

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### Greetings, Gentle Reader,

Can you believe Dan Rather? He's shot himself in the foot reporting this story, then shot himself in the kneecap sticking to it in the face of overwhelming evidence that it is a forgery. Now that he's bleeding profusely, he says he's sorry, but that the content of the story is still accurate. Meanwhile, Jay Leno says CBS now stands for "Cock 'n' Bull Story." Wow!

Today's reports say the documents went from Lucy Ramirez, to Bill Burkett, to CBS, to the Kerry Campaign, to Burkett, and finally back to CBS.

Why did it happen? Rather is astonishingly arrogant, with a conviction of great personal wisdom persuading him that, if he says it's true, people should believe it. He believes his perception of reality is so brilliant, his viewers will accept it on faith. Many have done so and would have continued to do so, if he had kept those documents to himself. He didn't, and internet bloggers immediately recognized them as amateurish forgeries.

There is a sinister facet to this cut-rate melodrama: Rather's primary audience is not just willing and eager to believe his reports, they are absolutely determined to believe them, because he and they have the same ideological obsession. One document expert reported the result of that obsession this way: 60 Minutes didn't want to be told the documents most likely were false, so they ignored her warning.

Further, today's political ideologues, of whom Dan Rather is one, live by the unwritten rule that, to lie convincingly, effectively, and tenaciously is no sin, if your cause is just and you believe in it passionately. Additionally, to win, by whatever means, is the highest virtue. That's why phrases such as, "Bush lied!" "The economy is the worst since Hoover!" "The Swift boat veterans have been discredited!" etc., are repeated mindlessly and endlessly by leaders and followers of that ideology, though each of these statements is provably false.

If Rather hadn't been caught with his pants down, he'd

have succeeded in scamming much of America. Anti-Bush activists would have been on every talk show and in every newspaper in America with this story. Why? Let's repeat the unwritten rule: To lie convincingly, effectively, and tenaciously in a great cause is a virtue, and to win, no matter how dishonest the means, remains the highest virtue.

Then there's Zell Miller. He doesn't spell virtue e-x-p-e-d-i-e-n-c-y. He's just a typical, old fashioned, honorable, decent, hellfire-and-damnation Democrat, who says what he thinks and lets the devil take the hindmost. He says his party's behavior is the result of a manic obsession with taking down the President. He's right.

Now to Rather's charges: General Staudt denies ordering George Bush's Guard reports sugar-coated, as the report states. He had retired eighteen months previously, so he wasn't even around. Besides, Bush was in the top 5 to 10 percent of Guard pilots in proficiency, so what's to sugar-coat?

He denies the Bush family pulled strings to get young George in the Guard. Enlisted men had trouble getting in during that period, but officers, especially pilots, had no such difficulty.

The Killian family denies he wrote those reports and insist he liked the future President because of his attitude and performance. They refute the typist's evaluation of Guard officers as having the negative feelings toward Bush alluded to in the forgeries.

So, what's up with dear old Dan? Unless he has brain freeze (or something worse), maybe he could act like a real man and admit he made a fool of himself before the entire world, because his cause was so great and he believed so passionately.

Nah. Probably not.