

Sample research paper on defining george w. bushs portrayal as president

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ABSTRACT

George W. Bush, the 43rd President of the United States and 46th Governor of Texas, served as the head of the executive branch from 2001 until 2009. The eldest son of President, George H. W. Bush, has been maligned and vilified rather than lauded for his two consecutive terms, which were fraught with strife. His presidency endured the rise of the Internet, the 9/11 attack, the wars with Iraq and Afghanistan, the art of electronic surveillance, immigration law and international relations, specifically the Geneva Convention's regulations for the treatment of prisoners of war and how war itself should be conducted. The world was changing at a tremendously swift rate and he was the nation's leader through these tense times. The goal of this paper is to examine how Bush was viewed and if the assessments of media, publicists and biographers painted an accurate picture of what he truly did or did not accomplish.

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Defining George W. Bush's Portrayal as President

It cannot be denied George W. Bush was brought into this world with some advantages. His parents consciously cultivated their expectations of what he would become in early childhood. Most people would say he was blessed as a child of privilege. After all, his father excelled serving his country during a

time of a contentious war, was Director of the CIA, Vice President and then eventually became President, but could it be quite possible to look at the other side of the coin. Being born into such a family comes with extensive opportunities, but it was also anticipated that nothing less than following in his father's footsteps would be considered a failure or at the minimum extremely disappointing. George W., however, managed to establish his own identity despite always being compared to his father. That is a tremendous burden to bear. Especially when eight months into his first term, one of the most gruesome, devastating acts of war ever conducted on American soil was his responsibility to manage and rectify. Along with the commencement of terrorism as a new form of warfare, the world was transforming so swiftly it would be difficult for any U. S. citizen to stay abreast of what was truly transpiring. Every president is under vast scrutiny and scurrilous attacks from the press, but George W. Bush quite possibly had more pressure on his shoulders than even Franklin Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln or George Washington. Those great men did not have to deal with the rise of social media or the World Wide Web during a time when their nation was experiencing a tremendous crisis. Bush did and besides joining John Quincy Adams as the only two presidents to achieve the country's highest office like their fathers before them, his presidency will always be tied to 9/11. That is an exceptionally stiff burden to place on a man no matter how esteemed his family lineage.

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Much has been made of George W. Bush's background and the fact his father had powerful connections that could certainly influence appointments for his first born son, but rather than realizing how difficult it would be for the younger Bush to fail, it appears much more emphasis was placed upon what his father could do for him rather than what he garnered on his own. People seem to forget he was elected the Governor of Texas on his own merit and the younger Bush clearly identified with the state of his birth, while his father preferred the East Coast. In fact, through his 20's George W. wrestled with who he was and would become versus the colossus that was his father. For example Bush told David Maraniss that he was attempting to "reconcile who I was and who my dad was to establish my own identity in that way." (O'Connor, 166). He "had mastered the art of minimizing expectations early in life so he could avoid direct comparison with his father." (O'Connor, 166). "Although often mistaken as a replica of his father, Bush's political style was his own. He cast himself as the 'outsider populist,' whereas his father had been one of the consummate establishment men of the 20th century, great at networking but far from a natural campaigner. George W. is much more naturally talented than his father at so-called 'retail politics' or the 'grip-and-grin' of meeting constituents than his own father and undoubtedly the personalities and political styles of the two Bush presidents are different." (O'Connor, 167).

Another component of his persona Bush was often mocked for was the expression of his religious values. Many members of the media openly

derided his decision to abstain from alcohol the day after his 40th birthday based upon his faith. Also, members of the press felt his references to various forms of religious imagery amounted to a blatant attempt to cater to evangelical political factions to bolster his own presence. They also claimed his religious rhetoric was the foundation for his foreign policy. There is simply not one iota of truth to support these statements. “ That is not to say that evangelicals or other religious groups had no

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influence at all. But their influence was rarely theirs alone. They found that to craft and maintain support for key policy initiatives meant working in coalitions that brought together some of the strangest bedfellows in recent policy history. In light of these various pressures and historical currents, the role of religion in shaping foreign policy during the George W. Bush administration was dynamic, contentious, and varied.” (Dun Delk and Rozell, 72).

There are also various references to George W. Bush displaying features of a narcissistic personality disorder through Helene Deutsch’s “ as if” theory. This hypothesis would imply the younger Bush put on a public happy face while downplaying any negative consequences. Many pundits cite his lack of emotion over the post-war situation in Iraq, the deaths the war caused and how the battles were handled as valid evidence for this conclusion. “ Ultimately this troubling state of affairs raises questions of Bush’s conscience. Some may doubt he has one. So, yes, he has a conscience but with a peculiar composition, likewise his reserves of empathy.” (Dervin, 214).

This man was President of the United States during a time of incredible domestic and international transition. His every word, action, deed and intention were scrutinized by every major media center across the globe. He was a representative of the United States and its Commander In Chief. His role was to show strength to the people he served so they would remain strong, while showing the rest of the world nothing would deter him from pursuing justice after the destruction of the Twin Towers. No one can say what his man felt internally or how many tears he may have shed over the loss of life or any other circumstance he had to contend with and frankly, his personal thoughts and emotions were really no one's business. He chose to be thrust into public service, therefore, he behaved not in his own interests but on

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the behalf of the world's most powerful nation. His private life and personal thoughts should be just that, personal.

During George W.'s presidency and even until this day, he is often depicted as a man with a flaccid mind, yet he had a higher GPA at Harvard than John Kerry and despite the limitations on civil liberties the Patriot Act instituted, its passage undoubtedly saved American lives. The younger Bush should be judged on what he accomplished while in office rather than be denigrated for being born with a silver spoon in his mouth and casting that spoon aside to pursue his own fortune. " No scholar can take presidential words at face value. Yet, denying that what the president says, especially in lively

extemporaneous exchanges, reflects his views and thinking is an equally damaging error. The way to evaluate presidential words is over time in relation to actions. (Renshon, 588).

Ultimately George W. Bush's presidency seemed to be defined by the rising influence of social media and increasing globalization incurred by the expansion of the Internet. That day in September was a moment few presidents in the course of history have had to endure and manage. Let the course of history determine who this man truly was rather than members of the press depict him as a court jester or clown. This president certainly fielded many blows, many of which were utterly false and absurd. " Films such as Oliver Stone's W, which portray him as a spitting, oafish frat boy who eats with his mouth open and is rude to servants, will be revealed by the diaries and correspondence of those around him to be absurd travesties, of this charming, interesting, beautifully mannered history buff who, were he not the most powerful man in the world, would be a fine person to have as a pal." (Roberts, 2009).

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References

Roberts, Andrew (2009, January 14). History Will Show George Bush Was Right. The Telegraph. Retrieved from [http://www. telegraph. co. uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk).