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"The Truth Shall Set You Free" -- And Maybe Win a Primary

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It's said that a fanatic is someone who won't change his mind and can't change the subject. I'm afraid that Rudy Giuliani's arabesque on the topic of choice during the debate, followed hard by the release of his personal giving to Planned Parenthood, is going to prove the meaning of those words.

Mr. Mayor: The fanatics are on your tail. And they aren't going to let you walk away from this. So why not just step up and say what the world already knows you believe? Unapologetic, unvarnished truth as political strategy -- what a concept.

What have you got to lose? Your position is going to be pursued like a cat after a June bug. You can skitter around and hide. But sooner or later you are going to have to deal with a record that isn't remotely as equivocal as your debate performance.

You can say you hate abortion. You can say abortion is a personal matter. But you can't follow that up by saying "It'd be ok" if Roe v. Wade were overturned. And you can't square that with donations to an organization that in 2005 (the latest available figures) performed 264,943 abortions and handed out more than 1.2 million emergency contraception kits.

Pick any public opinion poll, and the majority of Americans say they support at least some rights to a legal abortion, even if they are limited. Yet the foes of choice are chalking up win after win at the state and federal levels.

If that sounds familiar, it's because a clear majority of Americans and every police department are also on record opposing the sale of guns designed, manufactured and sold for sole purpose of killing people -- sometimes lots of people. But a small, well, organized, well funded group has politicians cowering in a corner, barricaded behind the Second Amendment.

It's time to hit the electorate forehead-square with a little honesty.

Our tolerance for hypocrisy -- and hunger for truth -- has reached critical mass.

It's been a tough several years. There is Pastor Ted, who reliably turned out committed right-thinking voters on request. He was hard on gays and hard on drugs, while he was romping with a male hooker and wired to the eyeballs on meth. There is Randal Tobias. As head of the Agency for International Development, he demanded that AIDS funds recipients explicitly condemn prostitution. Whoops -- he paid \$300 for a company selling a "legal high-end erotic fantasy service." He says it was only a massage; except that the price was three times the rate for a therapeutic massage and from a woman who has no massage license.

Add Duke Cunningham, Tom DeLay, Mark Foley, Don Sherwood, John Sweeney Curt Weldon, Robert Ney and the other Republican legislators accused or convicted of everything from sexual harassment to abuse to the grubbiest kinds of corruption. Throw in the outing of Valerie Plame. Add Alberto Gonzales and his disappearing recall; Karl Rove and his disappearing e-mails. Add the manipulation of the family of Pat Tilman; the fictionalization of Jessica Lynch.

Voters feel coated with an oily film of unending deception. The time has come for somebody -- anybody -- to stand up and say: "This is who I am. This is what I believe. I believed it then, I believe it now. And I'll believe it in the future."

In an age of big money, high-pressure politics, maybe that is just naïve. Maybe simple truth is a dead-end strategy. But how long has it been since somebody actually tried it? Think about it Mr. Mayor. It just might work.