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**OUTPOLITIK****Who's the Real Rudy Giuliani?**

BY YOAV SIVAN

In one of the classic game shows of the 1960s, "I've Got a Secret," an everyday citizen with a compelling story would face blindfolded celebrity panelists who'd ask about, then guess his or her secret — typically some personal quirk or rare line of work. Were the show still on network television today, Rudy Giuliani would be the ideal guest, for he'd stump all the panelists with his secret. They'd certainly guess some of his unusual truths, to be sure, but not the one he'd wanted them to guess, judging from his performance on the presidential campaign trail.

"When you divorced your wife, did you move in with two gay men?"

"Yes," Rudy might respond, "but everyone knows that. That's no secret."

"When you were the Republican mayor of New York, did you get the City Council to grant broad protections for same-sex partners?"

"Yes, but that's not why I'm here today."

"In fact, weren't you responsible for getting the city to actually pay for the benefits of same-sex partners of municipal employees? Wait, that's it! That's it! You're the most pro-gay Republican mayor in American history! I've guessed it!"

That's when the game show host steps in.

"It looks like we've stumped the panel," the host says. "It's time for our guest to reveal his secret."

At that moment, the panelists take off their blindfolds and the guest exclaims: "I'm Rudy Giuliani, and I'm running for president of the United

States as a homophobe."

This is my interpretation of Giuliani's appearance last Sunday on "Meet the Press."

"It's the acts — it's the various acts that people perform that are sinful, not the orientation that they have," he clumsily retorted, when asked for his stand on homosexuality, and in a failed attempt to save the situation he made things worse: "I've had my own sins that I've had to confess."

The Giuliani's dogma goes: being gay is okay, as long as you don't practice; and then comes the G-Twist: but committing sins is actually not that bad. No wonder this is a blow to the common wisdom that Giuliani is a friend of the LGBT community. Obviously, Giuliani tried to please everybody and ended up offending everyone.

We should carefully note that to date this is the former mayor's most anti-gay exposition. So is Giuliani finally yielding to the right or is this just a one-time slip from the otherwise seasoned juggler?

Giuliani's supporters are telling us that criticizing him for this ridiculously inconsistent answer is indeed effortless, yet the real insight comes from comparing his apologetic views to his conduct. Here, his partisans insist, Rudy scores well and he's got an almost spotless record of being not just a good boy but really top of his class. What better testament than the words of ultra-conservative Tony Perkins, the leader of the Family Research Council, who said, "Americans do not yet realize how far outside of the mainstream of conservative thought that Mayor Giuliani's

social views really are."

And to top it all off, Giuliani even moved in with a gay couple while still in office after he separated from his wife, and she won custody of Gracie Mansion. So, when he confessed on national television, "I've had my own sins," was he hinting at some experimentation with his gay roommates?

Giuliani's supporters continue, no one in his right mind can claim that he is a hardcore homophobe or a conservative politician capable of initiating an anti-gay crusade such as George W. Bush's marriage amendment campaign. This is why he deserves our empathy when from time to time, the argument goes, he has to play the Republican game and tame his gay-friendliness. After all, gay-rights-wise it's better to have Giuliani win the Republican nomination rather than, say, Romney.

True, perhaps, but not quite enough.

Alarming, Giuliani chose lingo that was used by Bush in 2003. "We are all sinners," said the incumbent then to soften a harsh anti-gay agenda that unified the gay community against him, as if my sins can equate to Bush's. It turns out the G-Twist is actually a B-Twist, and a very dangerous twist that is. If we hear it from both the GOP's conservative and the liberal wings — even if with a wink — we should be on guard that this might become the right wing's new doctrine on gay rights.

Being gay — or practicing, though politically I fail to see the difference — cannot be normalized, only tolerated. Admittedly, this is some

improvement from total illegitimacy, but nowadays it is also a major setback to the campaign for equality.

Understandably, Giuliani's supposedly being on our side pushes him to be apologetic when he speaks to the wider crowd, specifically to the people among whom he seeks the Republican nomination. And it's nicer that for a change the smooth-talk of the Republican at the front is intended to comfort or even deceive our bitter opponents, rather than aimed at soothing us.

Still, we know that Giuliani can't really have his cake and eat it too, which leads to the concern: who will pay the price of compromise? Even after the ballots of Iowa and New Hampshire are opened — and closed — there is a long way 'til November 2008. It would be of little surprise if Giuliani, feeling that his liberal image is strong enough, leaned to the right at our expense.

The former mayor, who has prided himself on being the man who says what he thinks regardless of people's tastes, emerges as a hypocrite unwilling to publicly defend his ideas on gay rights. Yes, we may expect politicians to lie, and in the case of Giuliani's we ostensibly know were his true sentiments are, but sometimes politicians' lies are more telling than their truths.

*Yoav Sivan is the LGBT coordinator of the International Union of Socialist Youth and a board member of the Aguda (the Israeli LGBT Association) and the Jerusalem Open House. His website is [www.yoavsivan.org](http://www.yoavsivan.org).*

**THE OTHER WAR****Drug Law Reformers See Progress**

BY NATHAN RILEY

Activists opposed to punitive drug policies, meeting in New Orleans last week, were stoic yet confident regarding national trends. No one expected a breakthrough, but most were satisfied with their growing strength. Ethan Nadelmann, the leader of the Drug Policy Alliance, announced: "We stand poised today where the movements to abolish slavery once stood, and the movement against racial oppression and

oppression of women and gays once stood."

A historical symmetry marked this gathering of reformers. The conference opened on December 5. Seventy-four years ago on that date, the struggle to repeal the 18th Amendment to the Constitution came to a successful conclusion, and Americans could legally take a drink.

1933 was the first year of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidency and the beginning

of Democratic Party dominance. In addition to the Great Depression, another factor in the Democratic victory was hostility to Prohibition. This lesson was brought home with reminders that drug prohibition has to date worked to the advantage of Republicans.

In a brief history lesson, Ira Glasser explained that 1968 was the year Democratic dominance ended, and a Republican era began. It was the year that Richard Nixon, the presi-

dent elected that November, began the escalation of the war on drugs. In Glasser's view, the move aimed at unwinding the gains made by the civil rights movement.

Drug prohibition was a "a replacement system for the separation and subjugation of black citizens," roared Glasser, the former head of the American Civil Liberties Union and the current board president