

# Blood in the Water

The Newsweek and Dan Rather situations are so similar it's eerie. Both got snookered because they bought scenarios that, if true, would have made President Bush look bad. Both ran with said scenarios. Both crashed and burned.

Whenever you want anything in this world too much, it is unlikely to happen. Desperately desiring a person, a job or a lifestyle just about ensures disaster. All of us must pursue our goals with our eyes wide open or else we will hit the rocks.

What is it about President Bush that causes such anger in the press that they are salivating for a story that will hurt him? Wait, I can answer that question. It's the same emotion that drove right-wingers crazy whenever they saw President Clinton acting as Commander-in-Chief: partisans just don't believe these guys deserve the title.

The left-wing print press has rallied around Newsweek, blaming the whole debacle on the Bush administration for its systematic "abuse" of prisoners in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay. If the abuse had not happened, the papers wailed, then Newsweek wouldn't be in this fix. From the Los Angeles Times to the Minneapolis Tribune to the Baltimore Sun to the Oregonian in Portland, the editorials were almost exactly the same. Talk about group-think!

To be fair, Newsweek Magazine is not even close to being the biggest Bush-basher in town. That publication is far less ideological than most of the leftwing newspapers. It also does excellent reporting on a regular basis. But its Achilles heel is the politically correct germ that infects most New York City-based media. Newsweek has a tendency to be very PC, and displays far more secular tendencies than traditional ones. It is Newsweek's prerogative to do that, but it is also risky

these days. Most Americans believe the press is unfair and unfit, and if you make a mistake that is perceived to be anti-American, you will pay a big price.

Ever since Woodward and Bernstein used an anonymous source (the so called "Deep Throat") to bring down the Nixon administration, the American press has been comfortable hiding behind phantom leakers who often hurt people for revenge. That has got to stop. Newsweek's anonymous source burned it, and what the magazine should do is put that person's picture on next week's cover. That would stop these cowardly weasels from spreading false stories.

But Newsweek will not do that, and now must rebuild its reputation. That's not going to be easy, as Dan Rather is finding out. Americans are jittery these days in the face of killer terrorists, and we are in no mood for bogus news reports that inflame our enemies. The left-wing media ignores that fact at its peril.

As with Dan Rather, I do not believe Newsweek knew what it put out there was false. It was duped. But that happened because the magazine was comfortable with a sensational item that would make the Bush administration look bad. As the old adage says: Be careful what you wish for.