

Triangulations of Christopher Hitchens

The death of author Christopher Hitchens from cancer at 62 brought forth a flood of flattering remembrances about his wit and style, but largely missing was the other side of Hitchens, the ruthless opportunist who sold out to the neocons, betrayed friends and bullied the weak, as media critic Sam Hussein recalls.

By Sam Hussein

“Have you stopped vomiting yet, Christopher?” were the first words I ever said to Christopher Hitchens face-to-face. I’d bumped into him at some DC shindig, the type of thing I rarely went to and what he seemed at times to live off.

It was just after the deaths of both Princess Diana and Mother Teresa, and Hitchens seemed to be on Cloud 9. My comment stemmed from a recent quote of his on a chat show – I think “Meet the Press” – that the commemorations around Diana’s death were such that he “couldn’t stop vomiting.”

The adulation that followed Hitchens to his grave would be enough to induce serious regurgitation from the better demons of Hitchens’ past self, if that still exists somewhere, if it ever really did. As gushing flattery poured out from writer after writer who recounting with swagger their interactions with Hitchens – I’ve been left to figuring how to account for mine.

There have been a few serious pieces noting his stark contradictions, but they didn’t seem to account for how he was trusted by many who should have known better, and I certainly count myself among the guilty on this count, though with reason.

Despite our personal meetings, some meals and drinks, and my reading him since I was young, I’ll forever associate Hitchens with email, and I’ve recently retrieved some, but not all, of my past emails with him off dusty hard drives. [See below.]

For example, shortly after 9/11, I wrote him in a note titled “your pathetic question” in response to his first pro-war piece. I wrote: “The fascists like Bin-Laden could not get volunteers to stuff envelopes if Israel had withdrawn from Jerusalem like it was supposed to – and the U.S. stopped the sanctions and the bombing on Iraq.”

I should say this was rather similar to what Hitchens had himself been saying for years (in his earlier incarnation as a critic of U.S. foreign policy), such as: “If the U.S. had stood for mutual recognition on the Palestine question and had directed its energies to a settlement of that dispute, Saddam Hussein would

have been punching air when it came to recruiting support outside his borders.”

But Hitchens took the occasion of the 9/11 attacks to not only attack me – as he had others, putting me in the splendid company of Zinn and Chomsky – but to threaten me with the hand of “the authorities.” He quoted my email to him in a column in *The Nation* and then wrote:

“You’ve heard this ‘thought’ expressed in one way or another, dear reader, have you not? I don’t think I took enough time in my last column to point out just what is so utterly rotten at the very core of it. So, just to clean up a corner or two: (1) If Hussein knows what was in the minds of the murderers, it is his solemn responsibility to inform us of the source of his information, and also to share it with the authorities. ...”

He then sent me that column after 2 a.m. with a PS attached: “I am dead serious about my first point and will call you on it again. If you claim you knew what these people had in mind, I want you to show me that you contacted the authorities with your information before you sent your blithering little letter to me. Either that or you shut the fuck up – not that it matters any more what you say. And you claim to know how enemies are made. ...You have no idea.”

And I’m sad to say that, to an extent, that did help to shut me up – or at least end up with me playing a more behind-the-scenes role. And it was somewhat understandable. A few days earlier, I was on Bill O’Reilly and he had cut my mic.

And Noam Chomsky, Edward Herman and other great figures were weighing in on what Hitchens was spouting, I probably couldn’t add much to the arguments they marshaled. And I had seemingly bigger fish to fry – getting desperately needed material out to media outlets through my day job.

But another factor was that Hitchens had serious government connections. He had dragged Sid Blumenthal, himself rather well-connected (as a White House to President Bill Clinton), through the legal mud. And, after all it was just after 9/11 and the government was rounding up Arabs and Muslims with little legal constraint. – and those civil liberties violations seemed immensely more important than Hitchens threatening me.

Hitchens would later say he was against government wiretapping through the National Security Agency with substantial fanfare. Apparently he preferred the more old-fashioned approach of people turning in their alleged friends to “the authorities.” And for the benefit of cameras, Hitchens would make great show of coming out against torture by himself being water-boarded.

Never mind that were I to have thrown caution to the wind and if Hitchens had

acted on his threat it's unclear how distant he was from causing serious harm to me at a time when liberty was most vulnerable.

As his fame grew, the public positions that Hitchens took were a high form of triangulation of the worst sort – and that gave him a fake sort of relevancy at times. Even my friends at The Real News plugged a video of Hitchens getting water-boarded. And Democracy Now just after his death proudly touted the debates they featured with Hitchens.

In a 1998 email exchange, Hitchens mocks me for suggesting that the U.S. would attack Iraq just as Clinton was about to be impeached. I ask him for assurance that there will not be an attack within the next week, he dismisses that and – within about 24 hours – the U.S. launched the Operation Desert Fox bombing campaign.

In another exchange, Hitchens writes to me: “vigilant as ever, but not as vigilant as you” – a month later his book comes out with my ideas and without my name in it, an oversight he called “shaming” – so he presumably has some.

I almost think by the end of his life, though we'd not spoken in years, there was no one rooting for him to beat the cancer more than I. And for very Hitchens-like reasons. “Purify your hatred” he'd write me, an art form I failed in acquiring.

It rather reminds me of a Kathy Kelly piece years ago quoting an elderly Iraqi man about the devastating effects of the sanctions, killing hundreds of thousands of children in the first phase of the 20-year war that is ostensibly ending now, saying that he wished George H. W. Bush – yes, the revered father, not the despised son – would go to heaven ... so that he could see all the Iraqi children he'd killed.

In the end, I really wanted Hitchens to live long enough to face the full consequences of the wars he'd help wrought. After all, he did have moments of genius, though they were quickly forgotten, most likely, including by him.

I recall a C-Span debate, with Morton Kondracke, just after the start of the Gulf War, in early 1991, as pundit after pundit was positing that that war would last two weeks – no, perhaps as long as three or five weeks – Hitchens chimed in: It would “last about a hundred years.”

And a tenth of the way into that, he'd set out to rather explicitly make the prediction a reality by outright backing the U.S. aggressions after 9/11. And then turning his back on his insights, he claimed in 2003 that Iraq saw the end of a “long short war.”

A parable for our age is to contrast Hitchens's rise with Scott Ritter's descent. In the mid 1990s, Ritter was the establishment media's golden boy – an articulate arms inspector who reamed Saddam Hussein for alleged non-compliance.

However, in 2002-2003, after coming out against attacking Iraq and saying that Iraq was basically unarmed before George W. Bush's invasion – no matter how nationalistic Ritter's reasoning – Ritter became an official enemy, shoved to political marginalization for the crime of being correct. And quite possibly driven to near madness, or at least to exchanging sexual material with females he thought were under 16. And so he's in jail, to the gleeful if muffled delight of much of the establishment.

By contrast, Hitchens lands plaudits from so many influential people for his alleged courage – yet, or exactly because, he had none when it mattered. Or actually Hitchens was good at displaying "courage" against those who were on the outs with the establishment, against people who had no power. In other words, Hitchens had no real courage.

I did reach a low ebb several years ago where I'd wanted to destroy him. Not crudely, physically, directly mind you. I'd wanted to write a piece that so thoroughly exposed him – as he was posing as a great critic of water-boarding in one episode of the Endless Triangulations of Christopher Hitchens – that not even he could be so shameless as to continue living, a la Tito Puente singing about Mr. Burns.

I don't think I'd felt that towards another human being, and with that in my heart, I put my pen aside. I had thankfully failed to purify my hatred. And then he fell ill and – assuming he wasn't going to recover – I came to a tacit conclusion that I'd rather speak after he lay still than to seem to spit on him as he lay dying, as Hitchens himself did with Edward Said, a Palestinian-American who advocated for Palestinian human rights.

Some wise men warned me in one way or another, at least tacitly, about engaging Hitchens. While I sensed they were right, I also felt they didn't understand the sheer loneliness of trying to do political work in DC. Contrary to Kipling's claim, what is hard is to keep your virtue while walking with kings, not with crowds. Political DC, especially in the 1990s, was a vast wasteland – with a few allies, with little power and with many establishment emissaries who seemed to have knives drawn.

And that stark landscape encourages one to see mirages and causes one, normally wary, to seek to work with someone like Hitchens. It's especially true given the warning from Alex Cockburn who dubbed Hitchens as having a taste for giving a

“Judas kiss,” a subject he avoids in his otherwise insightful recent piece.

I’d come to Hitchens’s work earlier through the recommendations of Noam Chomsky and Edward Said. And so despite warnings – given the trajectory – it was easy to end up where I did while trying to do political and journalistic work in DC, “makin’ out with Judas just to make your bail.”

Sometime around 2005, Iraqi exile Ahmed Chalabi was at an event somewhere in DC, perhaps AEI, and I went with my friend Matthew Bradley. There was a protest as I recall, and I was surprised to see Hitchens milling about outside.

“Christopher, you don’t have a ticket?” I asked.

“Oh, I’ve got one alright” he responded.

“Good, well, then all is well with the universe.” Last time we spoke.

Around the same time, I made the awful mistake of giving Democracy Now producer Mike Burke the contact info for Hitchens, which led to a series of self-absorbed “debates” between him and Tariq Ali and others. Hitchens was a pro-war creation of the “left” which was ostensibly anti-war.

I felt this was disastrous since Hitchens functioned for the left and a “fun” pro-war debater – it was more about Hitchens and the dynamics of the debate than the actual issues, and it in effect prevented an actual debate with actual pro-war people, something that was desperately needed.

I say actual because right after 9/11, it was Chomsky who would write that Hitchens could not possibly believe what he was writing. This seemed to really get under Hitchens’s skin. And over the years, it proved a powerful insight.

Hitchens himself in his final months would say that if he were to embrace religion in his final days that he’d hoped people wouldn’t take it seriously, since it wouldn’t really be “him.” It seemed an incredible thing to say, to forestall one’s own betrayal of one’s alleged principles. But, as Chomsky discerned, Hitchens had in effect been down that road and could not actually believe things he was saying.

One could contrast Hitchens with Bertrand Russell, who when talking about his own death, would talk of invented deathbed conversions – that is, he was concerned that others would claim that he had embraced religion on his deathbed, but Russell never seemed to be concerned that he would change his beliefs when it seemed convenient to do so.

In Hitchens’s comments after 9/11, there was a sense of a calculation, that the anti-jihadi wave would ride him out through the rest of his career. But, with

his backing the Iraq war, this seemed something of a miscalculation. Media critic Norman Solomon noted in 2007 that Hitchens was eager to change the subject from Iraq, to well, anything, so the atheism mantra assumed center stage.

Having pro-war Hitchens and Tony Blair debate the existence of God was like two draconian priests debating the number of angels on the head of a needle. Or worse. An old line is that journalists “shoot the dead” – and Hitchens would do that, making a show of atheism more than a century after Nietzsche proclaimed God dead.

Hitchens seemed to often be most vicious as a debater when debating those outside the establishment – especially including regular people – exactly the wrong instinct, as journalism allegedly seeks to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.”

Hitchens denied that he was a neo-con, but he did what so-called neo-cons do – and what the left and progressives allow them to do: Use the limitations of progressive criticism – the frequent lack of radicalism – to argue for rightwing policies. As such, the mindset is to pretend to rigorously police everyone – but themselves – to such a degree that they end up violating first principles.

Hitchens claims an affinity with the “Arab street” – dedicating his final collection of essays to Mohamed Bouazizi, who a year ago set himself on fire, touching off the Arab uprisings. But Hitchens’s book contained something of a puff piece on the Tunisian dictatorship.

When he was on the Arab street, Hitchens was more likely to get beat up, as he was in Lebanon, than greeted with sweets and flowers; he backed policies, like the Iraq War, which virtually every non-paid-off-Arab opposed. He was a “contrarian” and “skeptic” who embraced the basic precepts of Empire. He scrutinized his opponents’ eyes for specks while he ignored the gleaming of cruise missiles in his own.

It’s frequently said that Hitchens is a brilliant writer, but it’s similar to how people say Bill O’Reilly or Newt Gingrich are articulate. (Gingrich at a recent debate invoked Hitchens’s if-you-try-to-explain-Bin-Ladin’s-following-you-are-a-terrorist-fellow-traveler “reasoning”).

If you are not constrained by meaningful self-examination, by constraints of ethics, like appropriating ideas, or evidence or logic, then you can come off “brilliant” in a style-over-substance sort of way.

Even in his earlier days, it was perceptible where Hitchens was headed, for example, saying that Columbus Day should be celebrated “with gusto” around the

500th Anniversary of the “discovery” of the New World in 1992.

Norman Finkelstein at the time explained that Hitchens was forever attempting to be unpredictable. Finkelstein contrasted this with Chomsky, who is quite predictable in terms of the positions he takes but is read because he marshals evidence and facts that one learns from.

In contrast, Hitchens must come off forever unpredictable, thus the pattern of triangulation that he shared with Bill Clinton – and Barak Obama. Triangulation is more than centrism – it includes a use of symbolism to disguise oneself and pretend to be something one is not in the mind of the naive viewer.

Gore Vidal – who had christened Hitchens his heir, withdrawing it after Hitchens’s reaction following 9/11 – once wrote eloquently about the import of place in writing. I wrote, actually I finished this essay during this Christmas season, shortly after Hitchens’s final death, as I’ve always rather enjoyed writing some on holidays.

Hitchens said he wrote *The Triangulations of William Jefferson Clinton* to get Clinton out of his system. And I feel rather the same way about Christopher. But whatever you put into your system, you absorb. And Hitchens absorbed, or intensified his triangulation tendencies from Clinton.

I find that I’ve absorbed some of Hitchens – befittingly as a reaction to some of the worst of the left. Hitchens’s critique of the left was to lead him to – or be used by him for – the service of empire. My critique of the left leads me to greater radicalness.

Hitchens clung to WMD delusions for years. Shrewder neo-cons used statement by Democratic Party officials to get the Bush administration off the hook for their lies about Iraqi WMDs. I argue that the lies of the entire establishment about Iraqi WMDs damn the entire establishment.

I remember being at a meeting with a funder after 9/11 and talking about the importance of getting critical voices out regarding war and peace and civil liberties. Yet, I recall the silence after 9/11 – by much of the academy, by so many “nonprofits” – and the carping over tactical or marginal issues.

The only thing that clicked in their brain seemed to be the airline bailouts, which you gentle reader are forgiven if you don’t recall. There’s an entire edifice of “liberalism” that is intent of focusing on relatively minor, temporal issues. Give the devil his due, Hitchens at least usually focused on the issues that really mattered, wrong as he was about them.

And he also wanted – admittedly, largely for reasons of ego – to alter the

world. After 9/11, much of the left took up the slogan "Not in My Name" – which seemed to me to be a statement worthy of Pontius Pilate. Let the war happen, but please don't let the blood be on my hands. The focus is narrowly on one's own culpability, which becomes the worst sort of personal indictment.

Martin Luther King Jr. defended the Major Drum Instinct – that we should have an ego, want to be known, but for being a voice for good. I feel like my lack of self-defense against Hitchens's post-9/11 attack violated Elizabeth Cady Stanton's edict that "self-development is a higher duty than self-sacrifice".

I was recently in a controversy, being suspended from the National Press Club after asking the Saudi "Prince Turki" a tough question. And I immediately felt Hitchens's attack on me all over again – and was determined to defend myself as I'd failed to do before. So much so that when I appeared on RT I was almost channeling Hitchens – his certain doggedness, to not just "fight the good fight" – to not just "try, because we have to try" – but to actually win.

Hitchens wanted to win, and was willing to accept 30 pieces of silver to do it. Those of us who want to win for good have to be able to both develop ourselves and sacrifice ourselves. And so I found myself echoing Hitchens, a month before his death and ten years after he told me my words no longer mattered,

I was saying that real journalism is to hold accountable those who deceive because the deceptions do matter and should be studiously analyzed, for they are the lasting legacy of those who deceive for war, no matter how circular their route or reasoning. And it does make sense to purify one's hatred, not of persons as Hitchens seemed to intend, but of the stench of lies from whatever quarter.

Sam Hussein is a writer, political activist and communications director of the Institute for Public Accuracy, a D.C.-based nonprofit group that promotes progressive experts as alternative sources for mainstream media reporters.

I was most closely associated with Hitchens in the late 1990s as I'd predicted events in Iraq quite well, including the Desert Fox bombing campaign, which Hitchens had mocked me for initially, the emails between us are below as best as I've been able to recover them, with some mentions of some other, relatively innocent, people excised. For technical reasons I don't understand, I've sometimes been able to retrieve more of his end of the conversation than mine:

To: Sam Hussein

From: <CHitch8003@aol.com>

Date: Fri, 4 Dec 1998 19:58:25 EST

Subject: Re: Health & Iraq

Our difference may be narrow but deep. The two-party establishment ostensibly divides between those who want to rule Iraq through a crippled proxy – the same one that Nizar Hamdoun served so well in DC in the Bush years – and those who want an occasion for “standing tall”. I say ostensibly because these two factions often take on each other’s guises.

The same confusion is apparent in your own approach. I have had [voice] messages from you in the last few weeks warning of an imminent war that I would have bet my own money would not happen, and then discoursing on “reverse wag the dog” when it didn’t. Do we think that Clinton and Albright are drooling to bomb Baghdad, or don’t we? And if they don’t, then why don’t they. This carousel should be spun by any of our own contributions.

The sanctions are the fault of the Ba’athists alone, as far as I can see. And there would be, and is, immense establishment support for lifting them if any trust at all could be reposed in a quasi-fascist regime. However, phrasing the question in that way does help to see why it remains undecided.

Clinton should be impeached for abuse of power, and won’t be, because the Right will never charge it. ...

I’m off in my sailor suit to lecture to the floating Nation, and will be blessedly out of touch until the 12th or so.

Your health care piece was extremely good, and I hope I’ll find it on my fax again.

fraternally

CH

Date: Tue, 15 Dec 1998 12:20:48

To: hitchens

From: sam@accuracy.org

Subject: hard-ons and soft spots

Cc: jim

Christopher,

...Note how liberals like congressman Nadler have recently said that Gulf of Tonkin was impeachable – Sudan does not come to mind for them. A concerted effort may still be able to raise the subject of impeaching Clinton for the right reasons.

I do get a tad excited around a bombing of Iraq, but I think my analysis was right: They want to bomb, not to debate. They didn’t bomb because Annan got to yes before they got to fire. Having been deprived of the pleasure of shooting missiles, they did not want to discuss the subject. Next time, they need to bomb

with out any warning (like Sudan) or after quickly blocking any international peace effort and before the domestic opposition produces another Ohio State.

Of course, this analysis risks that without a bombing, Clinton seems pacifistic, which plays into his false liberal image that both he and the right have an interest in maintaining. (I don't think it is prudent to portray people who fire missiles as wimps – Clinton has repeatedly bombed Iraq.) Therefore, look at the sanctions.

“The sanctions are the fault of the Ba’athists alone.” Did you read my piece or what? [I'd almost certainly sent him my “Autopsy Of A Disaster: The U.S. Sanctions Policy On Iraq” <http://accuracy.org/iraq>] The Clintonoids have said that Saddam could morph into Gandhi and they would maintain them (probably like the U.S. kept them on Vietnam.) If he were to actually comply with UNSCOM, which itself may be moving goal posts, they'd go on about POWs or reparations for years. Are the Ba’athists also alone responsible for the Gulf War? You seem almost to be backing Clinton since he's not Saddam, just as the Clinton apologists are – well you get my point.

One hundred million dollars in CIA money for Chalibi will be used by the butchers in Baghdad to paint any opposition coming from any principled, patriotic individuals as U.S. cronies – if they needed that. Clinton cut in on Bush and Saddam's dance of death. They get their enemy and power over the region, he keeps power over Iraq. The powers collude...[and the people get screwed, a saying of mine that Hitchens was familiar with.]

Vidal had a soft spot for JFK since he also had a hard-on for him. I don't know what his excuse is about Clinton.

Hope the high seas did not lead to any vomiting fits. [We had a running joke about vomiting that originated when he said on Meet the Press that the reaction to Diana's death was causing him to have vomiting fits. I think he got the line from a Woody Allen movie, it was about Jesus Christ.]

Can you assure me that there will not be a bombing this week?

Best Regards,
Sam

Date: Wed, 16 Dec 1998 02:40:25 EST

To: <sam@accuracy.org>

Subject: Re: hard-ons and soft spots

A simple test. Has any liberal worth the name ever said that the abuse of power element in impeachment – the one most diluted by the GOP – be strengthened or even discussed? Voila tout. Clinton is being impeached for Clintonism, albeit in

microcosm, and that's better than one could have hoped.

In re Mesopotamia, I'd doubt a bombing this week but I'd return you to my question about which guise it would take – ruling through a chastened Saddam or “standing tall”, or a reversible coat consisting of both. This is not just a question to be posed to the other side.

I long ago gave up counting bedfellows. Perle did very well for the Bosnians at Dayton. (The American Left didn't even stop at doing nothing for Bosnia: it came up with excuses for Serbo-Orthodox fascism.) Good luck to Chalaby with whichever allies he finds. AIPAC used to be pro-Baathist when the Iraqi moderates were all the rage.

CH

[Within about 24 hours after this, the U.S. launched the Desert Fox bombing campaign, shortly before Clinton's scheduled impeachment vote, which was delayed as a result of the bombing.]

From: Hussein

To: Hitchens

Re: Questions to Lewinsky –

Walters: “What is your greatest regret?”

Lewinsky: “When I think that maybe he bombed the Sudan and Iraq and killed innocent people to get out of this. I – I don't know if that's what happen, but if he did that – I just can't stand to think about it.”

The new Diana? Does monarchy have a leg up on punditocracy?

At 01:12 AM 12/18/1998 EST, you wrote:

In your dreams. But a nice try. How did it go with Truscott? I did Holtzman on MSNBC and she took the Nixon line on troops in the “field”. Very satisfying. Good work. Purify your hatred. Refine it. Nourish the flame.

fraternally

CH

From: Hitchens

To: Hussein

At 02:12 AM 12/19/1998 EST, you wrote:

You're getting there. The liberals have beshitted themselves forever, and I mean that they have done so EVEN AS LIBERALS. “Voice in the Wilderness” relies too much on bloated kids for my taste. To whom did they give their donation? Have

you ever read Dalton Trumbo? If this "seems like a trick question, then it may be time for our actual drink rather"than our virtual chat." Quand meme, you will be able to live with yourself when this week is done,"which will make you part of a fragrant and honorable minority.

fraternally

CH

To: <CHitch8003@aol. com>

From: <sam@accuracy.org>

Subject: Re: My Lewinsky Fantasy

Date: Sat Dec 19 10:00:11 1998 -0500

Let us. "The kids are not bloated, they're they'reemaciated. ...

Regards,

Sam

At 12:19 AM 12/21/1998 EST, you wrote:

...The Vidal stuff I'm saving for my upcoming Clinton book, so by all means go into print in your own right if you can find anyone at the brain-dead Nation to get the point. I'm doing Iraq for them this week, and in such a way as to make them cringe if they still can.

Loved what I heard about your exchange with that pasty idiot EJ Dionne. I shudder to think that we were once friends. Sorry I didn't get your phone message until too late: I'm a martyr to family values this week with all my children come to stay but I also think we should be out talking to other people and not consoling one another. Nonetheless, a solidarity cocktail is indicated in the near future, and also a Trumbo chat that I actually think would help the cause.

you made the roll of honor in a week where, and when, those kinds of roll actually get kept.

fraternally

CH

Received: ; Mon Dec 21 00:32:25 1998 -0500

To: <CHitch8003@aol. com>

From: <sam@accuracy.org>

Subject: Re: More Mink

Date: Mon Dec 21 00:32:25 1998 -0500

A book on Clinton? Now we must talk much. Please do examine my timeline if you have not already: <http://www.accuracy.org/iraq>

Beyond the obvious waging, if I caught it right, they were saying that they were not hitting too many of the targets initially, then when the impeachment came anyway, they decided they've hit enough for now. In a way, the impeachment vote may have saved untold numbers of Iraqis. (though it caused the bombing, too).

Did the Soviets ever recall their ambassador, or have we hit a new low?

Am I paranoid to think that we may have a nuclear war because of blow job? I like Yelsin when they hate him and vice versa. ... [Hitchens would adopt this line of mine on Yelsin in his book on Clinton, though it made little sense for him to do so, since Hitchens was for the war on Yugoslavia, for example.]

Best,

-Sam

Christopher,

The Clinton Scam is serving corporate power while appearing to be bucking it. As Jim Naureckas pointed out, the establishment repainted both Mondale and Dukakis as flaming liberals once they lost so they could continue pushing the Democrats more and more to the right. Now, they are trying to repaint Clinton in his last years as a liberal after he has actually ruled as a Republican.

There must be some Republican who hates Clinton more than he likes bombing Arabs. Boyle can provide the legal case to impeach Clinton for the Sudan.

Below is a piece that our "local rag" [Hitchen's term for the Washington Post] the Post told me on Tuesday would be running shortly, no word since. (They assured me that they would show me the edited version prior to publication; I'm waiting for that before giving them any minor changes I'd like - feel free to make suggestions/crits if you like.)

Best Regards,

Sam

Sam,

Could you send me again your admirable piece on health care, which I seem to have misplaced?

fraternally

Christopher

[We must have been in touch about journalist Richard Goldstein writing a piece about Clinton.]

From: <CHitch8003@aol.com>

To: Hussein

Received: Sat, 13 Mar 1999 23:18:47 -0600

Subject: Re: bad ABC story on indonesia

Dear Sam,

I'm glad that Goldstein got in touch ... but let's see what he writes. His line, if you can believe it, was that now Clinton is out of danger we can say what we think!

I'll be in the Bay Area until the end of March.

My salaams to Comrade Ibish. Is it a mere failure of communication that has drawn no response to my reply to the ADC invitation? I mean nothing by the suggestion – the original invitation was sent by sea-mail to New York. vigilant as ever, but not as vigilant as you,

CH

Christopher,

I was delighted to see my work and disconcerted not to see my name in your book. To what do I owe this distinction? "One mind" indeed.

-Sam

Date: Tue Apr 20, 1999

Subject: Re: Naming Names

A suspiciously good point, and on reflection rather a shaming one. (I had already shuddered at the realisation of omitting Adolph Reed, but he only helped me indirectly.) Can I plead haste for the moment, and promise an amendment in what I hope will be future editions?

Of course, you weren't pro-impeachment....just kidding
fraternally

CH

Date: Wed Apr 21, 1999

Subject: Re: Naming Names

May you have many future editions. Will drop you some additional suggestions in time.

-Sam

From: <CHitch8003@aol.com>

Date: Tue, 15 Jun 1999 19:09:45 EDT
Subject: Re: constructive criticism?
To: <sam@accuracy.org>

I have never believed the

figures – which epidemiologist knows how to “attribute deaths to sanctions and how to separate child deaths so cunningly? “Nor has it been made plain to me how a regime which over-spends so obscenely “is not the one responsible for shortages. But one

thing is clear: this would “all end when the regime ended and it is to that objective – not to moaning “about anti-Arab bias – that all political efforts should be directed.

fraternally

CH

[I sent him an email and it must have been titled “your pathetic question” – it was almost certainly in response to his piece in The Nation “Against Rationalization” in which he wrote “Does anyone suppose that an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza would have forestalled the slaughter in Manhattan?” I must have mentioned the fact that Democracy Now was off the air in DC and New York at this critical time (I was chair of the DC Pacifica station, WPFW, at the time and had asked for Hitchens help in preventing the hijacking of the network by a self-selecting board, which he had declined to do.)

From: CHitch8003@aol.com

Date: Sat, 22 Sep 2001 21:56:43 EDT

Subject: Re: your pathetic question...

To: sam@accuracy.org

Dear Sam,

Bad luck for you. I’m going to quote you. How you will feel when you see your words on a page, I cannot imagine.

You are of course quite free to make any use you choose of any old e-mails of mine. I’m still quite willing to come to the aid of Amy, as I told you and as I told her. But neither she nor anyone else has been able to propose any course of action. That you make that a cause of petty resentment at a time like this is evidence of your generally shrivelled attitude.

Since you apparently know what was in the minds of the murderers, I hope you are communicating your information, and its sources, to the proper authorities. Don’t feel you have to waste any more time on me.

Christopher

At 02:12 AM 9/24/01

Just so that you got it from me first.

CH

PS I am dead serious about my first point and will call you on it again. If you claim you knew what these people had in mind, I want you to show me that you contacted the authorities with your information before you sent your blithering little letter to me. Either that or you shut the fuck up – not that it matters any more what you say. And you claim to know how enemies are made...You have no idea.

[Hitchens must have attached a copy of his column attacking me.]

Date: Mon, 24 Sep 2001 10:45:56 -0500

To: CHitch8003@aol.com

From: Sam Hussein <sam@accuracy.org>

Subject: Re: your pathetic question...

Christopher –

Two problems: One, it's out of context – I obviously don't know who perpetrated the terror attacks, or why; I was talking about bin Laden's following in general. Two, this was part of a private, personal correspondence written in shorthand. On both counts, you're being very unfair.

-Sam

[This letter was basically written by a colleague, Lord knows what I'd wanted to write.]
