

Is Now the Time for a Play about the War in Iraq?

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By Ron Brynaert

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Everone knows that comedy is mostly about timing. If you hit upon the right nerve (is a funny bone a nerve?) at the right time then, usually, you don't even have to be original or even marginally funny to win laughs. The audience laughs just at the reference (i.e. "How about Michael Jackson?") and may fall into hysterics at a gifted comic's pause.

Of course the other element in comedy is distance. The funniest jokes might fall flat if the audience remains in grief or on edge (it might be too soon for "Now that John Ritter's dead, can we agree that three's a crowd?"). We may be past the days of "tarring and feathering", but if somebody decides to throw something at you, chances are it won't be a cake or a pie (which used to, at least, be good for laughs). So, it's important to be able to recognize this.

I started writing my play, "The Rules of Embedment or Why Are We Back In Iraq?", in June, a few days after a costume-wearing George Dubya Bush flew on to a carrier with a banner reading "Mission Accomplished." I knew Iraq War II was far from over – no matter what the Media was babbling – but I thought my take on the situation warranted the risk. Instead of carrying a sign on the street, I wanted to deliver my message within an entertaining context (much safer, these days, the way cops treat protestors now).

My play combines drama and satire, sometimes simultaneously. During the readings with different audiences my play's had, I've discovered that what some people find funny, other people gasp at. In my play, a young Mexican-American Marine [Santana] discusses his wish to be naturalized by the government. In response, a Gulf War veteran Sergeant [Drudge] mutters, "If you die, maybe they'll make you [a citizen] one." One audience became silent, the other roared. When I wrote that line I was aiming for tragic but I'll gladly accept the guffaws.

It's one thing to write about history after it's mostly been done and said. But my play had to be shaped to withstand any future developments. I believe (fingers crossed with duct tape) I achieved this by

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sharply defining the timeframe of the play. It's not about what happened or even what really happened. It's about what we knew when it happened then. I based my play on the opinions and beliefs that were in vogue in order to show how it all came to pass. Instead of focussing my sights on the Administration, I targetted the Media and how they sold the American public a preventive invasion (one way was by referring to it as preemptive).

Every day I hear new news I still sometimes worry that all my hard work will have gone to waste (though if tomorrow Bush/Cheney gets impeached, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, etc. go to jail, and our troops come home I won't mind). But so far my plan has worked. Saddam's capture caused me to pause, but that still didn't change "what happened then" (plus I still don't trust anything they say, for all we really know Saddam may have died in 1999 like it was rumoured) and never will.

Are there enough people out there aching to see a work like mine at this juncture? We'll see (or, hopefully, you'll see).

Ron Brynaert's play, "The Rules of Embedment or Why Are We Back In Iraq?" explores the Media's role in Iraq War II. Sample Scenes & More!

The Iraqi Dinar In A Nutshell

By Marcel Heersema

The Iraqi dinar (pronounced: di-'när) is the legal currency of Iraq.

Old Iraqi dinar

The Iraqi dinar was introduced into circulation in 1931 and was at par with the Pound sterling. The Iraqi dinar replaced the Indian rupee that was the official currency at the time of the British occupation in World War I. After the 1958 coup d'etat, the Iraqi dinar was dissociated from the Pound sterling, but continued to have a very high value.

After the Gulf War in 1991 and due to the economic blockade and unrestricted printing of banknotes by the government, the dinar devalued fast, and in late 1995, \$1 equaled 3000 dinars.

Banknotes issued between 1990 and October 2003, along with a 25-dinar note issued in 1986, bear an idealized engraving of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Following the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq's currency was printed using poor grade wood pulp paper (rather than cotton or linen) and inferior quality lithography.

Counterfeited banknotes often appeared to be of better quality than real notes. Despite the collapse in the value of the Iraqi dinar, the highest denomination printed until 2002 was 250 dinars.

Currency printed before the Gulf War was often called the Swiss dinar. It got its name from the Swiss printing technology that produced banknotes of a considerably higher quality than those later produced

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under the economic sanctions that were imposed after the first Gulf War. After a changeover period, the Iraqi government disendorsed this currency. However, this old currency still circulated in the Kurdish regions of Iraq until it was replaced with the new dinar after the second Gulf War.

New Iraqi dinar

Between October 15, 2003 and January 15, 2004, the Coalition Provisional Authority issued the new Iraqi dinar to "create a single unified currency that is used throughout all of Iraq.

The Hampshire-based Company "De La Rue" printed the New Iraqi dinars, also known as the "Post – Saddam" dinars, in England, in six denominations: 50, 250, 1000, 5000, 10,000 and 25,000 Dinars.

In November of 2004 the new 500–dinar note was issued by the Central Bank of Iraq to facilitate market transactions. The banknotes are beautiful and of "Swiss" quality with many security features rendering them very hard to counterfeit, features include, watermarks, metallic inks, security thread, ultraviolet images and raised lettering.

Value of the new dinar

Iraq has the second largest oil reserves in the Middle East and the largest reserves of natural gas. The new Iraq will be able to take full advantage of exporting these resources with sanctions no longer in place.

As Iraq is welcomed back into the International Community the value of the New Iraqi Dinar should rise. How high? That is what you speculate on when buying Iraqi Dinars! (And nobody dares to predict!)

Marcel Heersema is an online investor who is always looking for the best money making opportunities on the net. For more information go to:

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