

This is neither a factual chronology of Rudolph Giuliani's accomplishments nor a list of his qualifications to be President of the United States. It will also proffer no judgments as to his "character". There's plenty of time for the political assassins from both the right and the left to go after all the candidates and make certain we know, so that we can be perfectly "holier than thou" (despite all of our own shortcomings) where and when they might have stumbled; who they may or may not have slept with; whose limo or yacht or jet may have offered a free ride and how they either didn't do this or did do that when they should or shouldn't have.



These are nothing more than the observations of someone who lived in Manhattan from early 1994 through 1999; the first six years of Rudy's two terms as Mayor of New York, the city he deftly, appropriately and a little arrogantly called "the capital of the world".

My work in the city at the time was of the nature that got us on some special lists and that resulted in nice things happening; like being invited to Gracie Mansion, along with 400 of his closest friends for a wonderful garden party with the dinner music provided by (who else) Yitzhak Pearlman. Rudy has style and it comes naturally.

He is also elegant and well-spoken. You can hear the Brooklyn kid in his accent but you also hear the Jesuits and the law school professors. You notice that Rudy doesn't need notes when he speaks. That he looks you in the eye. The way he must have when he broke crime's grip on New York and cleaned up the fabulous Fulton fish market (not the smell of the fish; just the animals who were terrorizing and controlling the place).

New York City changed dramatically under Rudy Giuliani. There are still people scratching their heads and trying to figure out where all the things he cleaned up went. The reduction in crime was enormous. Criminal activity and its "perps" virtually disappeared in many parts of the city. This is not the kind of "disappeared" we associate with the Generals in Argentina, but they were gone and no one really cared to know how it happened or where they ended up.

The crime-busting had an almost immediate effect: Neighborhoods changed. Places that used to be scary became 24 hour neighborhoods. In Manhattan that's code for streets you can walk on at any hour because there are people around, restaurants and stores open and a general feeling of well-being.

The subway system's ridership increased. Subway cars became clean. Rid of graffiti. Stations were improved. People took the train (subway) day and night. New Year's Eve celebrations in Grand Central station drew thousands of revelers. Times Square changed from no man's land to Disneyland overnight.

Rudy did not do this alone. In fact, a great deal of the credit belonged to Police Commissioner Bill Bratton and therein lies one of the most intriguing aspects of Giuliani's personality.

He brought Bratton from Boston to lead the charge against crime. They established this brilliant, visible and even friendly strategy called "community policing". Cops were everywhere; Auxiliary Police volunteers walked the streets. People and police respected each other. Shows of force were sometimes made to remind people of who was in charge.

One morning at a news conference, Bill Bratton took a little too much credit for the demise of crime in New York. A few mornings later he was the Police Commissioner in LA. The day that happened was the day I recalled something from a high school history book. The phrase is "Enlightened Despot" and I thought it fit our Mayor to a "t". Certain credits others could take, but the line had to be drawn and the boss is the boss and that's how it is.

But think about it: How could anyone make a city with a population larger than many

countries work properly without understanding the need for and the use of power? And Rudy had plenty of political power: It came from every inch of the political spectrum; it crossed party lines, it crossed all racial and religious lines, and while it rankled people like Al Sharpton and a few labor leaders, the vast majority of New Yorkers stood behind Rudy, admired how he did things and liked the benefits ... economic, cultural and global, that accrued to New York.

And so it was, too, with the outrage of September 11, 2001. New York's Mayor jumped into the inferno, eyes wide open; a dynamo balancing the rage of the attacked with the compassion of a huge heart, the courage of a lion and the determination of a great leader; a leader who, on that day, became "America's Mayor".

Some would say he became even more than that. Some would say that he, more than the President, became our rallying point; our focus and our hope in the face of that horror, the loss it brought and the abject sorrow and fierce anger we all felt in its aftermath.

It gives us a sense, I think, of the kind of President he would be. He would be one of those Presidents who is larger than life; in the mold of Roosevelt, Eisenhower and Kennedy. He would be one of those Presidents who would restore American eloquence on the world stage; in the mold even of Jefferson and Lincoln. Communication would be clear and often exhilarating in the mold of Reagan and of Clinton.

Yet despite those comparisons, the surest guarantee is that he would be his own man. It's like this: If we put him in charge, he will assume that we meant it.