NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

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Freddy's Obligation

The Rev. Alfred-Come-Lately, in hiding almost from the moment of the World Trade Center terror attacks, emerged over the weekend to slander Mayor Giuliani.

Recalling Giuliani's unifying presence as the full horror of what had happened began to sink in, Al Sharpton on Saturday said: "We would have come together if Bozo was mayor."

We?

Where was Sharpton when the heavy lifting was going on?

Nowhere to be seen, that's where.

And no surprise.

The contrast between the unrelenting heroism of New York City's uniformed forces and the crabbed, self-serving opportunism of the boy preacher grown to malign adulthood would have been much too illuminating for his career to bear.

But Saturday, in the safety of his Harlem headquarters and with the immediate crisis passed, he was back in action.

Speaking with mayoral candidate Fernando Ferrer looking on impassively, Sharpton brought to mind the words of Joseph Welch, to Sen. Joe McCarthy, during that famous congressional hearing back in 1954:

"Have you no sense of decency, sir? At long last, have you left no sense of decency?"

Regarding Al Sharpton, of course not.

Not then. Not now. Not ever.

But the same question might fairly be asked of Ferrer, inasmuch as he has been joined at the hip with Sharpton for several weeks now.

The alliance was enormously distressful *before* Sept. 11.

Now it is intolerable.

Ferrer, who is a fundamentally decent person, stands a good chance of becoming mayor of New York City. So, certainly, it's not too soon for him to start *acting* mayoral.

The Bronx borough president has been downplaying the more divisive elements of his anti-cop, post-Diallo "Two New Yorks" campaign — not that he had much choice, given the events of Sept. 11 and immediately thereafter.

But his presence as a prop in Sharpton's Saturday performance sent a clear message: "Two New Yorks" lives, in all its malicious mendacity.

Ferrer needs to stop it.

If he doesn't, what remains of the primary campaign *alone* could rend the city, even as it claws its way out of the ash heap left by Osama bin Laden.

Whether or not Ferrer is destined to become New York's next mayor, it's time he started acting the part.

Ferrer, in a sense, had a clean slate beginning last Wednesday.

He hasn't passed the point of no return. Not yet, anyway.

An explicit rejection of Sharpton isn't too much to expect, particularly after the latter's "Bozo" characterization.

Anything less foreshadows a meaningful Sharpton presence in a Ferrer administration.

Is New York City ready for *that*?

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