

Who needs to be president when you can give speeches?

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Ralph De La Cruz
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Forget the old phrase. There is no gift when it comes to gab.

Last week, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani got a whipping in the presidential primary in the Sunshine State and immediately dropped out of the race.

OK, so it was humiliating to be trounced in a state you had been telling everyone you'd win. But come on, it was his first real test of the campaign.



Why the urgency to get out?

Word was he was motivated by a concern: A prolonged losing campaign might damage his value as a speaker.

Rudy makes about \$100,000 per speaking gig. Salon.com reported that in 2006 and half of 2007, he made \$9.2 million in speaker's fees.

Hey, can't fault the man for not wanting to upend that gravy train.

No wonder Rudy often seemed like a reluctant candidate. Even if he had won Florida, and the Republican nomination, and the presidency, he would've had to take a pay cut — if only for a while.

Bill Clinton has supposedly made about \$40 million in speaking fees since the end of his presidency. According to *Fortune* magazine, Clinton gets about \$250,000 per chat.

Imagine what a Bill-and-Hill show could command if Hillary got into the White House. Particularly if she were accused, indicted or put in jail.

Because criminal, immoral or unethical behavior pays big-time on the speaking circuit. Which just might explain why Bill is making some serious bank these days. If the man decided to shill for a condom or cigar company, he could get Oprah rich.

The notoriety dividend has certainly been very, very good for preternaturally pumped Jose Canseco. In 2005, he picked up \$35,000 from the University of Florida speaker's bureau for a 20-minute talk plugging his book, *Juiced: Wild Times, Rampant 'Roids, Smash Hits, and How Baseball Got Big*.

Last year, disgraced former Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez talked at UF for a cool \$40,000.

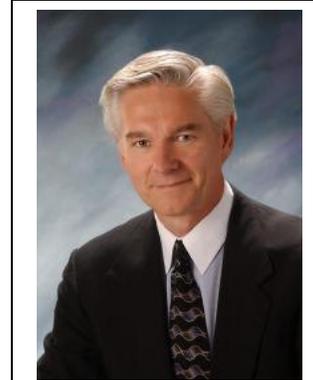
Students heckled both men.

Who knows? Maybe these fees are the price we pay to be able to confront the jailed, shamed or dishonored.

Other generations had Dale Carnegie and Buckminster Fuller. We have Michael Milken, the Wall Street financier-turned-philanthropist who spent 10 years in jail for securities fraud. He was forced to pay about \$1 billion in fines and settlements — and is still worth \$2 billion.

Milken gets between \$75,000 and \$125,000 per speech.

"If you've got a chance to hear from a guy who's made \$3 or \$4 billion, wouldn't it be worth \$75,000?" asked Ohio agent/accountant/business speaker Gary Zeune. "It's not how much something costs that's important. It's the value you get from it."



Gary Zeune, CPA
Added by Zeune

Zeune, who has a Web site called The Pros & The Cons, offers speakers who are either successful professionals or successful convicts.

"They have to meet two qualifications," Zeune said of the "cons." "One, they have to be out of jail. And two, they have to be willing to admit what they did and take responsibility for it."



Fred Shapiro
Added by
Gary Zeune

There's a healthy appetite these days for the cons. They generate about 70 percent of Zeune's business.

"Fred Shapiro defrauded nearly every major financial institution in the city of Philadelphia to the tune of \$8.6M," read the tease for one of Zeune's clients.

"Mark Morze committed the most infamous fraud of the 1980s, the ZZZZ Best Carpet Cleaning fraud," is how another client is touted.

I asked Zeune if he had any "con" clients in South Florida.

"Not yet," he said.

Hey, I know some politicians ... if he's willing to lower his standards.

Ralph De La Cruz can be reached at rdelacruz@sun-sentinel.com or 954-356- 4727.



Mark Morze
Added by Gary Zeune