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George W. Bush Painted Former House Speaker John Boehner as a Parting Gift— and Now It's His Official Portrait

The painting will hang in the Speaker's Lobby of Congress at the Capitol.

Eileen Kinsella, September 13, 2019



AUSTIN, TX - MARCH 15: John Boehner speaks onstage at Convergence Keynote: Kevin Murphy and John Boehner during the 2019 SXSW Conference and Festivals at Hilton Austin on March 15, 2019 in Austin, Texas. (Photo by Nicola Gell/Getty Images for SXSW)

A surprising and intriguing tidbit has emerged from a recent interview with John Boehner, the former speaker of the United States House of Representatives. It turns out that Boehner asked former US president-turned-artist George W. Bush to paint his portrait as he was leaving his Congressional post in 2015.

According to Barstool Sports journalist Matthew Cothron, who conducted the interview with Kate Mannion, the portrait will hang in a portion of the Capitol building called the Speaker's Lobby of Congress, a marble-floored room outside the House Chamber where representatives come and go and meet with constituents.



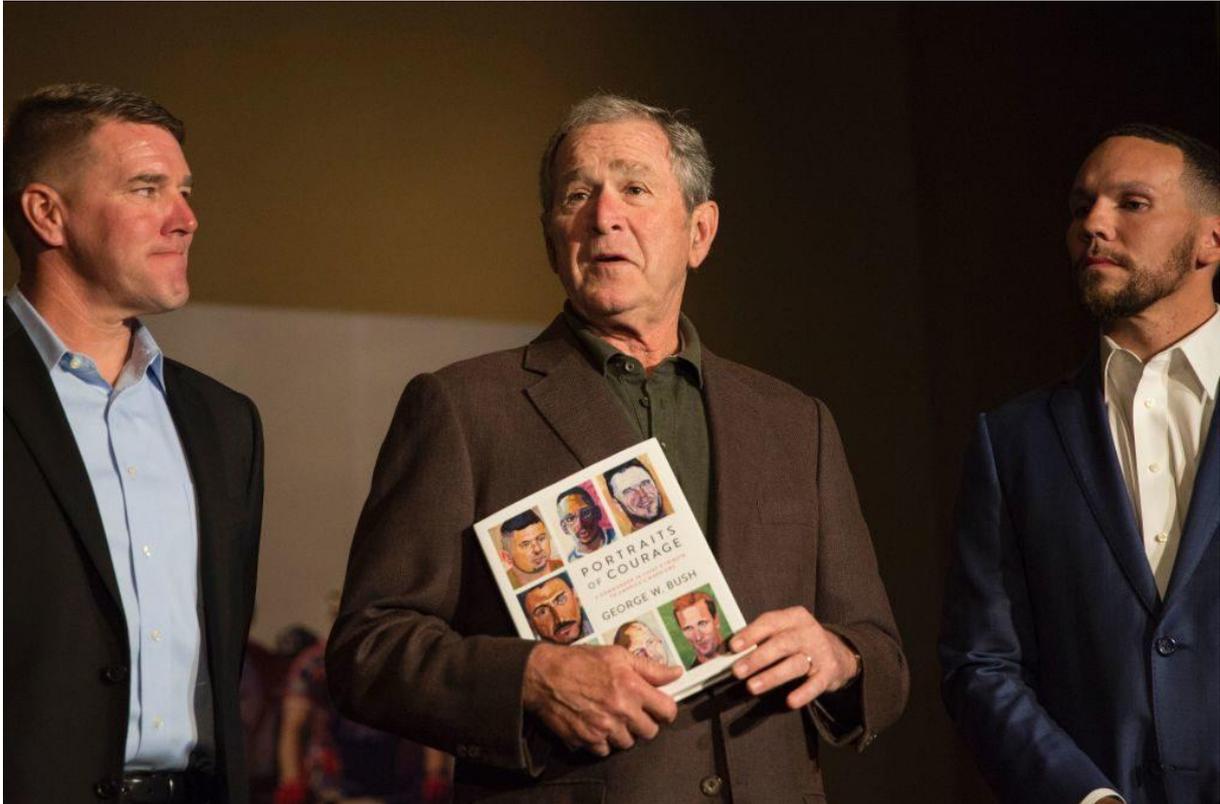
Image via Uncle Chaps/Matthew Cothron on Twitter.

Cothron tweeted:

“Me and [@katebarstool](#) interviewed John Boehner yesterday. He let us see something that no one else had before. When he was leaving the position of Speaker of the House, he asked President George W Bush to paint his official portrait. Here it is.”

In a [reply](#), Kate Mannion noted that Boehner initially wasn't too pleased with the portrait. When Bush sent him a text of the finished painting, he was surprised to see the former president had given him all white hair. “And so a few hours later W sent this updated salt n pepper version,” Mannion wrote.

Cothron [said](#) Bush did not intend for the painting to become Boehner's official portrait, but Boehner was swiftly convinced.



Former US President George W. Bush holds up a print copy of his “Portraits of Courage” exhibition catalog as he stands with several of the veterans he painted. Photo: Laura Buckman/AFP/Getty Images.

An admitted “art agnostic” for much of his life, Bush—who served as the 43rd US president from 2000 to 2008—initially kept his painting hobby under wraps. But in early 2013, the hacker Guccifer unceremoniously leaked the former president’s handiwork to the world. (For that and other related offenses, he was ultimately sentenced to four years in prison in 2016.) The paintings, which included self portraits of Bush in the shower, received a surprisingly (but not universally) warm reception.

More of Bush’s art will soon be on view in DC. He has a solo show opening October 7 at the Kennedy Center featuring 66 portraits of veterans who have served in the US armed forces since the attacks of September 11, 2001. Called “Portraits of Courage,” the exhibition was previously on view at the Presidential Library and Museum in Dallas and comprises portraits Bush made of veterans who were injured in the so-called War on Terror, the global conflict surrounding the Iraq War, which his administration notoriously played a role in instigating. (The New Yorker dubbed the works “Painted Atonements.”)

Bush began painting after he left the White House, taking weekly lessons to improve his technique. He joked with his art teacher: “There’s a Rembrandt trapped in this body—your job is to find it.”

Cothron did not immediately respond to request for comment.

