

**THE LATE-NIGHT PRESIDENTIAL STRATEGY: A HISTORICAL REVIEW  
OF THE FIRST 40 YEARS OF PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN USE  
OF LATE-NIGHT TALK SHOW APPEARANCES**

by

Marie Jackson

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of  
The University of Utah  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Communication

The University of Utah

December 2010

Copyright © Marie Jackson 2010

All Rights Reserved

# The University of Utah Graduate School

## STATEMENT OF DISSERTATION APPROVAL

The dissertation of Marie Jackson  
has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

Nickieann Fleener, Chair 4-22-2010  
Date Approved

Glen Feighery, Member 4-22-2010  
Date Approved

Tim Larson, Member 4-22-2010  
Date Approved

Tom Huckin, Member 4-22-2010  
Date Approved

David Vergobbi, Member 4-22-2010  
Date Approved

and by Ann Darling, Chair of  
the Department of Communication

and by Charles A. Wight, Dean of The Graduate School.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study chronicles the first 40 years of appearances by presidential candidates on late-night talk television beginning with Nixon and Kennedy in 1960 to Bush and Gore in 2000. This dissertation exposes a historical trend in presidential campaigning and uncovers an increasing use of late-night talk television as a political communication forum. Media use and influence have evolved from campaign to campaign and by the 2000 campaign, late-night talk show appearances were seemingly obligatory.

Presidential campaigns are important to the governance of our country and our democratic society. Through these elections, the authority of the government is given by the approval of the American people. The quality of any particular election is a function of the interplay among candidates, media and voters. The media's role in this process is the conduit disseminating information, which voters learn about their candidate. The changing media environment, where television has become the primary source of political information and changes in how news covers elections, has influenced candidate strategies creating the use of alternative media venues.

In today's mass media culture, voters seem to want more than just speeches and policy papers from their candidates. They want to get to know them as people. Media uses have shifted towards the age of image politics with the consequence of millions of voters make their decisions about candidates based on personal characteristics and

likeability. Research has shown that personal qualities or “likeability” are stronger predictors of voter choices than issues or ideology.

Candidates are now opting to use alternative avenues like late-night talk shows to communicate their messages and sell their likeable images. These shows have become a more efficient means to an end. Today image politics dominate and entertainment television genres are a significant factor in election outcomes. Entertainment shows may be useful to sell a candidate’s image but the benefit to the democratic process is debatable.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
CHAPTERS	
1. LATE-NIGHT PRESIDENTIAL STRATEGY	
Introduction.....	1
Methodology.....	6
Research Questions .....	11
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction .....	13
Presidential Election Television News Coverage.....	16
Political Television Advertising.....	22
Political Television Debates.....	27
Political Imaging.....	32
Politics and Entertainment Programming.....	37
Late-Night Talk Television.....	40
Conclusion.....	48
3. KENNEDY AND NIXON, THE FIRST LATE-NIGHT STRATEGY APPEARANCES	
Introduction/Election Overview.....	51
The Candidates.....	53
Late-Night Television Candidate Appearances.....	56
Conclusion.....	72
4. THE IN BETWEEN YEARS – NO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE LATE-NIGHT APPEARANCES	
Introduction.....	73
Talk Show/Entertainment Program Appearances Between 1960 and 1964 Campaigns.....	74

1964 Election Overview.....	81
Talk Show/Entertainment Program Appearances Between 1964 and 1968 Campaigns.....	83
1968 Election Overview.....	85
Talk Show/Entertainment Program Appearances Between 1968 and 1972 Campaigns.....	87
1972 Election Overview.....	90
Talk Show/Entertainment Program Appearances Between 1972 and 1976 Campaigns.....	91
1976 Election Overview.....	91
Talk Show/Entertainment Program Appearances Between 1976 and 1980; 1980 and 1984 Campaigns.....	93
1980 Election Overview.....	93
1984 Election Overview.....	95
Talk Show/Entertainment Program Appearances Between 1984 and 1988 Campaigns.....	96
1988 Election Overview.....	98
Conclusion.....	100
5. 1992 ELECTION AND THE SAXOPHONE	
Introduction/Election Overview.....	103
The Candidates.....	107
Late-Night Television Candidate Appearances.....	113
Polls.....	126
Conclusion.....	127
6. 1996 ELECTION AND THE ELDER STATESMAN	
Introduction/Election Overview.....	130
The Candidates.....	135
Late-Night Television Candidate Appearances.....	139
Conclusion.....	144
7. ELECTION 2000 – BEFORE FLORIDA THERE WAS AL AND DUBYA	
Introduction/Election Overview.....	147
The Candidates.....	153
Late-Night Television Candidate Appearances.....	158
Conclusion.....	195
8. LATE-NIGHT STRATEGY – CONCLUSION	
Summary.....	199

Conclusion.....	200
Changing Media Environment.....	201
Election News Coverage.....	202
Image versus Substance.....	203
Late-Night Talk and Candidate Likeability.....	204
Reaching the Apolitical Audiences.....	211
Financial Benefits.....	213
Study Limitations and Future Opportunities for Study.....	217

APPENDIX

A.    CHRONOLOGY OF LATE-NIGHT TALK SHOWS, HOST AND NETWORK.....	220
B.    TRANSCRIPTS OF LATE-NIGHT TALK SHOW APPEARANCES.....	222
C.    NOTES FROM TED ROGERS, NIXON’S RADIO AND TV TECHNICAL ADVISER.....	335
REFERENCES.....	340



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have reached completion without the support of a number of people to whom I would like to express my genuine thanks.

First, my thanks to committee chair Professor Nickieann Fleener, for her continued support, encouragement, patience, assistance and friendship throughout all my graduate studies. It was a project from her Historical Research Methods class that initially inspired this study and her continued enthusiasm that kept me going. Sincere thanks are expressed to Professor Timothy Larson, who convinced me to seek my doctorate in the first place and who has been a pivotal support in my graduate work. I am also extremely grateful to Professors Glen Feighery, Thomas Huckin and David Vergobbi for their participation as committee members and unlimited support.

I must also extend my appreciation to my friends and family who not only supported me through the years but also have genuinely seemed impressed by my endeavors to obtain this education. Thank you to a special lady, Betty Robertson, who initially sponsored my education through her scholarship and has become a cherished friend. Amy Klug, who over the years helped me with my children, cheered me on in addition to helping edit some of my first graduated papers and been a cherished friend. There is my posse of girlfriends who had no clue what I was doing but persuaded me to keep going and finish anyway. And there is my family, my brothers, and sister and sister-in-laws who are successful and educated individuals in their own right and actually

thought it was impressive of me to accomplish such an undertaking. I've impressed my siblings!

Last, but far from least and above all, I am indebted to my husband Doug and sons, Zach and Alex. These three provided the love and encouragement I needed to fulfill this goal. Two young boys could not have been more patient with my work and never complained about me being too busy. I hope one day they will truly appreciate the importance of education. This in no way shape or form could have happened without the support from my husband Doug. He is due my deepest gratitude and love for picking me up and cheering me on at the most discouraging moments. Not only was he continually supportive but he always helped me keep this project in perspective as a thought provoker and editor. He was especially helpful to work through my brain-fart of words that seemed to happen after a long day of writing. Without these three guys nothing I would accomplish would matter. Because of their support, this accomplishment has been made even more special, and for that, words will never be able to say how much I appreciate and love them.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **THE LATE-NIGHT PRESIDENTIAL STRATEGY**

#### **Introduction**

To remain healthy, a democratic political system must focus and use its energy efficiently to solve its problems while sustaining the support of its people. Presidential elections are, in theory and in practice, important vehicles for generating both problem-solving energy and citizen support. They are significant beyond the usual preoccupation with strategy, image, polls, politics and momentum. They invite us, the citizens, to participate in presidential politics and be part of the democratic political process (Buchanan, 1996).

The quality of any particular election is a function of the interplay among candidates, media and voters. Media organizations control the 'democracy megaphone' and are the primary communication channels linking actual and prospective leaders to their constituents. Therefore, the news media should usefully address the political information needs of the mass public. However, we have found that television news coverage is focused primarily on ratings rather than helping voters make informed decisions. The use of traditional news media then becomes consequential for voters to obtain political information and ultimately, influence the democratic process (Buchanan, 1996).

Traditionally, politicians relied heavily on news coverage and political advertising to communicate their messages. Interestingly, as the literature reveals, no agreement exists among scholars regarding the relative effectiveness of these two primary political tactics. Because of the ambiguity of these two traditional media strategies, candidates have looked toward alternative approaches for media exposure to communicate their messages (Hallin, 1992).

With the challenges of the changing television news industry, such as fragmented audiences and the large number of media outlets, it is difficult for candidates to reach voters. This diversity in media has left few channels that feature extensive campaign coverage, implying that only a citizen willing to invest the time and effort to seek out information can become well-informed. Those voters not invested at this level, the vast majority, are clearly disadvantaged by current media coverage patterns. They are thus more vulnerable to candidate manipulation and less likely to be served by traditional media avenues. To this end, political campaign teams are constantly trying to maneuver through the media to communicate and promote their candidate's campaign agendas to voters (Buchanan, 1996).

It is useful to remember that since the time of George Washington, politicians throughout history have created their own unique ways to communicate with the public and deal with the media. Andrew Jackson stocked his "kitchen cabinet" with various newspaper editors and set standards for influencing public policy through the press. FDR was also masterful at manipulating the media and has been called the "greatest managing editor of all time" (The love-hate relationship between politicians and the news media, 1994, p. 5). He circumvented the press by creating his legendary "fireside chats." More

recently, we have seen presidential candidates like Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton, Bob Dole, George Bush, and Al Gore supplement mainstream news media coverage by appearing on late-night entertainment programming such as *Late-Night with David Letterman* and the *Tonight Show*.

Political candidates and their strategists have long understood the media's ability to set agendas and influence public opinion. Considerable energy is devoted in determining how to best use the media to create a positive image of their candidates. Media uses have shifted towards the age of image politics and for better or worse, millions of voters make their decisions about candidates based on personal characteristics and likeability. This focus on personality is also the predominant emphasis of late-night entertainment talk shows rather than discussion of public policy issues (Schultz, 2004).

The relationship among the media, politics and the public has constantly been evolving, making political communication a lively area of communication study. As media uses and television programming have evolved, so have presidential media campaign tactics. The connection and evolution of the two are creating new avenues of research to explore by examining these media changes and uses by political candidates. New tactics created through media use are blurring the lines between news, entertainment and presidential politics and generating implications for democratic electoral outcomes.

The purpose of this research is to explore the birth of late-night talk show television programming and chronicle its relationship with political campaigning. Late-night talk shows are considered a subgenre of talk show programming with a celebrity host chatting with one or more guests. The late-night talk show genre is based on friendly encounters between the guests and host. This type of programming became popular on

network television in the late 1950s with celebrity talk show host Steve Allen and then in the 1960s when *The Tonight Show* became the flagship talk program of NBC (Timberg, 2002).

In addition, this research will take a historical look at how this relationship has developed into an influential and seemingly mandatory venue for national political candidates as part of their “packaged” images. This research will chronicle the evolution of the use of late-night talk television as a perpetuating presidential campaign strategy and document those general election candidates who have used it as a campaign communication vehicle.

During its first decades the television news industry reflected a clear separation between the news and entertainment divisions of the networks. In the 1950s, Edward R. Murrow almost predicted our current state of affairs with the media noting that broadcast news was “an incompatible combination of show business, advertising, and news.” Since then, television entertainment and news have become one televised blur while the ideals of journalism and relationships between the news media and politics have become part of a dynamic evolution (Adatto, 1990).

The past two decades of presidential elections have seen the use of late-night talk show television become an important venue for campaigns. A survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that 28 % of the general public and 47 % of Americans under age 30 rely on late-night talk show programming for campaign information (Pew Research Center, 2000). Other survey data revealed that as many as 25 % of Americans get a portion of their campaign news from the monologues of these shows (Abelman, 1998). The survey also reports that nearly 1 in 10 Americans said they

“regularly pick up information about the presidential campaign from talk show hosts Jay Leno and David Letterman” (Aucoin, 2000, p. 36). With this type of influence on Americans, late-night television talk show appearances are becoming as critical to national candidates’ election strategy as their speeches, rallies and debates (Purnick, 2000).

The tactics of political campaigning have changed over time by the use of this programming as a forum for image building and as a campaign supplement to traditional news reports and political advertising. The steady increase in late-night talk show coverage of national politics over the past several presidential election cycles strongly suggests that, whether we like it or not, this particular blend of politics and entertainment is likely to continue in the future.

The distinction between television entertainment and news has been minimized over the years as presidential hopefuls have utilized late-night talk show appearances to turn viewers into votes. It seems mandatory today for U.S. presidential candidates to make appearances on these programs to be successful. These nontraditional venues for campaign appearances are allowing candidates to present themselves as likeable, in a relaxed yet controlled environment, while reaching a broad range of voters (Collins, 2000).

As with any historical review, we must consider that “no human practice ever stands still and all demand a historical perspective, which uncovers the dynamics of change over time” (Tosh, 2002, p. 12). In the current phase of political research, attention has focused on how media are used to influence the political process by using techniques that are familiar to audiences over time. In particular, television has assumed

a place in culture that allows researchers to investigate how real-world issues, such as politics, become “packaged” like products.

The first use of such alternative television programming by presidential candidates was in 1960 with appearances on the popular late-night talk show, *The Tonight Show with Jack Paar*. The political role of late-night talk show has become the product of several forces including the changing structure of network news, the merger between entertainment and politics and the growing focus on candidate personality over issues. This television genre has become an important vehicle used by presidential candidates to reach voters. Because these programs have evolved over the years as an important factor in our political process, they offer an interesting and necessary area to research.

### Methodology

This study aims to contribute to historical journalism literature as a perspective regarding television influences on political campaigning beyond paid commercials, debates and traditional news. It may also be valuable to political campaign literature, the strategic process of political campaigning and the changing use of the media by politicians. The purpose of this research project is to chronicle the evolution of presidential candidate use of television late-night talk shows.

Every aspect of our culture, behavior and beliefs is the outcome of a process over time. No human practice ever stands still and all require some kind of historical perspective (Tosh, 2002). When we study the past, we learn about what happened and posit about why things occurred that assists us in understanding how we arrived in the place we are in the present.



This dissertation offers an exploration and historical review of presidential candidate use of late-night talk television that reflects a shift in television and presidential political campaign tactics. The primary aim of the study is to give a historical account related to the appearances of presidential candidates on talk television beginning with the first appearances in 1960. The research chronicles the evolution of the presidential candidate appearances on late-night talk television beginning with the 1960 campaign to the 2000 election.

The timeline for this study has been selected for a number of reasons. First, it follows other political and communication academic scholarship that examines presidential elections between 1960 and 2000 such as effects of turnout on partisan outcomes (Marinez & Gill, 2005); issue convergence (Sigelman & Buell, 2004); the press and presidential elections (Liebovich, 2001); style in presidential debates (Johnson, 2005) and polling in presidential elections (McGillivray & Scammon, 2001).

Second, after the 2000 election the atmosphere of television late-night talk shows and the use of entertainment television for presidential campaigning changed. It was during the 2004 election that similar yet more satirical genres on cable programming began to garner popularity and strong ratings. For example, satirical talk show genre programs shows such as *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report with Steve Colbert* were gaining recognition by the mass media as an influential force in voter perception.

During the 2004 election these shows gained notoriety with Jon Stewart as a featured guest on *Fox News with Bill O'Reilly* on September 12, 2004, and CNN's *Crossfire* on October 14, 2004 to discuss the influence *The Daily Show* was having on

the 2004 election (Foxnews.com). In addition, it was not until the 2004 election that the first presidential candidate appeared on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*; John Kerry appeared August 24, 2004. The scholarship studying the 2004 election has focused more on these satirical cable programs rather than the late-night network talk shows that are the primary inspiration for this study.

Lastly, 1960 designates the first appearance of presidential candidates on late-night television and 2000 is the last election that scholarship concentrates on this programming before moving on to another subgenre. According to Tuchman (1981) when researching history it is important to know when to stop, stating, “one must stop before one has finished; otherwise one will never stop and never finish” (p. 20). Therefore, for the reasons previously stated it seems prudent to keep within the 1960 to 2000 election timeline. Each election will be evaluated and noted for any nontraditional media use during the general election campaign.<sup>1</sup> The media use considered is for general election party candidates only and not during primary races.

Once media uses have been reviewed for each election, specific attention will be given to the candidates’ appearances on talk show programming. Each of the individual appearances on these programs will be reviewed for topic discussion and candidate’s performance. An assessment of topics discussed and review of appearances on talk television will first be noted for each candidate.

Because of the overabundance of entertainment talk show programming that has aired over the past 40 years, this research will focus specifically on nationally broadcast talk television programming that was utilized during the elections. Late-night talk programming is generally considered any program of interview-talk format that airs after

---

<sup>1</sup> Traditional media use being considered political advertising, political news coverage and debates.

late news or during designated market time periods. The late-night time periods for the top 20 Nielsen major market areas is 11:35 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. on the East and West Coast market daypart time-zones and 10:35 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. in the Central and Mountain daypart time-zones (Nielsenmedia.com).

Strictly focusing on late-night talk show programs allows me to survey an area where viewers get political information from sources that are not intended to inform but is first and foremost for entertainment. The two most dominant entertainment programs during this time period were *The Tonight Show* and *The Late-night with David Letterman*. *The Tonight Show* is the oldest late-night entertainment program, having begun in 1957 with Jack Paar as host followed by Johnny Carson as host from 1962-1992 and Jay Leno since 1992. *The Late Show with David Letterman* aired from 1982-1993 on NBC following *The Tonight Show* and has aired on CBS since 1993 with David Letterman as the constant host (Appendix A). These two popular late-night talk show programs have consistently garnered the highest ratings, reaching approximately five million viewers per show compared to CNN's *Larry King Show*, which has about half a million (Meroney, 2000).

In addition to *Late Night* and *The Tonight Show*, *The Arsenio Hall Show* is of interest and is included in this study. A late-night talk show airing in the same time-period, *The Arsenio Hall Show* has been specifically noted several times for hosting Bill Clinton during the 1992 general election. Though there are numerous other daytime talk shows, this research is interested only in the late-night programming time period because of its diverse viewership and growing audience. As a subgenre of talk shows, it also holds to a unique style and audience compared to daytime and morning talk shows.

Not all political candidates who appeared on late-night programming will be included. Only those presidential candidates nominated by the three primary parties, Republican, Democrat and third party organization nominees are considered. It will be these candidates' appearances on the late-night talk shows that will be the focus of this research.

In addition to analyzing the appearances of candidates, media coverage of the appearances will be reviewed. An examination of the newspaper articles and broadcast coverage regarding each appearance will be evaluated. Coverage will be assessed for overall topic content as well as positive and/or negative commentary. A review of major market and national newspapers and broadcast media will be analyzed for stories that appeared within one week after each appearance of the candidates.

Lastly, a review of public opinion polls taken within a one-month period before and after each candidate's appearance will reflect any changes in public opinion of the candidate and his agenda. Polls regarding the likeability of the candidate as well as the primary campaign topics will be analyzed for differences before and after the appearances. A review of the polls can offer only a possible correlation but not causation of the appearances in opinion polls.

This research will utilize both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are those documents that have not been duplicated in significant quantities for public dissemination such as actual video and transcripts of the late-night talk show television programs in which the candidates appeared. For the purposes of this research, other primary source materials include those that were originally printed and made public such

as newspaper and other publication articles as well as other publicized reports on the candidates during the time of their appearances.

Secondary sources will come from collections of scholarship such as essays, general histories in journals, books, bibliographies and other articles. In addition, a historical review of Gallup polls will be used in relationship to the candidate appearances. Though both primary and secondary sources contribute to the historical research process, the primary sources such as program transcripts are the foundation for this story.

### Research Questions

This project intends to examine the appearances of presidential candidates on television throughout history looking to answer the following questions:

1. Since Kennedy and Nixon first appeared on the Jack Paar Show in 1960, what other presidential candidates have appeared on late-night television talk shows between 1960 and 2000 elections?
2. What presidential elections, if any, between 1960 and 2000 did not include the use of late-night talk show television?
3. How has the use of late-night talk television evolved into an enduring presidential campaign vehicle between 1960 and 2000?
4. What type of press coverage did each of the candidates' appearances garner on national television newscasts and in major market newspapers?
5. Did the candidates' poll ratings change after their appearances?

## Chapters

The first chapter covers the introduction to the research and background of the issue. The second chapter covers literature within the field of media political campaign use including; political television news reporting, political television advertising, political television debates, political image, politics and entertainment programming and late-night talk television. The third chapter chronicles the use of late-night talk television in the 1960 election between Kennedy and Nixon. Chapter 4 discusses the years from 1964 – 1988, when no late-night talk television appearances by official party presidential candidates. The chapter will note the use alternative programming by those politicians who eventually became their party's nominee. Chapter 5 focuses on the media uses during the 1992 election, including presidential candidates, Clinton, Perot, and Bush Sr. Chapter 6 covers the 1996 election between Clinton and Dole, and Chapter 7 the 2000 election between G.W. Bush, Gore and Ralph Nadar. The last chapter outlines the findings and implications derived from the research, considers study limitations and looks towards future possible research within this area.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

In 1952, television networks brought the sights and sounds of a presidential election to their first national audience (Waltzer, 1966). This year witnessed the first broadcasting of national conventions and the advent of the televised spot commercials in politics. However, television ownership in the United States was not widespread during the 1952 election, with only 51 % of voters reporting they used television as a medium for acquiring political information (Waltzer, 1966). Additionally, only 36 % of Americans claimed that television was their most *important* presidential campaign information source.

The 1960 election marked another important turning point in the role of television in presidential election campaigns (Dover, 1994). It occurred after a decade of dramatic growth in the ownership and use of television. By 1960, when television ownership became more universal, reliance on television for campaign information dramatically increased (Asher, 1988).

In contrast to the first televised campaign in 1952, television usage for campaign information in 1960 surpassed that of all media, as 87 % of voters reported using it as a primary source of information (Asher, 1992). The 1960 election was a new beginning in

American presidential political campaigning and a time of change in relationships between the media and politicians (Liebovich, 1998). This newfound reliance on television as a source of information about presidential campaigns by voters brought about changes in voter media usage patterns (Asher, 1988).

Not only did television become a consequential factor in the 1960 election, but it also established itself as the primary vehicle of information in presidential politics. Since then, electronic reporting of major political events has become the norm, with television becoming the major instrument of political communication. Research regarding political communication reveals that television exposure intensifies the efforts by political parties and politicians and has become an important influence on the American political system (Waltzer, 1966). While these changes keep evolving, Americans have become spectators of national politics as they watch the news portray an edited reality (McCombs & Shaw, 1977).

After 1960, television became the medium that allowed politicians to make an emotional connection with people. Television has a pervasive impact of the visual element. This visual impact emphasizes personality and allows a politician the opportunity to manufacture an image that enables people to get to know the politician as a person. Today the political environment perpetuates the idea of emotional selling the “same way a movie star can because of their looks, their personality, their charisma, their power” (Petersen, 2004, p. 2).

Just like all other events in the continuum of history, the 1960s brought about change between the media and politics. In addition to the changing relationships between the press and politics, newspapers experienced a transformation in the 1960s.



Many died because of outdated labor policies, aging print facilities, and the rising competition of television. To compete with the timeliness of television, newspapers frequently interpreted events of the day, telling readers why the day's news occurred as much as who, what, when, where, and how. Many newspapers turned away from political news altogether, preferring to emphasize features and entertainment (Liebovich, 1998). Such changes in the media continually positioned television as the primary vehicle for political communication.

In addition, the nature of the media industry itself, television in particular, changed drastically. Cable began carrying TV signals to more and more sections of the country that had not been able to receive signals earlier. By the 1970s, television began to transform from a three-network monopoly to a cable industry. News cable networks were being added in the '80s that focused on political issues and activities. This rapid change and new intermix between the press, the presidency, and elections is continually being analyzed by political strategists (Liebovich, 1998).

With the proliferation of 24-hour news networks, tabloid news organizations, and the Internet, viewers have multiple news choices to view the world of politics and obtain election information. Since the 1960 campaign, presidential candidates are finding they must communicate using traditional and nontraditional methods to get their messages out (Pfau, Jaeho, & Chong, 2001).

Not only have the media changed but also have the mindsets of Americans and their ideas about the media and politics (Liebovich, 1998). Along with this change is the perception that Americans have become more cynical towards the newsperson. A Louis Harris poll of 3,004 adults, commissioned by the Center for Media and Public Affairs in

November 1996, found that 42 % felt that newsmen were more arrogant than most other Americans. Additionally, 31 % thought journalists were more cynical, 33 % found them less compassionate, 14 % said they were more biased, and 20 % said they were less honest while 52 % felt that the media abused the First Amendment (AP, December 4, 1996).

Research regarding political communication considers three major shifts during the twentieth century. Initially, the mass media were regarded as having considerable power to shape opinion and belief. During the second stage, 1945-1960, mass media were regarded primarily as forms that would reinforce existing beliefs, but were thought to have little effect on initial attitudes or opinion change. The third stage, from 1960 to 1999, involves the ways in which media shape the image of candidates and the way voters respond to the images and agendas set forth by the media used by political candidates (Hanson and Maxcy, 1999).

#### Presidential Election Television News Coverage

The power of the pen and the press is conventional wisdom that goes back hundreds of years. However, looking over the period 1960 to 2000 a couple of primary issues have emerged with political news reporting that have influenced presidential campaign strategists to look for alternative media opportunities for their candidates. First, according to researchers Benoit, Hansen, and Stein (2003), many people tend to assume that voters learn about the presidential candidates and their positions on issues from the news. Their research contends that although the news does inform voters about candidates, people do not learn much about the issues. These factors limit the importance of traditional news as a source of political campaign information.

These investigators note that the presidential campaign is but one topic among many in the news. The trend in recent years has been for the news to devote less time to covering the presidential campaign than in the past. A study by Hallin (1992) reveals this trend and notes that between 1968-1988, the length of a typical political news story decreased by about 20 %. This study found that network television news<sup>2</sup> decreased the length of news stories from 43 seconds during the 1968 presidential campaign to nine seconds in 1989. Additionally, Steele and Barnhurst (1996) revealed the number of political news stories also has dropped by 20 %.

Similarly, Farnsworth and Lichter (2003) conclude that network news coverage of presidential campaigns has declined over time. In 1988, stories discussing the presidential campaign totaled 1116 minutes. By 2000, this had dropped to 805 minutes. Jamieson, Waldman, and Devitt (1998) also reported newspaper coverage of 1996 was 40 % less than in 1992. These studies uncover a steady decline in the amount of coverage the news is devoting towards presidential campaigns. Other studies of media coverage, Merriam and Makower (1988), and Sabato (1991), also indicate that the overall number of stories covered by the media has dropped.

Hallin (1992) posits the change in campaign news coverage is part of a broader change in television journalism. He hypothesizes three plausible explanations for the changing environment.<sup>3</sup> The first has to do with the technical evolution of television, the

---

<sup>2</sup> Network news being reviewed includes ABC, NBC and CBS news coverage of presidential elections.

<sup>3</sup> First, technology developed which made it easier to produce highly complex modern news stories. Television news of the 1960s and early 1970s seemed much more “primitive,” dull, and difficult to follow. Second, political divisions widened in the '60s and '70s, and a “credibility gap” over Vietnam was followed by Watergate; the old forms of reporting no longer seemed adequate. Following the 1968 and 1972 campaigns, journalists often sounded alarms about the danger that image-making candidates were manipulating the media. Third, a change in economics of the industry was evolving. In the early 1960s, CBS, NBC, and ABC expanded their evening news broadcasts from 15 minutes to half an hour, followed

technical culture and a television aesthetic. A second factor is the weakening of political consensus and authority in the years of Vietnam and Watergate, “which pushed all of American journalism in the direction of more active reporting” (p. 13). The third possibility for change was the increased competition, which also came at a time when broadcasting was being substantially deregulated, decreasing political pressure that had once motivated the development of news divisions.

A second primary issue concerning the news coverage of presidential campaigns according to Benoit, Hansen and Stein (2003) is that the news media’s coverage of campaigns is notorious for its tendency to focus on “horse race” coverage. Robinson and Sheehan (1983) analyzed television and newspaper coverage of the 1980 campaign from January through October, concluding that

At every level, in every phase, during each and every month, CBS and UPI allocated more news space to competition between the candidates than to any other aspects of the campaign...“Horse race” permeates almost everything the press does in covering elections and candidates...about five of every six campaign stories made some meaningful reference to the competition, but, by comparison, well over half of the same stories made no mention of issues. (p. 148)

Additionally, Just, Crigler and Wallach’s (1990) study of the news media also agrees that television’s news concentrates on the “horse race” aspect of campaigns and that it comes at the expense of reporting on the candidates’ positions on issues. As with previous research, Ridout’s (1993) analysis concurs that “after the debacle of campaign coverage in 1988, at issue was the amount of substantive information versus the time spent on the ‘horse race,’ strategy and campaign events” (p. 712).

---

by the increased competition from cable and independent stations, which along with other economic forces squeezed the networks economically in the 1980s. See Hallin (1992).

Hallin's (1992) study also found that the media tend to frame their coverage of elections as a "horse race." This study found that there was a strong trend in news between 1968-1988 to put greater emphasis on "horse race" coverage than the issues. Television news coverage reflected an "organizing theme of the story focused on 'horse race' themes" (p. 20). This trend continued to the end of the century. Farnsworth and Lichter (2003) reported that "horse race" coverage increased from 58 % of network television stories in 1988 to 71 % in 2000" (p. 51). Problematic to this type of coverage, as Benoit, Hansen, and Stein (2003) posit, is that most people assume that the news informs them about who will make a better president, but what the news is best at is informing them about who is the most efficient campaigner.

Similarly, a study by Mann and Oren (1993) indicates that reporters have become so enamored with poll results that they are in danger of viewing the voting public simply as a demographic mass to be stimulated by ads and messages. Lavrakeas, Trangott, and Miller (1995) also look at some of the problems the media's use of polls has created but offer detailed solutions for reporters and editors in future campaigns. Additionally, Cantril (1991), Asher (1992), and Moore (1995) all examine how the news media use election polls and offer suggestions as to how they should more responsibly use polls in an effort to better serve democracy.

Jamieson, Auletta, and Patterson (1993) posit that pollsters are augurs. What they forecast is victory or defeat. These scholars argue that polls determine how reporters treat the candidates:

Coverage of candidates and their campaigns differs qualitatively depending on their relative standing in the polls. Stories about candidates doing well in polls usually focus on what they are doing correctly – the policy positions, campaign strategies, and personal qualities that put them at the top of the preference

rankings. Coverage of candidates doing badly in polls usually focuses on what they are doing wrong – various factors that put them behind front-runners. (p. 40)

For Adatto (1990), the language of political reporting has been filled with accounts of staging and backdrops, camera angles and scripts, sound bites and spin control, photo opportunities and media gurus. Television news has been so attentive to the way the campaigns constructed images for television that political reporters have begun to sound more like theater critics, reporting more on the stagecraft rather than the substance of politics. According to Addato's study comparing the 1968 presidential election to the 1988 election, by 1988 television news had displaced politics as the focus of coverage.

Images that once formed the background to political events, such as the setting and the stagecraft, now occupied the foreground. In 1968, only 6 % of news reports were devoted to theater criticism compared with 52 % of news coverage in 1988 (Adatto, 1990). This study exposes that the reporters showed the potent visuals as they attempted to avoid the manipulation of it by “deconstructing” the imagery and revealing its deception.

While this type of criticism has been reported on political events, political advertising critiques by television news have also grown more closely intertwined (Kaid, Gobetz, Garner, Leland & Scott, 1993). These scholars reveal that advertising has become the content of television news. According to this study, television political coverage increased the attention given to the candidates' ads by network news. Networks acknowledged the importance of televised political spot ads and ran analysis of local television spots (Reinsch, 1988).

In his comparison study of news coverage between the 1968 and 1988 elections, Adatto (1990) exposes a similar trend in news coverage of political advertising. This study reflects that even though political ads played a prominent role in the 1968 campaign, the networks rarely showed excerpts on the news. During the entire 1968 general election campaign, the evening news programs broadcast only two excerpts from candidates' commercials. By 1988, the number had jumped to 125.

One explanation for this apparent increase in network news emphasis on television ads according to Kaid, Gobetz, Garner, Leland and Scott (1993) may be the ability of the ads to serve as a ready source of video for journalists. Television's need for visuals to use in the construction of each story segment is well known (Berkman & Kitch, 1986; Epstein, 1973; Gans, 1979). Not only do stories about television ads have obvious built-in visual content, but the ads can also serve as visuals for story lines in which the ads themselves play only a minor role.

Political spot ads incorporate another characteristic that may make them particularly good fodder for the news media (Kaid et al., 1993). Political advertising, because of its partisan and adversarial nature, often generates conflict and drama, defining elements of television news. A Patetz and Entman (1991) noted, "reporters and editors want news – defined as conflict, controversy, duplicity, and scandal" (p. 32). The heavy emphasis in the 1988 presidential campaign on negative advertisements and messages was considered ready-made for television news.

As the literature reveals, political news coverage by television changed over those 40 years. The factors of declining coverage and differences in the focus of type of coverage as well as broader concerns of changes in the television news industry are issues

being deliberated by campaign strategists and forcing them to look for alternative media avenues to reach voters.

### Political Television Advertising

In contrast to the amount of news coverage, political advertising has grown over the past 40 years and the amount of campaign dollars that have been allocated to advertising has escalated. Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1994) illustrate that the power of political advertising has been proven repeatedly over the last half century, to the point that \$1 billion was spent in the 2000 presidential election on television advertisements. Advertising enables campaigns to pursue multiple objectives and achieve the fundamental goal of influencing voters. In his study regarding television advertising in election campaigns, West (1994-95) emphasizes that most critiques of political advertising are based on the assumption that television ads are influential in a wide variety of ways.

As a campaign communication tool, political advertising serves many functions for candidates. In particular, research has shown that political advertising can make unknown candidates better known by establishing name identification, can connect the candidate with particular demographic groups, can attract new supporters, stimulate participation in the campaign, help raise money for the candidate and attack the opponent (Devin, 1986; Sabato, 1981). According to Johnston and Kaid (2002), among all of the functions of political television advertising two of the most important functions are helping the candidate define or redefine his or her image and providing a forum where campaign issues can be explained and developed.



Politicians have used television as an avenue for reaching voters through both news reports and political advertising since the early '50s (Atkin, Bowen, Nayman & Sheinkopf, 1973). However, over the past 50 years candidates for elective office have increasingly come to rely on political advertising to reach voters. Beginning with the 1952 campaign, advertising strategists<sup>4</sup> for Eisenhower introduced the concept of “electorate penetration” through television spot advertising techniques (Atkin et al., 1973). This strategy, unlike long-winded speeches that audience could tune out, offered a brief and to-the-point message that was difficult to avoid. Each succeeding election campaign has featured advertising messages with growing sophistication and pervasiveness.

Similarly, Jamieson (1996) notes that political advertising is a major means by which candidates for presidency communicate their messages to voters. By 1980, the half-hour broadcast speech – the norm in 1952 – had been replaced by the 60-second spot television advertisement. These ads enable candidates to build name recognition, frame the questions they view as central to the election, expose their temperaments, talents, and agendas for the future in a favorable light and attack what they perceive as their opponent’s flaws.

Examining political advertising strategies, Atkin, Bowen, Nayman, and Sheinkopf (1973) found that these messages are growing in sophistication and pervasiveness.

Campaign specialists, they contend, have developed a conventional wisdom concerning

---

<sup>4</sup> Rosser Reeves, an advertising executive, in 1952 changed the nature of American politics by introducing the television spot. He developed the idea of a campaign of quick television spots featuring General Eisenhower speaking to the American people on a vast range of issues. He produced 22 spots, each 20 seconds long. See David Halberstam, “How politicians discovered TV; Adman R. Reeves dragged Ike into new medium in 1952,” *Advertising Age*, June 3, 1993.

the effectiveness of political advertising that is positioned within specific tenets. These tenets include the ideas that brief spot ads reach a larger proportion of the electorate; the greater the frequency of candidate ads, the greater the level of exposure and attention among voters; frequency of presentation is more important than quality of presentation. Patterson and McClure (1976) maintain that advertisements are carefully crafted to make the candidate's message favorably remembered by the viewer. Although the advertisements are brief, their frequent repetition aids learning.

Early research by Patterson and McClure (1976) contends that voters learn issue information from television advertisements but not from television news. However, almost 20 years later Zhao and Chaffee's (1995) study disagrees with this research finding that candidate advertising was not a significant predictor of issue knowledge. Additionally, it contends that the attention a person pays to campaign news on television does "indeed enhance the likelihood of acquiring political issue information... and clearly contradicts one major conclusion of Patterson and McClure (1976)" (p. 51).<sup>5</sup>

Critics of televised political ads argue that ads are filled with image construction, not issue discussions, and that televised political ads, averaging 30 seconds each, are not an appropriate forum for discussion of complex campaign issues (Johnston & Kaid, 2002). These scholars assert that the image construction and manipulation in ads have dominated content since political ads first came on the presidential campaign scene in 1952.

---

<sup>5</sup> Numerous studies tend to acknowledge Patterson and McClure's (1976) findings, however, Zhao and Chaffee (1995) are the first to have addressed the deficiencies in the study. They combine data from a number of new and previously analyzed regional surveys, concluding that both TV news and campaign ads contribute to citizens' political knowledge.

In addition to concerns about the actual content of political ads, researchers have also struggled to define what makes something an image ad and what makes it an issue ad. However, over the past several decades scholars have found that political advertisements are as much about issue discussion as they are about image construction (Johnston & Kaid, 2002). Evidence has indicated that political candidates have used their ads to put forward an agenda of issues as well as an agenda of personality characteristics for voters to consider. Several early campaign studies found that ads concentrated more on issues than on image (Joslyn, 1980; Patterson & McClure, 1976).

Conversely, several later studies demonstrate that presidential candidates devote a considerable portion of their campaign discourse to discussing personal qualities, a major component of character (Benoit & McHale, 2003). Benoit (1999) reported that 40 % of the utterances in presidential television spots from 1952-1996 concerned character (“characteristics, traits, abilities, or attributes of the candidates,” p. 21) whereas 60 % concern policy (“governmental action and problems amenable to governmental action,” p. 21).

Further, research exploring political advertising and network news coverage during the presidential campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s found that there was more issue content contained in the ads than in the campaign coverage of network news (Hofstetter & Zukin, 1979; Kern, 1989; Patterson & McClure 1976). In addition, several scholars suggest that issue discussion in presidential campaign ads have been substantiated in more recent studies. Analysis of presidential primaries and general elections of the 1990s found that issues continued to be more frequently stressed in campaign spots than image and sometimes were more prevalent in the ads than in television news (Center for Media

and Public Affairs, 1996; Lichter & Noyes, 1996; Kaid & Johnston, 2001). Similarly, Benoit and McHale (2003) assert that research on political communication frequently distinguishes between issue and image (Hacker, Zakahi, Giles & McQuitty, 2000; Hinck, 1993; Leff & Mohrmann, 1974; Stuckey & Antczak, 1995).

Researchers Just, Crigler, and Wallach (1990) assert that both political debates and advertising are more effective than network news in providing issue information to the voters. These investigators suggest that the most important effects of political commercials occur not among politically attentive people but among moderately or less interested voters. In addition, the study states that viewers learn important information about candidates including their names, parties, office sought, images, and positions on issues from political advertising. Similarly, according to Jamieson (1996):

Political advertising is now the major means by which candidates for the presidency communicate their messages to voters. As a conduit of this advertising, television attracts both more candidate dollars and more audience attention than radio or print. Unsurprisingly, the spot ad is the most used and the most viewed of the available forms of advertising. (p. 517)

Yet, Hanania (2000) argues that for all of their impact televised political advertisements might have reached the limits of their power. The debate over the most effective media avenue to reach audiences is of critical importance to political strategists. According to Schwartz (1973), news coverage contributes to electoral success indirectly by affecting the persuasiveness of campaign advertising. Campaign strategists generally agree that candidates are better off when the advertising and news messages are consistent and mutually reinforcing. With the conflicting research regarding the effectiveness of news coverage and political advertising inconclusive, adding to the discussion are others suggesting debates have been a more persuasive vehicle.

### Political Television Debates

Although presidential debates have been a staple of American politics since 1948, their actual impact on elections remains in doubt (Yawn, Ellsworth, Beatty, & Kahn, 1998). Many journalists, candidates and a few scholars believe debates have substantial and important effects (Asher, 1988; Geer, 1988; Germond & Witcover, 1985; Reagan, 1990; White, 1982). White, for example, argues that debates can “shift votes more than any other single action of the final electoral campaign; (1982, p. 401). President Reagan echoed this general point when he said of the 1984 campaign versus Walter Mondale, “I almost blew the whole race during my first debate” (Reagan, 1990, p. 327).

Most scholars, however, remain unconvinced that general election debates have any significant impact on voter choice (Sears & Chaffee, 1979). Additionally, after reviewing literature on presidential debates, Holbrook (1994) concluded that presidential debates affect public opinion “sometimes, maybe” (p. 471). Holbrook reports that only one debate study; Geer (1988) demonstrated “clear and consistent evidence of a relationship between perceived performance in presidential debates and vote choice” (p. 471). While Holbrook (1994) and Lanoue (1992) suggest that debates in general elections may influence voter preference, the findings in the studies of Zhu, Milavsky, and Biswas (1994) and Sears and Chaffee (1979) contradict their assumptions.

Yawn, Ellsworth, Beatty, and Kahn (1998) argue along with other scholars (Holbrook, 1994; Lanoue & Schrott, 1991; Schrott, 1990; Sears & Chaffee, 1979) that general election debates generally have minimal effects because of the preexisting attitudes in regards to party identification and voters’ candidate preferences, which tend to influence viewer perceptions of what occurs during the debates. Accordingly, Lanoue

and Schrott (1991) assert that these attitudes work to “anchor” viewers’ preferences, thereby limiting the amount of change that can occur.

With no agreement in regards to the influence of debates in general elections, scholars have also focused on less significant debates such as those in primary elections. Lanoue and Schrott (1989) examined primary season debates instead of general election debates. Their 1989 study was, according to the authors, “the first systematic empirical study of voters’ reactions to primary season presidential debates” (p. 302). This study is significant in that candidates in primaries are of the same party, thus forcing the audience to evaluate the candidates without regards to party label. This lack of party, ideological, and issue differences among the candidates mitigates the influence of preexisting attitudes that emerge in the previous studies of general election debates. Lanoue and Schrott (1991) suggest that studying primary debates may yield greater returns than studying general election debates.

Jamieson and Birdsell (1988) agree: “debates don’t very often convert partisans on one side to the other” (p. 161). However, as Benoit and Hansen (2004) argue, many voters are not partisans, and therefore they are likely to be more susceptible to influence from debates. These scholars claim that saying “debates rarely convert partisans” does not make it clear how much of the electorate might still be susceptible to influence (p. 222). Additionally, debates may play different roles for various groups of voters. Likewise, Pomper (1975) explains that many voters “change their partisan choice from one election to the next, and these changes are most closely related to their positions on the issues and their assessment of the abilities of the candidates” (p. 10).

Jamieson and Adasiewicz (2000) suggest that the inconsistencies in debate research could occur because the amount of learning from debates varies from year to year. In addition, studies of how debates affect voters' perceptions of candidates have produced mixed results. In reviewing the literature on presidential debates, two primary areas emerge as the focus of research. One area of study concentrates on issue knowledge, or learning, with a second area of research focusing on the influences on perceptions of candidate character (Benoit & Hansen, 2004).

Research in regards to political learning from debates began in 1976 with studies of the Carter-Ford debates. Graber and Kim (1978) concluded that little voter learning occurred during debates. However, other researchers Becker, Sobowale, Cobbey, and Eyal (1978) and Bishop, Oldendick, and Tuchfarber (1978) found that exposure to the 1976 debates increased issue knowledge. Mulder (1978) argued that the 1976 debates did not benefit either candidate, but debates influenced perceived knowledge of both candidates' positions on issues.

Kenamer (1987) examined the 1984 debates and found that viewing the debates was not a significant predictor of issue knowledge. In his study of the 1988 debates, Lemert (1993) concluded the presidential debates increased issue knowledge. However, in another study of the 1988 debates Lanoue (1991) found that viewing the debates led to short-term increases in viewers' levels of candidate information. Similarly, Drew and Weaver (1991) indicated that exposure to the 1988 debates was a significant predictor of issue knowledge.

Studies have been executed for each of the campaigns that have followed. Each revealed similar findings in that they indicated viewers reported some increase in issue

knowledge and learning from the televised debates. Pfau and Eveland (1994), Jamieson and Adasiewicz (2000), Zhu, Milavsky, and Biswas (1994) studied the 1992 campaign. Benoit, Webber, and Berman (1998), Kaid, McKinney, and Tedesco (2000) and Weaver, Drew, and Wu (1998) examined the 1996 election debates. Two studies investigated the 2000 debates: Benoit, McKinney, and Holbert (2001) and Weaver and Drew (2001). Benoit et al. found that viewing the debates increased issue knowledge while Weaver and Drew failed to find a significant effect for debate viewing on knowledge.

Similarly, scholars have studied the influence of character perceptions since the 1960 debates. Lang and Lang (1962) found that perceptions of Kennedy improved, whereas perceptions of Nixon declined. Tannebaum, Greenberg, and Silverman (1962) reported a decrease in character evaluation for Nixon but no change for Kennedy. Hagner and Rieselbach (1978) as well as Morrow (1977) compared character evaluations such as honesty and personal appeal for Ford and Carter in 1976. These scholars found that both candidates experienced improvements from the debates while Simons and Leibowitz (1979) reported no improvement for either of the candidates. Yawn and Beatty (2000) and Benoit, Webber, and Berman (1998) discovered similar discrepant findings for the 1996 debates.

As with the knowledge learning studies, character studies have also been conducted for each of the subsequent elections. For the 1988 election, Drew and Weaver (1991) reported that debate viewing did not predict character evaluations for either George H.W. Bush or Michael Dukakis. However, a study by Holbrook (1996) contradicts those findings and found no influence in character evaluation by viewers. Pfau and Eveland (1994) found that watching the 1992 debates was a significant



predictor of voters' perception of character. Similarly, McKinnon, Tedesco, and Kaid (1993) reported increased changes for Bush but not Clinton while Zhu, Milavsky, and Biswas (1994) found no changes for either candidate.

As these studies have revealed, Trent and Friedenbergr (1996) summarize eight distinct effects that presidential political debates have:

Typically they attract large audiences. Second, they seem to reinforce many of the preexisting attitudes and beliefs of the audience members. Third, they seem to shift a limited number of voters....Fourth, debates help to set the political agenda. Fifth, debates contribute to the education of audience members. Voters who watch the debates apparently are more knowledgeable as a consequence of their watching....sixth, debates seem to affect the images of candidates. The image of the lesser-known participant is normally affected more by a political debate. Seventh, debates tend to freeze the campaign in place until their conclusion. Finally, debates seem to contribute to the public's confidence in government institutions and leaders. (pp. 282-283)

Candidate debates provide an opportunity for one candidate to hold another accountable for the claims found in political advertising. In 1984 Walter Mondale used this opportunity effectively in the New York primary when he turned to his opponent Gary Hart in a debate and asked why he was saying in his ads that Mondale favored killing kids in Central America. And one characteristic of the 1992 primary debates was the candidates' use of them to unmask false charges in their opponents' ads (Jamieson et al., 1993).

The presentation and treatment of the debates have contributed to their perceived value to the electorate. Debates are considered serious politics by virtue of the fact that they are uninterrupted by advertisements. Additionally, they are a forum in which participants are expected to converse about specific issues (Jamieson & Birdsell, 1988). Because television has had such an impact on political debates and on American political

process in general, it matters what the candidate stands for when considering debater strategies.

Hellweg, Pfau, and Brydon (1992) found two different debate strategies, depending on the candidate's classification. The challenger points out past errors of the present administration and promises to do better, while the incumbent forces the challenger to support such criticisms by being substantively specific, which can lessen the efficacy of the challenger's strategy. Such discourse offers a forum in which candidates can express their unfiltered perspectives on issues. The candidates can use language that either distances or more directly ties them to a particular issue (Woelfel, 1995). Consequently, voters recognize that the debates are a valuable source for information and they use the format to learn about the candidates (Drew & Weaver, 1991).

As with political advertising and news reporting, the research regarding debates does not conclude advertising as the strongest persuasive media vehicle for campaigning and convincing voters. The press coverage about whether one candidate would or would not win a debate creates expectations that disadvantage the candidate when the debates finally occur. Empanelled or not, reporters play a central role in presidential debates and although their role is to cover the debates and the candidates' performances, the candidates themselves understand that it is the image that they portray during the event that is most significant to voter perception.

### Political Imaging

The importance of imagery became entrenched in political campaigning early in our country's history. One of the first image campaigns took place in the presidential

election of 1840 when the Whigs created a “hero” and “Old Tippecanoe” image for William Henry Harrison to defeat Martin Van Buren (Trent & Freidenberg, 2000). Today, we have the modern day images of campaigns for example, Michael Dukakis attempting to have the image as a military leader while driving a tank and Bill Clinton trying to appeal to a younger electorate playing the saxophone on late-night entertainment television.

The importance of image is evidenced each time a candidate is seen on television surrounded by family, talking to a senior citizen or standing in front of a sea of American flags (Trent & Freidenberg, 2000). Louden (1990) argues that image is an evaluation negotiated and constructed by candidates and voters in a “cooperative venture.” Accordingly, most voters have preconceived ideas regarding a candidate’s personality in which the candidates are constantly being measured against during a campaign (Trent & Freidenberg, 2000). It has become understood that the strategies candidates use to construct a public persona constitute an important aspect of political communication.

The research regarding political advertising, news reporting and debates reflect the commonality that regardless of how the candidates’ messages reach the voters, it is more important how the messages are perceived. Imagery plays an important role in the consideration of style. All candidates, whether they campaign using the strategies of incumbency or those of the challenger, must do and say whatever it is that will enhance voter perception of them (Trent & Freidenberg, 2000). The awareness regarding the importance of image creation in a political campaign has been used for many years.

Nonetheless, voters tend to have preconceived ideas regarding what a candidate’s personal characteristics and behavior should be, and these ideas are continually measured

against the reality of what an actual candidate says or does during the campaign. As Trent and Freidenberg (2000) chronicle examples from the past:

The context in which the campaign occurs can become the dominating force – as was the Great Depression during the 1932 presidential campaign and the Vietnam War during 1972 election. In each instance, the images of the candidates were framed by an all-consuming event that in some instance overshadowed the candidate’s strategies to build an image and in others overcame voters’ preconceptions of the ‘ideal’ candidate. It is also possible that a single and dramatic campaign event can tip the scale one way or the other. During the surfacing period of the 1988 presidential campaign, Senator Gary Hart’s alleged relationship with a Miami model, his challenge to the media to prove the relationship, the public accusation by reporters from the *Miami Herald*, and the subsequent intensity of national media attention completely overwhelmed anything else Hart said or did. No image strategies the senator might have utilized could have competed with public preconceptions about the way in which candidates who would be president should behave and the contrast of this with Hart’s alleged behavior. And in 1984 when Geraldine Ferraro was nominated by the Democratic party for vice president, we believe there was very little the congresswoman could have said or done to have created a public persona favorable enough to refute the preconceptions of some Americans regarding the personal characteristics or attributes vice presidents are expected to possess. (p. 67)

As we have seen, the growth of mass media, especially television, has increased the impact of character questions regarding political candidates (Jamieson, Auletta, & Patterson, 1993). In today’s political discourse, whenever the so-called character issue is raised it seizes center stage, often to the exclusion of other news about campaign concerns or government. While rival politicians or the tabloids usually are the first to raise character questions, the mainstream press has been all too often a willing accomplice.

Increasingly, “citizens seem to perceive and evaluate the president as a person, rather than in terms of his policy commitments or his skill in the specialized tasks of leadership. When people are asked to indicate what they like or dislike about the president, they most commonly refer to aspects of his personal image” (Greenstein, 1965,

p. 526). Research by Graber (1972) reiterates this idea that a candidate's personal qualities and image are more important than policy positions and leadership ability.

More than 30 years of research has consistently revealed character and image as an important determinant in voter selection. Boyd (1969) found that "attitudes toward the candidate (as opposed to attitudes toward the party or policy) are the major statistical explanation of voting defection" (p. 63). Williams, Weber, Haaland, Mueller, and Craig (1976), studying the 1972 New Hampshire primary, found that most respondents indicated that candidates' personal attributes were more important to their voting decision than candidates' issue positions. Similarly, Marshall (1984) analyzing exit poll data found that "personal qualities are stronger predictors of voter choices during presidential primaries than issues or ideology" (p. 756). A presidential candidate's character can be extremely important (Benoit & McHale, 2003). This study revealed that a sizeable group of voters reported that the most important determinant of their vote for president is personal character.

As these studies reveal, presidential candidates' character can influence voters in primary and general election. A study by *NBC/Wall Street Journal* also showed that throughout the 1996 general campaign over one-fourth of those polled said that character was most important issue when choosing a president. Additionally, after the investigation and impeachment of Clinton, character may have been an even more important consideration in the 2000 campaign. One year after Clinton's trial, a *Los Angeles Times* poll revealed that nearly three-quarters of Iowa caucus-goers say they were supporting their candidate because of a personal trait rather than his stance on the issues ("Characters," 2000, p. 7A).

Sigel (1966) indicated that desired qualities for a president were honesty, intelligence, independence, thrift, problem-solving ideas and sympathy for the common person. Similarly, Trent, Short-Thompson, Mongeau, Nusz, and Trent (2001) posited 11 qualities of an “ideal candidate”: experience in office, energetic and aggressive leader, faithful to spouse, forceful public speaker, moral character, talks about the nation’s problems, honesty, younger than 65, male, remains calm and cautious, and has solutions to problems. Talking about problems, problem solving and being honest were consistently ranked as most important by participants in both of these studies.

These characteristics that voters deem important also seem to correlate with the candidates’ likeability. Liking for candidates is defined as a positive affective orientation toward the candidate as a person, independent of party affiliation or issue positions (Atkin & Heald, 1976). Therefore, liking is viewed as a personal attraction toward an individual rather than an ideologically based evaluation.

Media exposure either through political advertising or political news coverage assists with a candidate’s *liking* by constituents. “Mere exposure” theory suggests that repeated symbolic experiences with a novel and simple stimulus will lead to greater positive affect for the politician’s image to be portrayed (Zajonc, 1968).

In addition to media exposure enhancing a candidate’s liability, advertising and news add to the constituent’s political knowledge defined in terms of an individual’s ability to recall candidates’ names, personal characteristics, and qualifications (Atkin & Heald, 1976). Because of the candidates desire to be “liked” as part of their campaign image strategy, a cultural shift from these traditional media strategies has evolved to entertainment television, which allows them to play the role of a likeable person.

### Politics and Entertainment Programming

If political campaign strategies are cultivating the entertainment factor, then we must consider if political news may be doing the same. Altheide (2004) asserts that media sociology has shown very clearly that news and politics are immersed in the entertainment format. This scholar contends that the research has demonstrated that this emphasis has changed the organization as well as the working assumptions and culture of journalists and audiences. It is a commonplace that the entertainment format dominates popular culture and news in the United States. Altheide also posits that political culture and political communication are joined through entertaining news formats.

Accordingly, Kern, Just, and Crigler (1997) claim that society is in the midst of a sea of change in media use, in which the use and influence of traditional media are giving way to new media. Scholars McGuire (1986) and Zaller (1992) hypothesize that the mass media's influence in political campaigns is central to communication and public opinion, yet is far from resolved. Additionally, the influence of what Davis and Owen (1998) characterized as "new media" on prospective voters' perceptions of candidates is much less clear.

Similarly, Norris (2000) refers to "diversification" of media environment, where a range of communication forms from traditional news media to "tabloid trash" exert influence on voter information and perception (p. 313). These new communication forms are posited to be in "an adolescent stage" (Davis & Owen, 1998, p. 254). They have emerged in recent presidential elections as vehicles for campaign influence. These scholars consider these vehicles to include television news magazines, political talk radio, and television talk shows. Since the 1992 campaign, the Internet and television

entertainment talk shows have become a permanent fixture for campaign strategists. Yet until recently, very little research has been conducted of the actual influence of these less traditional communication forms on people's perceptions of candidates in presidential campaigns, especially in comparison to the impact of more traditional forms.

One of the first studies conducted by Pfau, Cho, and Chong (2001) examines the influence of various communication forms or modalities on prospective voters' perceptions of candidates and their attitudes about the democratic process during the 2000 presidential election. These researchers found that the use of nontraditional communication forms such as political radio, television entertainment talk shows, and television news magazines exerted the most influence on perceptions of presidential candidates. In addition, this research discovered that among traditional communication forms, people's use of televised debates exerted considerable influence, while newspapers, magazines, and television news exerted very limited impact.

In recent years, journalists (Kurtz, 2002; Weiss, 2003) and other communication scholars (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003; Young 2003) have increasingly recognized the potential for the entertainment media to influence American politics. However, few political scientists have devoted attention to determining whether or to what extent candidate appearances on entertainment-oriented media outlets might influence the way voters think about candidates and vote, particularly in presidential elections.

Wizda (2000) notes that the appeal of entertainment media by political strategists increasingly reflects our entertainment-centric culture. Viewers want to see what they believe is the candidate "unplugged." An entertainment venue offers an opportunity for candidates to portray themselves as average people. This allows political strategists to



script how they want their candidate to be perceived. Baum (2005) asserts that by focusing on candidates' personal qualities rather than multifaceted policy debates, entertainment television allows candidates to appeal to the relatively apolitical, entertainment-seeking audience. This research postulates that people's appreciation of entertainment is one of the factors determining news exposure and, by extension, attention to politics. What may be cause for concern is that such blurring of news and entertainment is actually adding to our collective distrust of the political process, rather than merely reflecting it. Carpignano, Andersen, Aronowitz, and Difazio (1993) argue that the entertainment spectacle and politics are inseparable.

Interestingly, according to Greppi (2003) the Fox News Channel has recognized the desire for less traditional news reporting and has itself created a political agenda that people find attractive and it has an entertainment value that many people find appealing in news programming. Similarly, Schorr (1988) also argues that the media pipers' decision to offer its selection of programming is based on the assumption that the programs will attract viewers and subsequently sponsors, which are all factors in the agenda-setting process. Orange and George (2000) contend that television is liked to the pied piper because it made its debut doing good deeds such as delivering good programming but has since used its influence for other purposes. Television assumes the role of media piper as agenda-setters. Schiller (1973) refers to the media pipers as "America's media managers who create, process, refine, and preside over the circulation of images and information which determine our beliefs and attitudes and, ultimately, our behavior" (p. 1).

Entertainment programs are not created to cover presidential politics. Yet political figures and issues have taken a new place in American television. Many prominent entertainment based programs have increased their level of political content over the past two decades (Parkin, Bos, & van Doorn, 2003). Since the mid-1980s, MTV has routinely hosted politicians, discussed political issues and even sponsored the “Rock the Vote Campaign.” The Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA)<sup>6</sup> shows that television has become increasingly political as well. Similarly, Baum’s (2005) study reveals that politicking in the entertainment media has moved from occasional novelty to political center stage. This is seen as major party candidates compete aggressively for the millions of voters who consider Oprah Winfrey and Regis Philbin trusted friends, or who depend on Jon Stewart’s parodies and Jay Leno’s monologues for their daily update on national affairs. Because of this emerging phenomenon, it is of interest to examine further the use of the talk show genre as a tool for political agenda setting.

### Late-Night Talk Television

For years now, American television has been seeing a fusion of entertainment, news and politics. The media history of the talk show is pivotal in understanding the process of politics today. NBC’s *Tonight Show* is the longest-running television talk show still on the air. Since the *Tonight Show* was the first talk television show, the roots of all current shows can be traced back to it (McNeil, 1996). It has a rich history as each host has taken the helm, adding to the genre and feel of talk television. Each host of the *Tonight Show* has left a legacy, making it of interest to look back at the history of the

---

<sup>6</sup> One of the CMPA’s functions is to record and document the number of political jokes told about political figures and events each evening on television. [www.cmpa.com](http://www.cmpa.com).

*Tonight Show* and the importance of its political commentary and influence. To understand the social and political influences of television shows now, it is useful to examine where it all began.

*The Tonight Show* was not the first late-night talk show on the air. That honor belongs to a show called *Broadway Open House*, which aired from 1950-1951, 11 p.m. to midnight. It was *Broadway Open House* that proved that a show aired past many viewers' bedtimes could still attract an audience. The humorous, relaxed and conversational nature of *Broadway Open House* was attractive and appealing to viewers. However, this show's lifespan was shortened with the advent of *Tonight!* (The first name for what later became the *Tonight Show*) taking its place in the timeslot (McNeil, 1996). Since then, the *Tonight Show* has earned the distinction of the longest-running television show.

The *Tonight Show* was the brainchild of Sylvester "Pat" Weaver, a NBC network executive who also created the *Today Show* (McNeil, 1996). Steve Allen was the first host of *Tonight!* serving from 1954 to 1957. Because he was the first host, Allen essentially established the genre of television that is still closely followed today by other television shows (McNeil, 1996). Similar to hosts today, Allen opened the show with a monologue then did a segment involving the audience followed by guest interviews. The set design for guest interviews is similar as Leno and Letterman today, consisting of a desk and chair for the host and a couch for the guests.

Following Steve Allen as host of the *Tonight Show* was Jack Paar. Paar ruled talk television from 1957-1962. The program was renamed *The Jack Paar Tonight Show*. Now controlling the show, Paar was able to turn the show from a typical variety show

that Steve Allen created into something very different. Paar had a “rare combination of intelligence, irreverence, and intuition” that revolutionized television programming (Jack Paar: The original talk show host, 1999). Audiences did not know what to expect from Paar during his show, which added to the show’s popularity and discussion (McNeil, 1996).

Paar drew fresh notions from politicians and film idols when such figures were not ubiquitous TV presences. Paar, who preceded Carson on the *Tonight Show*, could also be quite the antagonist regarding politics. His interview with William Buckley led to one of Buckley’s most popular essays: “An Evening with Jack Paar” (found in the Buckley collection *Rumbles Left and Right*). Buckley appeared on the show in 1962, and so unnerved his host that Paar went on a several-day rampage against Buckley, grouping him with the Nazis and Communists. Buckley, a well-known conservative at the time, prompted President Kennedy to call and congratulated Paar for his efforts against Buckley’s beliefs (Corliss, 2008).

The media were not happy with Paar’s attempts to discuss serious political news and issues and as seen here in *The New York Times* article, which criticized Paar for using his entertainment persona to cross over and discuss such topics. *The New York Times* TV critic Jack Gould commented:

Mr. Paar meets neither the test of journalistic training or experience, but he deals with news constantly. Steve Allen was shushed on TV when he wanted to discuss nuclear disarmament and Arthur Godfrey has been admonished to adhere to entertainment only. But not Mr. Paar. On flying trips hither and yon he presumes to perform a reportorial function and, no doubt, is accepted at face value by some of his millions of viewers. (Gould, 1961, p. 71)

This article was not the first time Paar had been criticized by other media for his political commentary. Prior to his trip to Berlin, Gould again condemned Paar for his

ventures outside of the entertainment field, stating, “But Mr. Paar never has been able to resist dabbling awkwardly in non-entertainment matters” (Gould, 1961). Today’s hosts like Letterman, Leno, and Stewart mock the political arena but rarely make the serious commentary or actions that Paar did during his tenure as host on the *Tonight Show*.

Unlike his predecessor Steve Allen, Paar could not open the show playing the piano, but he could tell jokes. With his opening monologues, Paar was the first to poke fun at politics and politicians, relying on them for the material for his humor (Abelman, 1998). This was Paar’s legacy. As we see today, television hosts continue to look first to politicians and the news as their never-ending source of jokes.

During the 1960 presidential campaign, Richard Nixon sought to “humanize” himself by playing piano on *The Tonight Show* (Rosenberg, 2000). In the early 1990s, interest in talk shows was fueled by the talk show strategies of candidates in national political campaigns (Timberg, 2002). Ross Perot’s third-party candidacy in 1992 emerged out of a talk show appearance on *Larry King Live*, and Bill Clinton was dubbed the first “talk show president” with appearances on *Donahue*, *The Arsenio Hall Show* and MTV. In every national election since that time, talk shows have increasingly become sites where news, entertainment, and political power converge. The ever-emerging entertainment factor in presidential campaigning has created a new avenue in which political candidates are able to set their agendas with a variety of voters (Baum, 2005).

The talk show is one of the oldest and most durable genres of American television. From an economic point of view, its revenue potentials are much greater than its minimal cost of production. Popular and political culture in the United States at the turn of the 21st century was shaped in part by television talk shows, which are designed

for entertainment value rather than for public enlightenment. These programs, inexpensive to produce and widely imitated around the world, tended to elevate personal opinion and private experience over authoritative facts relevant to U.S. public life. Choreographed by entertaining hosts, these television programs usually spotlighted studio guests who sometimes faced on-air audience questions and reactions.

The TV talk show genre is a creation of 20th-century broadcasting. The talk show has become a powerful social and political force in American culture since talk formats began to capture the imagination of radio listeners in the late 1940s and television viewers beginning in the 1950s. The range of talk has been very wide. Talk shows have run the gamut from polished conversations of Edward R. Murrow and Bill Moyers, entertainment of Jack Paar and Johnny Carson, to verbal mudslinging and parodies of tabloid talk shows that materialized in the 1990s (Timberg, 2002).

As a commercial venture, talk television is a perfect promotional showcase for products of all kinds, be that a movie, a record, a book, a celebrity or a political candidate. Carpignano, Andersen, Aronowitz, and Difazio (1990) describe the talk show as a “self-referential and typically intertextual program...Its ultimate strength, however, is in its popularity and in its ability to establish a bond of familiarity with the television audience” (p. 46). A special relationship has been created between the show’s host, the guest and the audience. These elements that tie the production together make it a desirable use of television for politicians.

The ebb and flow of genres, particularly the talk show, is like a negotiation over the representation and meaning of cultural texts (Gledhill, 1997). With the continuing evolution of television, it is essential to understand its roots. Beginning with Jack Paar,

television's meaning and impact on audiences and the political scene is an essential prerequisite to grasp today's political arena. With the rise of entertainment and shaping of the television genre, one can better understand its growing importance in the political realm.

Particularly during the past decade of presidential elections, talk television has become an important venue for campaign appearances. The programs give politicians an increasingly high profile and are becoming more important for voters seeking information. Baum (2005) posits that if traditional news programs differ materially from entertainment talk shows in their coverage of presidential politics, such differences may, in fact, have meaningful consequences for voter attitudes and behavior. Research by Popkin (1994) and Sniderman, Broday, and Teltlock (1991) has shown that most individuals rely upon information shortcuts, or heuristic cues, to help them make sense of the political world. These studies reveal that the availability of simple heuristics, especially a candidate's likeability or party identification, makes it possible for even relatively uninformed voters to figure out which candidate best represents their own interests. This venue makes it possible for politicians and political strategists to create agendas toward those who are not that politically informed.

Politicians and media audiences enjoy talk show programs because most hosts, unlike news reporters, allow their guests to present their issues and agendas in their own words and from their own perspective (Graber, 1996). Graber (1996) argues that talk shows ask fewer tough questions during interviews and provide unique opportunities for direct interaction between "ordinary folk and political leaders" (p. 34). Additionally, this scholar states that, "the standard mass media and individual pundits widely report

remarks made during talk shows, thus raising their profile and political significance” (p. 34).

Talk television is about improving likeability. Political candidates may sell their ideas to voters but most importantly they try to become likeable. According to Gregor (2003), late night will not become any more of a forum for national politics than it already is. “Legislators are not going to argue over the important issues in the such-and-such bill on stage with Jay Leno. They are going to talk about their issues and attempt to connect with the ‘normal American’ in whatever way they can” (p. 1).

Ridout (1993) also agrees that in contrast to news coverage, talk shows offer voters information about the candidate’s personality attributing to their perceived *likeability*. In addition, this research asserts that talk shows can improve both the substance and relevance of information by the individual candidates, which can partially compensate for the informational omissions of the news and contribute toward a more desirable representation of the candidates.

Additionally, Baum (2005) notes that compared to traditional news shows, in order to appeal to their relatively apolitical audiences, entertainment talk shows make political information more accessible. At the same time, the candidates understand that there is a relative absence of negative or conflicting frames and tones favoring personality-oriented topics and themes that tend to portray any candidate in a positive way. Iyengar and Kinder (1987) suggest that for those viewers with lower political awareness, talk shows tend to prime the candidate’s “likeability,” increasing the prominence of candidates to viewers and influencing their vote choice.



Similarly, Rosenstiel (1992) asserts that politics detests a vacuum and talk shows offer an alternative venue for campaign coverage. This author believes that the primary benefit of the talk show format for politicians is that it allows candidates more time to answer questions using their own words and style. The candidates and their public relations counselors like this change of environment as it allows candidates almost full control over their public images. Clinton's 1992 campaign news coverage and talk show appearances found that talk shows provided a more viable alternative form of communication for his candidacy (Ridout, 1993). What emerged was that this venue contributed to a substantive dialogue between the candidates and voters while the news coverage continued to focus on the "horse race" of campaign events. Ridout (1993) contends that this emergence of talk shows as an alternative venue allows for candidates to deliver their messages to voters. And, quite possibly, Clinton could have lost the campaign without this voice.

Recent research suggests that entertainment talk shows influence the voting behavior of low-awareness individuals and can be traced, at least in significant measures, to the effects of such shows on voter perceptions of the candidates' personal qualities in general, and their likeability in particular (Baum, 2005). This study implies that we should anticipate fairly analogous effects on both likeability and voting behavior. Similarly, Decker (2000) conducted focus groups during the 2000 presidential election and found consistent evidence that candidate appearances on talk shows like *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno and *The Oprah Winfrey Show* weighed heavily in the minds of many voters as they contemplated their vote choice.

## Conclusion

It is only recently that the importance of late-night talk shows has become evident in the political arena, and the result of this awareness is that professional political strategists now take the time to monitor and analyze the shows nightly. In addition, strategists plan and place their candidates on those programs to communicate to many voters who otherwise are difficult to reach. They want voters to get to know the candidates as people. By utilizing entertainment television, candidates are able to give voters what they want while setting their own agenda for discussion. Candidates receive all this while in an environment that is less adversarial, relaxed and inexpensive.

With the decline of political parties and the direct appeal to voters, presidential campaigns have become more adept at conveying their messages through visual images, not only in political commercials but also in elaborately staged media events. By the time of Ronald Reagan, an actor turned president, the technique and idea of the video presidency had been perfected (Adatto, 1990). In addition, by the 1980s, network news operations came to be seen as profit centers for the large corporations that owned them, run by people drawn less from journalism than from advertising and entertainment backgrounds.

Those who pay no or little attention to the political world are possibly more influenced by late-night television talk shows than those who more actively seek information about current political events. Research suggests that people who are not generally interested in politics or government are not usually exposed to the political information found in newspapers, magazines, or the radio. However, television has immense reach and influence. Research supports the idea that attention to late-night

television shows is associated with affecting the perceptions of viewers during presidential elections.

Some communication forms may elevate political discourse, serving as catalysts to citizens' interest and involvement in politics, while other forms may exert the opposite effect, contributing to cynicism and disengagement. The literature reveals that late-night talk television has evolved as a catalyst for such discourse.

Concerning this use in late-night talk shows as a political forum is the long-term potential influences involving the democratic process. If, as the research has stated, late-night talk shows as a political forum reduce the impact of the traditional news and its influence on the electoral outcomes, the democratic process is being altered. Democracy is enhanced when there is a greater availability of issue information. However, late-night talk shows rarely discuss issue information and focus on candidate personality, reducing the political information being distributed. With talk shows representing a major change in the way politicians are packaging their campaign information and communicating to voters, it becomes of interest to research and chronicle how it all has evolved.

As seen in this literature review, past work conducted in mass communication and political science has broadened our perspective of the effect that media can have on the political arena. Most scholarship has been on three primary traditional uses of the media, including radio and television advertising, news coverage and debates. However, the focus in the literature is primarily on media effects, political knowledge, and candidates' evaluations and voter selection. This scholarly work has been useful and informative. Complimenting this area of study and not thoroughly researched is a review of the use of alternative media vehicles such as late-night talk shows to communicate campaign

messages. Specifically, missing from the literature is a historical perspective regarding the use of alternative television programming, such as late-night talk shows, by presidential candidates.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **KENNEDY AND NIXON, THE FIRST LATE-NIGHT**

#### **STRATEGY APPEARANCES**

Every presidential election creates some new historical precedent and this one is no exception. For it is the first time in the long story of the American Union when two men have run for the Presidency on the Jack Paar television show.

(Reston, 1960, p. E10).

#### Introduction

##### Election Overview

The 1960 presidential election campaign was a pivotal moment in the history of campaigning. Presidential campaigning had gone through a series of changes and by 1960 evolved into what is considered the first modern campaign (Donaldson, 2007). Whistle-stop tours on trains were replaced with jet airplanes. President Dwight D. Eisenhower approached his 70th birthday and the end of his second term and a new generation of leaders seemed to be emerging. The 1960 presidential candidates were young; Kennedy was 43, and Nixon was 47 years old. These younger politicians were born in the 20th century and were more comfortable with the changes in communication technology. They embraced the change to a new modern campaigning style.

Important to this change was the prominent role television had in this election versus previous elections. The role played by television in the 1960 presidential election

ushered in permanent changes to the way American political campaigns were waged. With 88 % of American households owning a television set, compared to just 11 % in 1950, the emerging medium now reached a majority of U.S. voters, and clearly was poised to play a central role in the 1960 presidential race (Donaldson, 2007).

Though Kennedy won the election, he won the popular vote by a mere 112,000 votes. This 0.1 % margin over Vice President Nixon was significantly assisted by the use of television in two ways (Liesse, 2008). The first were the images presented in the now infamous one on one debates between the two candidates. These were carried live during prime-time television for the first time in history. Second was the candidates' ability to incorporate a strong television presence with their campaign strategies.

Most distinct, however, was the importance that image played in the outcome in this election. For the first time in American history, a candidate's image was seen as the deciding factor in an election (White, 1961). Growing directly out of this election is what we now consider the "manufactured" candidate. The focus turned towards a candidate who could look good for the cameras with an image that could manipulate voters and a candidate who could be made to appear something he was not (Donaldson, 2007).

In many ways, it did not matter what the two men said. "It was the picture image that had done it," Theodore H. White, the historical journalist who followed the two campaigns intimately for more than a year, said later. "In this year, television had won the nation away from sound to images" (Liesse, 2008, C1). Additionally, the race between Nixon and Kennedy ushered in the modern era of "high tech" election campaigns, characterized by the packaging of candidates by media specialists, extensive

private polling and heavy television coverage of even the most trivial of presidential races issues (Schlesinger, 1994).

The electronic exposure altered the nature of the political audience and of the messages politicians broadcast. Until this election political communication had been most effective by mobilizing party members. Now, with the growth of television the campaign was reaching undecided voters. No longer were they just preaching to the choir but they were reaching the uncommitted. Americans were not deciding if they wanted style or substance (Schlesinger, 1994). In 1960, television viewership averaged almost five hours of programming each day (Shade & Campbell, 2002).

Though the four televised debates have been covered and noted as a pivotal event during the 1960 presidential campaign between the candidates, Kennedy and Nixon, the events less documented are the candidates' appearances on the late-night talk show, *The Jack Paar Show*. The day after Nixon appeared on the show the media reported that "Until recently, there was only one popular test between Kennedy and Nixon and now there are two: "Who can stand up to Nikita Khrushchev? And who can sit down with Jack Paar" (Reston, 1960, p. E10). These appearances have had more impact on the future of campaigning than originally perceived.

## The Candidates

### John F. Kennedy

The Democratic John F. Kennedy, 43, a Harvard graduate with a credible war record, handsome, articulate and a member of a legendary family, had won his party's nomination. Money and organization were Kennedy's strengths. His family both funded and staffed his campaign. However, the senator from Massachusetts had to overcome an

opponent with extensive experience and who was the vice president of a popular Republican president in addition to concerns of his youth and religion (Shade & Campbell, 2002).

Kennedy's style was gregarious, and he got along well with reporters. In addition, he had a sense of humor and would exchange stories and wisecracks with fellow politicians and journalists (O'Brien, 2005). However, he realized that his most urgent presidential campaign task was to become better known for something other than his Roman Catholic religion (Sorenson, 1965). Many Americans were uncertain about Kennedy because of his faith, and no Catholic had ever been elected as president.

Using a different campaign tactic than Nixon, Kennedy concentrated his time and money on large electoral states using the theme, "working for a brighter future for all Americans" (Shade & Campbell, 2002). During his campaign he made over 500 hundred speeches, press conferences and statements in 45 states. However, he knew that he would only reach a minor portion of the electorate this way and that television was the medium that would help him achieve his goals (Schlesinger, 1994).

Kennedy's campaign team also understood the importance of television and how to use it. Kennedy's success with the one on one debates, the celebrity endorsed television political advertising and talk show appearances garnered him a strong political image. The focus on personality and image by the Kennedy campaign significantly contrasted Nixon campaign's approach.

### Richard M. Nixon

The Republican favorite, Nixon, had an extensive resume serving in the House of Representatives and Senate before becoming Eisenhower's vice president. Nixon had



just spent the last 8 years serving as second in command to Eisenhower's presidency. He primarily represented the United States abroad but kept himself in the spotlight throughout the 1950s with his 1952 Checkers speech and 1959 "Kitchen Debate" (Shade & Campbell, 2002).

Nixon's campaign started out strong. His duties as vice president did not limit his ability to go out and campaign. He made a commitment in his acceptance speech that he would visit each of the 50 states during his campaign. The Nixon campaign ran heavily on the current administration's achievements and his experience as vice president. He promised to carry on the administration's success (Benoit, 1999).

The 47-year-old candidate from California worked on distancing himself from the regular partisan politics. He was thoughtful to tread carefully, championing Eisenhower's administration without being too defensive. Eisenhower did appear on Nixon's behalf in a few advertisements. Though his lack of enthusiastic support seemed to be reflected in the commercials and may have undermined Nixon's campaign charge (Benoit, 1999).

Nixon's style was folksy. Though his campaign tried to focus primarily on issues over personality, Nixon positioned himself and mounted an energetic campaign as the hard-working grocer's son comparing himself to the millionaire playboy (Schlesinger, 1994). Still Nixon would not emphasize man over party but stuck with issues over personality. In the end, even Nixon admitted that images and tactics swayed the campaign (Ambrose, 1987).

## Late-Night Television Candidate Appearances

These appearances of Kennedy and Nixon are important because they are the first time presidential candidates appeared on entertainment programming. Up until this 1960 election, politics, news and entertainment had been kept basically separate. The *Tonight Show with Jack Paar* allowed the candidates to reveal a different side of their personalities beyond that of the scripted platform speech. Studies have revealed that often it is not the platform on issues that a candidate stands for but the “likeability” factor from the voters (Atkin & Heald, 1976). Research by Graber (1972) asserts the idea that a candidate’s personal qualities and image are more important than policy positions and leadership ability.

### John F. Kennedy

*The Jack Paar Show* – June 16, 1960

Jack Paar was the first late-night talk show host who invited political candidates on as guests. Jack Paar prefaced the introduction for Kennedy on his show with a disclaimer regarding his perspective about having political figures on his show and the opportunity he felt it offered. During the program on June 16, 1960, John F. Kennedy was not the only guest on the show, nor was he the first to appear. Jack Paar hosted actresses Peggy Cass and Ann Bancroft prior to Kennedy joining the show that evening. Though Kennedy was the third guest his segment took up almost half the entire show.

After discussion with first two previous guests Jack Paar introduced Senator John F. Kennedy and they sat next to each other behind a table with two microphones. Unlike the usual late-night talk show set where the host is behind the desk and the guests sit in a

comfortable chair, Paar and Kennedy sat almost shoulder to shoulder at a table with microphones in front of each.

Although the appearance was to be casual conversation the candidates prepared for possible issues that may arise during the program as well as scripted moments. As the transcripts below reveal, in Jack Paar's introduction of Senator Kennedy he assured his audience that it was not a scripted performance as well as offers his perspective having such a guest presented to his viewers (Appendix B: transcripts *The Jack Paar Show*, June 16, 1960)<sup>7</sup>.

Paar: Now ladies and gentlemen, I should like you to meet the man that many of you came tonight to see and tuned in to hear. Let me tell you a little story about my feelings about this kind of show, and asking such distinguished guests. I feel that there's a small service I can perform here because this is an unrigged unloaded kind of show. We have no great point to make, nothing is rigged against anyone. There's no Larry Spivacks or Mae Craigs, who do their job very well, but I have noticed if you watch political programs, they are asked political questions and the answers are political answers and sometimes I must say I watch shows for half hour and when it's all over no one said anything when it's all over. But there is a chance that in this relaxed atmosphere of *The Tonight Show* you can meet people who aren't on guard, not as tense, and perhaps not as political as you would meet them on other news-type shows. I do not pretend for a moment to know much about politics. It interests me not too much, really. I don't pretend to know a lot about what I am about to ask, I'm going to give you the chance to ask questions too. Senator Kennedy said he'd be most delighted to let you ask him questions. I think Mr. Kennedy came tonight because he thinks he can reach people who wouldn't ordinarily watch news programs or a portion of them wouldn't and I say again, all candidates in the two parties are most welcome here and all have been asked. I would ask you to give a real *Tonight* welcome, to the Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. John Kennedy.

---

<sup>7</sup> Conversation in this chapter between Jack Paar and John F. Kennedy reference transcripts from *The Jack Paar Show* June 16, 1960 and were received from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library. Transcript is located in Appendix B.

During this June 16<sup>th</sup> appearance, Kennedy's and Paar's initial discussion did not hit any hard topics and they bantered back and forth like close friends. The light-heartedness between the two is reflected in Kennedy's attempt towards humor as the following transcript reveals.

Paar: I must say you're a brave one, off the beaten path of the kind of thing you'd talk about. You're always welcome here and your brother too. This is Peggy Cass, who's dying to meet you, from Massachusetts. Miss Bancroft the great actress. This is Walter Kiernan.

Kennedy: I know Walter.

Paar: We're delighted to have you here. How would you like us to ask the things that come in our heads? May I ask you a tough question so I don't look too naïve...

Kennedy: Whether I am a Democrat or a Republican?

Paar: There was some confusion earlier. Ingo Mario Hansen's brother came in. He thought you were a Republican.

Kennedy: You straightened him out, I hope.

Paar: I said you were a Socialist, of course, I jest. You'll see the whole thing later. You can sniff what you will I'm amazed. You're thinner than I imagined, have you lost weight on the campaign?

Included in this discussion of weight was celebrity guest Peggy Cass. She was vocal about her support for Kennedy, giving him an unsolicited celebrity endorsement during the show and joined in the conversation about the primary elections.

Kennedy: Well, yes, we've won in seven primaries since January. We began in NH in March and finished Oregon May 20<sup>th</sup>, so I am thinner. It's a good diet. I heard Miss Cass talking about someone losing 30 pounds. This is another way it can be done.

Cass: You *really* clobbered them in Oregon. I was *really* very pleased.

Paar: You're being partisan (*sotto voice, disapproving*).

Paar took control of the conversation feeling the awkwardness of the endorsement and moved on to other issues. He personalized the moment by asking Kennedy if he may call him “John” following into more serious discussion regarding the country’s foreign affairs. Again he kept the feel of the program from getting too serious to more light-hearted, Paar asked if age was an issue in the campaign. Kennedy initially quipped jokingly back but then took the opportunity to downplay age as an issue and promote his candidacy.

Paar: If this is as serious as it certainly looks, couldn’t this affect your campaign - that you’re too young a man. Or they’ll say that times are this serious, this man is too young. Has that crossed your mind?

Kennedy: And others (*laughter*). It’s crossed their mind. I came to Congress the same day as Mr. Nixon. He’s about 4 years older. I think the problem for the next president and really for the people of the United States, to select a president who’s responsible, who’s had long experience, competent and devoted to the interests of the United States. Who’s vigorous and constant in the application of his responsibility. Without in any way criticizing the president, which would be extremely wrong at this moment, I do think we have had an administration based on long experience, and age. I think this is a job that requires a constant vigilance.

Paar: How old are you?

Kennedy: I’m 43, a year older than Theodore Roosevelt, who was a pretty good Republican president. I would say that the problem is not the four years that separates Mr. Nixon and myself. The problem is which candidate – can best mobilize the resources of the United States and the free world so the balance of power will begin shift in the direction of the free world, rather than move in their direction. That’s the basic issue. And the people of the United States will have to make a judgment as to who can do that.

Kennedy’s charm and likeability during the show seemed to still entice the audience. Though initially light-hearted conversation between Paar, the other show’s guests and John Kennedy, the show turned into what we consider today more of a

“Town-Hall Meeting” opportunity with questions from the audience for the presidential candidate, Kennedy. Paar prompted Kennedy, and his sidekick Walter Kiernan, to go to the audience and solicit questions for the senator. The topics and discussion then turned more serious. Paar turned to the audience for questions and the senator indulged the audience and his host as these samples of questions reveal. In addition, Kennedy used this opportunity to connect with the audience and promote himself as competent and knowledgeable of the issues and likeable at the same time.

Paar: Senator, I know you’re willing you told me this afternoon you would do it. You’d like to answer questions from the people. Walter, walk in the audience. Let’s have responsible questions from responsible people (*audience shuffles*).

Walter: You have a question?

Q: I’m Tom Westbrook. Senator, do you think Russia or communist China is our worst enemy at this time?

Kennedy: Russia has the greater power, but the Chinese Communists if it’s possible to judge that, are in a more belligerent and dangerous period of their national development. The Soviet Union has sufficient national development so that they realize if war came they would be destroyed. But I think the Chinese Communist that have a population of over 700 million people that if perhaps a war came they would emerge successful. Today it’s rather difficult to judge these matters today the Chinese Communist are moving through a more dangerous period of their development. The greater risks are in this particular area.

The opportunity to reach a diverse audience is reflected in another question by a young female.

Q: Senator, I’m Marilyn McMillan, when and where do you think political education should begin?

Kennedy: I hope we’re all (*pause*) from the time we can get up enough strength to walk down at 14 or 15 to walk down to the headquarters of a candidate for local office or the office of the presidency and offer your services. There isn’t any doubt in my mind that there are very

few jobs that you can't do as well in politics at 17 or 18 as you can at 70. Because most of them consist of hard detailed legwork, stamps and all the rest, living material, and I assume you if you know of anybody who can move of any age (*laughter*) we'll be happy to have them help us (*applause*).

Between audience questions Jack Paar brings up the common issue between the host and guest; that James Hoffa is suing both Kennedy and him. Kennedy does not waffle on his comments about Hoffa and is very open with his opinion of the man.

Paar: ... Your brother Robert and myself are being sued by Mr. James Hoffa. That's the new suit I've got going for me there. How do you feel about Mr. Hoffa? Do you have any opinions about Mr. Hoffa?

Kennedy: Yes, I have strong opinions. When I ran in Wisconsin he came out against us and also in West Virginia. I don't think he likes my brother, which I think is a compliment. I'm hopeful that we're going to get rid of Jimmy Hoffa. We don't want him in a powerful union like the Teamsters. I think the sooner he's out of the Teamsters, the sooner he's retired to private life the better off we'll all be. If he's not out by the end of this campaign, I hope that it will be possible by a strict application of the laws, to make it difficult for him to continue as head of the Teamsters. So I may join you in your suit (*applause*). I agree with what my brother says. How much are you being sued for?

Paar: How much am I being sued for? I'd like to say how much are WE being sued for? I'm hoping Bobby can come up with more than his half. Something like 2 million dollars, which I don't happen to have at the moment, foolish, I spend it on licorice sticks and stuff. Walter?

Paar prompts Walter to continue with another question and continues audience questions for the remainder of the program. Ironically, fairness by the media was also an issue during the 1960 campaign. It was also of interest to the audience reflected in this next question for the senator. Contrary to the Hoffa response, Kennedy is more diplomatic and careful with his answer regarding a question on media coverage.

Q: Frank Long, Westfield New Jersey. The senator says he was a working newspaperman. I wonder what he feels of his treatment from the press this year?

Kennedy: I think it's been fine. I think it's been...

Paar: I have a few words to say on that. (*Paar stands up, laughter*)  
You think you've been fairly treated, John?

Kennedy: I think sometime you don't like it, but on the whole,  
it's alright. You'd like to read good things about you, would you?

Paar: Well, I wouldn't mind. Generally speaking the press is responsible.  
There are some great national exceptions to responsibility.

During Kennedy's interview Paar had to take five different commercial breaks.

At one point Paar mentions they need to break for another commercial and saying apologetically, "Senator, this is an historic moment in a sense that I am interrupting what might be the next president of the United States with this." Kennedy smiles, accommodating the process of the program mentioning, "No apology, that's how it all operates." At the end of questioning before Kennedy leaves the stage Jack Paar sincerely thanks Kennedy for being there and asks him why he agreed to come on the show.

Paar: Senator we only have three minutes here and I wanted you to say, however you wish, because I know you will be asked it, why, and I'm ever so grateful, why did you choose to come on the show?  
You'll have to answer it tomorrow.

Kennedy: I must say for two or three reasons. First, because my brother has had a pleasant experience each time he's been with you. Secondly, in campaigning in Wisconsin and West Virginia, I ran into a lot of people who sat up nights watching you. And I think any time it's possible for those of us in public life to have a chance to communicate, I think we ought to take it. Therefore, I regard it as a privilege to appear on this program (*applause*).

Ending the interview on a light note Paar offers.

Paar: Personally, I am in an impartial position here, but Senator, may I ask you how do you stand on crab grass (*laughter*)? Come out strongly against it and you'll have the suburbs behind you. It was a great



pleasure to have you here. We all just feel wonderful about it. Goodnight sir. I hope you'll come again (*Kennedy leaves set; applause*).

John F. Kennedy's appearance on Jack Paar show provided the opportunity for this political candidate to present a personal side of himself, allowing the audience to get to know him as a person versus as simply a political image. Kennedy believed that nonpolitical talk to the unconvinced was better than political talk to the already convinced. Television expedited the impact of his logic. His appearance on Jack Paar's show demonstrated his ability and willingness to use TV for personality projection (Watson, 1994). This attributes to the likeability factor that has been asserted as important for a candidate (Zajonc, 1968).

Media coverage of the appearance afterward was not extensive and it was not seen as a groundbreaking event in the media. Coverage by *The New York Times* focused more on the question raised of "equal time" by his appearance versus the actual interview itself. Once Kennedy's appearance was announced *The New York Times* reported that, "Senator John F. Kennedy will be a guest on *The Jack Paar Show* next Thursday. Whether anyone gets equal time depends on what category the show falls in. Yesterday nobody was certain" (Adams, 1960).

### Richard M. Nixon

*The Jack Paar Show* – August 25, 1960

The Republican presidential candidate Richard Nixon followed Kennedy's lead two months later and appeared on *The Jack Paar Show* on August 25, 1960. Richard Nixon was the current sitting vice president of the United States. Unlike Kennedy's

appearance, the interview with the vice president was not at Paar's regular studio in New York but was held at the network's studio in Washington D.C., WRC-TV.

The press was housed in facilities next door to the studio with several line monitors so that they would be able to see everything. As with Senator Kennedy's appearance, if the press had been allowed in the studio, they would have filled over half of the audience's seats. The network took precautions with audience tickets so it would not look planted in the candidate's favor or that there would be strong opponents making it uncomfortable as well (Appendix C: Show prep notes from Ted Rogers, press secretary, to Richard Nixon).

In his introduction on the August 15 program, Jack Paar did not carry on about the opportunity this brought for his audience as he did with Kennedy. Instead he leaned more humbly towards the honor he felt to have the vice president on the program. He also joked about being in Washington as "it was rumored that I would be here on many other occasions, but not under such friendly circumstances" (Appendix B: transcripts *The Jack Paar Show*, Aug. 25, 1960).<sup>8</sup>

In the opening conversation between the host and vice president, Paar set the tone with his remarks of thanking Nixon for appearing on his show, "on this very informal 'catch-as-catch-can' show." Unlike the interview with Senator Kennedy, the show had no other guests scheduled except for Pat Nixon, the vice president's wife. In addition, only one commercial interruption occurred during the entire telecast compared to the five sponsor announcements during Senator Kennedy's interview.

---

<sup>8</sup> Conversation in this chapter between Jack Paar and Richard Nixon reference transcripts from *The Jack Paar Show* August 25, 1960 and were received from the Nixon Presidential Library. Full transcripts are located in Appendix B.

Paar's initial welcome was lighthearted joking about lack of commercials but then led into a serious question, the first, which reflected a perceived stress between Eisenhower and Nixon's relationship. Though serious in questioning, Paar still seems to lighten the moment before Nixon answers.

Paar: We are really honored. Now, there'll be no commercials, incidentally – that might get you the popular vote alone! You've cut the commercials on the *Tonight Show* way down and I will say nothing commercial unless it comes up in normal conversation.

Let me ask you a question that I think...I wasn't going to ask it really because I thought it was kind of a rough question and someone said, "No, ask it" so all right. Yesterday in a press conference the President, Mr. Eisenhower, said that you had not actually made decisions and there could be an inference that the advantage you have in experience would not be so. Forgive me for asking that, but they want to make me real powerful and I don't really want to be (*laughter*).

Nixon: Well, Jack, actually the president stated the case exactly and correctly from the standpoint of both his administration and I would hope any administration, Democratic or Republican, because only the president of the United States can make the great decisions affecting the country. He consults with the vice president, with the Cabinet, and with others of his official family as well as others whose views he respects. But when it comes actually to deciding something, he must do it.

Since no other guests appeared on the show, Nixon and Paar had the opportunity to discuss several topics including campaign issues and strategies, polling and voter registration. Nixon was not pressured for time and was uninterrupted through his long lengthy answers on each of these topics. Nixon was able to focus on issues while reflecting a likeable personality. In addition the two discussed the candidate's tastes for Mexican food, the ages of Nixon and Kennedy. In between serious questions, Paar interjected humor.

Paar: You don't in the foreseeable future see taxes reduced (*laughter*)?

Nixon: I don't (*laughter*). We're still going to get the main part of your income, I can assure you (*laughter*).

Paar: Well, I'm pretty sneaky, I'm telling you that.

Nixon: They'll have you down in Washington if you....

Paar: No, sir, they're never going to get me down here unless I want to come (*laughter*).

After lightening up the moment Paar takes another thought-provoking turn and asks about world politics. With this question Paar personalizes the question to Nixon by incorporating the aspect of their children's futures. The mention of Nixon's children along with the common bond between him and Paar, both having girls, gave the audience another personal view of the candidate. Again, Nixon has the luxury of giving a long and lengthy answer without worry of interruption.

Paar: Do you think our children, your two little daughters and my daughter and their kids, do you think that they'll ever be able to pick up a newspaper some day and not find threats and wars and impending disasters and threat from our friends, former friends? Do you think in our time we'll see that? Or, at least, you and I probably will not see it. But our children, will they see it?

Nixon responds with an optimistic look at the opportunity but does not underestimate the gravity of concern. He takes several minutes during the show to display his understanding and knowledge of the complex world dynamics. He elaborates on the different threats from various countries including Cuba, Iran, and Congo and concerns with these countries that he believes the next president will face. Sounding like a seasoned yet humbled statesman Nixon replies to Paar:

Nixon: I think that it is possible that our children could see it, or even that we could see it. But I don't think we can assume that it is going to be easy, and I don't think we can ever underestimate the great challenge that is presented to us. We mustn't try to seek an easy way out because there is none. If we do seek an easy way out that means

surrender, and this we cannot do...So I wouldn't underrate the difficulty of the problem. I say the challenge is great, but it's an exciting time and your children and mine can live to see the realization of the best times that civilization has ever seen on earth.

After the last question from Paar, the host introduced Mrs. Nixon in the audience. Paar invited Mrs. Nixon to join the vice president on the stage where the two sat. Conversation between Jack Paar and Mrs. Nixon was short and he asked very benign questions such as "How do you get your laundry done?" and about a tuxedo mishap in England when they were meeting with the Queen. Paar's discussion with Pat Nixon allowed the vice president to be seen as a family man and another opportunity to connect with Paar's audience. Mrs. Nixon also was perceived as likeable, which added appeal to the vice president's likeability.

As did Kennedy during his appearance, Nixon agreed to take questions from the audience. Questions during Nixon's appearance came both from the Washington D.C. audience as well as an audience in the New York studio. Fewer questions were asked of Nixon than Kennedy on this show from the audience. Paar limited the number of questions that would be asked of the vice president. Nixon answered two questions from the Washington D.C. studio and two questions from the New York studio. In contrast, Kennedy answered 11 questions from the studio audience during his appearance. Paar did not specify the number of questions Kennedy would be answering but was very specific when he asked the vice president to answer questions.

Paar: ...Would you like to answer two questions from the audience in New York and two questions from here? And then I'm sure you'd like to go. I can't tell you how much this means to our show. It gives us "class" (*laughter*).

Q: I would like to ask Mr. Vice President whether he thinks the Washington Senators will stay in the first division (*laughter and applause*).

Nixon: Well, I would say they will if I can go to enough games (*laughter*). Because generally, it's a funny thing...I see to – you know, there's always little jinxes and in this case whenever I go see the Washington Senators play, they win. I've been there – the last seven times I've been there, they've won. They beat the Yankees, incidentally, Friday. You know I learned later – it was on television in New York and all those New York fans saw me standing up and cheering for the home runs, we won 4 to 2, and nobody votes in Washington and everybody votes in New York (*laughter*)! That shows you my baseball's non-political.

Nixon had one serious question regarding the United States' relationship with the United Nations in regard to Congo. After this question Paar directed questioning to come from the New York audience. The first question from the New York audience referenced how active the vice president was in the administration and if that role would increase if he were elected president. Nixon agreed he would.

Nixon: Yes, I believe so. I believe that one of the major contributions, among many contributions the president has made, has been in upgrading the office of the vice presidency.

Nixon also used this question as an opportunity to promote his running mate, Henry Cabot Lodge, to the audience.

Nixon: ...And speaking, for example, of my own running mate, I happen to believe that Henry Cabot Lodge is a man who has as much experience and as much ability in handling the negotiations with the Communists, with the Russians, as any man in the world.

The last question from New York was regarding Mrs. Nixon and whether the vice president has briefed her “on what to say and do – and what not to say and do?” Paar breaks in jokingly “Holy Cow! Get that Democrat out of here will you!” Nixon diplomatically answers to Paar that it was a “fair question” and all through his travels

with his wife she has been an “ambassadors of good will without any controversy whatever.”

Ending on a friendly and personable note, Jack Paar offers a copy of an article, from a magazine he had just read, to Mrs. Nixon that states that she is a “tremendous asset – not only as a wife and to your husband, the vice president – but to the Republican Party.” At the end of the interview Nixon turns the table on Paar and asks for a favor. Paar at first taken aback concedes to the favor.

Nixon:        Could I ask you one favor, Jack?

Paar:         Yes, sir, you can ask me any favor you’d like.

Nixon:        Could we have your autograph for our girls (*laughter*)?

Thanking the vice president and Mrs. Nixon, Jack Paar ends the show.

Paar:         Well, you give my regards to the president and tell him he’s doing a fine job (*laughter*). Good night, good night – good night Hugh (*applause*).

The next day *The New York Times* printed one full page of excerpts of Nixon’s appearance on *The Jack Paar Show*. Two days after Nixon’s appearance *The New York Times* wrote “Nominees and TV Face a Problem” with the article acknowledging the issue of blending politics and show business:

The leading candidates and the television networks faced the problem yesterday of whether more appearances on entertainment telecasts, such as Vice President Nixon’s visit with Jack Paar may not result in too much show business and not enough political business on the air. (Shepard, 1960, p.39)

Although the media were lukewarm on the appearances, a report received by Nixon compiled by his staff revealed mass approval by the show’s audience. Ted Rogers, considered Nixon’s image-maker, wrote in a report to the vice president that “the nation-wide reaction to the Paar Show seems to be overwhelmingly on the positive side.

The report of the New York press is excellent. Chicago and the West Coast confirmed what New York is saying” (Appendix C: Notes from Ted Rogers).

Additionally, the report noted, “The advance ratings that have been passed down from New York is that the Arbitron was a 16.3. This is against the August average of 9.6. The previous high was with Kennedy who had a 12.” Furthermore, the report went on to state favorable response from Rockefeller Headquarters, CBS and “Voice of America called to say they were thrilled with the telecast – using program overseas” (Appendix C: Notes from Ted Rogers).

These appearances may or may not have actually helped the two candidates in the public opinion polls. Timing for each poll was instantaneous and compilation of polls took much longer due to the sophistication of technology in 1960. It is prudent to note that a poll taken in May, one month prior to Kennedy’s appearance, reflected a slight Republican lead with Kennedy 49 % and Nixon 51 % (The nation: The campaign ahead, 1960 p. 17). Conversely, later July’s polls put Kennedy ahead 51 % to Nixon 49 % (The nation: The campaign ahead, 1960 p. 17). However, at the end of August, just after Nixon’s appearance on Jack Paar, the polls turned again and displayed Nixon with 50 % and Kennedy trailing at 44 % with 6 % undecided (The campaign: First turns, 1960 p. 11).

These 1960 campaign appearances by Kennedy and Nixon were not the only unusual events of the election. This election year also involved a third candidate named Lar Daly. Lar Daly, considered “Chicago’s perennial political candidate who campaigns in an Uncle Sam suit” demanded “equal time” as the other two candidates on the *Jack Paar Show* (Adams, 1960). After Mr. Daly was granted equal time on the *Jack Paar*



*Show*, Congress reacted quickly by creating four exemptions to the equal opportunity law.<sup>9</sup> Paar was required, however, under the old equal time rule to provide a forum for Lar Daly because he had hosted Senator Kennedy the month prior.

The “equal time”<sup>10</sup> rule was a provision of the Communications Act of 1934 that required radio and television stations to treat legally qualified political candidates equally when it comes to selling or giving away air time. During this time official newscasts were exempt from the equal time regulation but entertainment programming like *The Jack Paar Show* was not considered exempt at the time. NBC argued that it should be exempt because it was an interview format.

Lar Daly appeared on *The Jack Paar Show* on July 7, 1960, and received 47 minutes of airtime. This appearance did not help Daly’s cause, as Daly’s local paper the *Chicago Tribune* reported the hometown candidate was not welcome by the show in an article headline reading “Boo Lar Daly on Paar Show” (*Chicago Tribune*, 1960, p 11). Additionally, *The New York Times* reported that he was booed and heckled by the audience, and Paar, criticizing the commission for its ruling, described the Daly appearance as “an abuse of equal time” (Nixon Appears Tonight, 1960, p. 23).

---

<sup>9</sup> Four exemptions under the revised equal opportunity law include stations who gave time to candidates on regularly scheduled newscasts, news interviews shows, documentaries (assuming the candidate wasn’t the primary focus of the documentary) or on-the-spot news events would not have to offer equal time to their candidates for that office. See Klienman, [www.museumtv.com](http://www.museumtv.com).

<sup>10</sup> The “equal time” obligations imposed on broadcasters is not limited to paid appearances. Instead, if a candidate should make a guest appearance on a morning variety show, his or her opponent has a right to request equal coverage. The “equal time” aspects of the political broadcast rules are further complicated by the various “exemptions” available to candidate appearances on certain programs. For instance, the appearance of a candidate on a “*bona fide*” newscast or news interview does not trigger equal time obligations. And certain talk shows, which are syndicated, may also be exempt. However, exemptions on major or syndicated talk shows are done on a case-by-case basis. See Klienman, [www.museumtv.com](http://www.museumtv.com)

## Conclusion

These 1960 appearances were regarded as setting a historical precedent. This was the first time in the history of American politics that presidential candidates used late night television as a political forum. On August 28, 1960, *The New York Times* reported “in short, the rigged political show could become the greatest development in politics since the stuffed ballot box” (Reston, 1960, p. E10).

No conclusive evidence reveals a definitive answer as to whether these appearances made a difference in the election results. Other factors during this campaign such as the first televised Presidential debates and the Kennedy campaign’s strategy to focus on personality and image contributed to public opinion.

These late-night talk show appearances were unique to the time. Jack Paar was also a host interested in politics. By 1960 standards, a presidential candidate’s appearance on an entertainment program was considered shocking and prior to Kennedy and Nixon’s appearances on Jack Paar had not happened. These appearances did not bring a bombardment of politicians to the late night talk shows. Notably, since these candidates first embarked into the late night talk show format very few followed until almost 30 years later. Primary party presidential candidate appearances on either *Late Night* or *The Tonight Show* did not resurface until the 1992 election.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE IN-BETWEEN YEARS -- NO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

#### LATE-NIGHT APPEARANCES

Presidential campaigns do more than just send a chief executive to the White House. They illuminate social trends and define issues, explain where America has come from and where it is headed, and generate more than their share of triumph and tragedy – even a fair bit of comedy in between. (Walsh, 2008, p. 28)

The following seven elections did not experience any late-night appearances by presidential candidates like the election in 1960 with Kennedy or Nixon. However, entertainment television still had the presence of politicians during these years. Many of the politicians eventually became their party's presidential nominees. Prior to their candidacies, several appeared on late-night talk shows such as *The Jack Paar Show* and *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* as well as prime-time entertainment television programming.

The 1960 presidential campaign was just the beginning of politicians using late-night talk show television as a vehicle to promote their likeability. Jack Paar hosted a number of politicians throughout his tenure as host of *The Tonight Show*. In addition to Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy's appearances, both Kennedy's brothers Robert and Ted Kennedy also made at least one or more appearances on the show in the early 1960s.

Jack Paar, careful to be seen as bipartisan, also hosted Republican politicians including two more appearances by Richard Nixon and two by Barry Goldwater.

Though it took several election periods for nominated presidential candidates to reappear on late-night talk television during the general election, several eventual presidential nominees did go on late-night talk and entertainment programming between the 1960 and 1992 elections. Though the focus of this research is primarily presidential party nominees appearances on late-night talk shows during the general election period, it is of interest to reference the appearances of those politicians who eventually became their party's official candidate. Therefore, this chapter gives a brief overview of those 'in-between years' appearances made by politicians, who though not at the time of their appearance, later became their party's presidential nominee.

### Talk Show/Entertainment Program Appearances

#### Between 1960 and 1964 Campaigns

The campaigns of the 1964 election did not use late-night talk show television or entertainment programming as part of their election tactics. However, before the 1964 election two future presidential candidates made appearances on late-night talk television. Jack Paar hosted two Republican candidates, 1964 nominee Barry Goldwater, and 1960 and 1968 nominee Richard Nixon. Both Nixon and Goldwater appeared twice on Paar's show for friendly conversation prior to the 1964 general election. Neither candidate at the time of their appearances was their party's presidential nominee. These four appearances reflect the beginning of an evolving trend in the relationship between entertainment and politics.

Nixon appeared twice on *The Jack Paar Show* after his defeat to Kennedy in the 1960 presidential election. His first appearance was February 8, 1962, just before he launched his campaign to become governor of California. It was his first appearance on national television in over a year (Egan, 1962).

Nixon received almost a full hour of airtime during his February appearance on *The Jack Paar Show* to discuss a variety of issues. Taking the opportunity to show his image a likeable guy, Nixon came out after his introduction and went into the audience to shake hands with the audience and kiss Paar's mother, who was also in the audience.

Paar asked Nixon questions regarding the Kennedy Administration's handling of Cuba and foreign policy. Nixon lashed out, saying, "If all the United States does is what the weak and timid will approve, we might as well cash in our chips right now." In addition, Nixon used the analogy of Cuba being a cancer and was adamant that Castro must be removed from power. At the end of interview, Nixon acceded to a request from the audience to play a stanza on the piano of *The Missouri Waltz*. Nixon noted, "This song was often used politically as a theme for former President Harry S. Truman. It was his favorite" (Egan, 1962 p. 1).

Nixon's second appearance on *The Jack Paar Show* came on March 8, 1963 less than six months after facing a devastating defeat in the California governor's race. This was his third appearance on the show within three years. Jack Paar discussed several issues with Nixon including foreign policy and the Cuban Missile crisis. Conversation was very similar to his February 8, 1962 appearance, discussing Cuba, Khrushchev as well as covering more personal topics such as Nixon's wife and children.

In answering Paar's questions, Nixon again came out critical of Kennedy's handling of the Cuban invasion as he did during his interview a year earlier in February 1962, repeating his previous analogy of Communist Cuba to cancer as these comments from the show reveal (Appendix B: transcripts *The Jack Paar Show*, March 8, 1963).<sup>11</sup>

Nixon: ...and I who have indicated criticism tonight will join in the bipartisan support of any strong action that President Kennedy will take to remove the Communist cancer. Let me just say one thing in conclusion in that respect. There are risks involved in these policies that I have suggested. You know that, I know it. But I used the word cancer a moment ago. There are risks when you have an operation for cancer but there are greater risks if you don't operate. And the greater risk if you don't operate on the patient you may die. Cuba and Communism is a cancer in the Western Hemisphere and we, eventually, will die under Communism.

Paar and Nixon did discuss other political issues. Paar turns to the 1964 election and asks Nixon if he believes Kennedy will be re-elected and Nixon jokingly answers.

Paar: Can ah, (*more applause*) Can Kennedy be defeated in '64?

Nixon: Well, which one (*laughter and applause*)?

Paar: Boy, I hate a smart-aleck vice president. I can tell you that (*laughter*)!

As conversation lightens up from politics, Paar mentions that he had vacationed with Nixon and his family. Paar asks Nixon if it he would mind if he told a story regarding their recent vacation in the Bahamas and an incident that happened with their children. Nixon does not have any concerns about Paar's telling the story. This part of the conversation reveals a closer friendship than that of cordial host and guest. It reflects

---

<sup>11</sup> Conversation regarding this appearance between Jack Paar and Richard Nixon reference transcripts from *The Jack Paar Show*, March 8, 1963, and were transcribed by the author from *The Jack Paar Collection* DVD. Full transcripts are located in Appendix B.

a close friendship between the two men beyond politician and entertainer. Interestingly, this exposes another relationship between entertainment and politics.

Like his previous appearance on *The Jack Paar Show*, Nixon ended his interview with a performance playing the piano. This time Paar jokingly stating that they spent a lot of money on the accompanying Democratic violin orchestra.

Paar: This isn't what you call one of those trick surprises but the funny thing is we have hired about 15 Democratic violinists (laughter) to fill out – we are spending more money for this orchestra than we ever spent in our life. And Jose has made a concerto arrangement of this hinky dinky song that you wrote (laughter). Would you play it for us?

Nixon: Now Jack, let me say this. You asked me a moment ago whether I had any future political plans to run for anything and if last November did not finish it, this will! Believe me, the Republicans don't want another piano player in the White House (laughter).

Though not a presidential candidate at either of these appearances, Nixon took the opportunity to show himself as a knowledgeable statesman while being a likeable guy. From discussing world politics to playing the piano, Nixon was allowed the opportunity to sell his personality as a senior politician as well as portray an amiable persona by discussing his family and common interests with Jack Paar. In addition, it revealed a personal relationship he had with the host of the show. The friendly, personal appearances on this show are said to have helped reshape Nixon's image (Halberstam, July/Aug. 1994).

In the vein of Nixon's use of late-night talk television, Senator Barry Goldwater made two appearances on *The Jack Paar Show*. Goldwater's first appearance directly followed Nixon's March appearance on the March 22, 1963. Goldwater's first

appearance on *The Jack Paar Show* was also while he was running for Arizona State Senator.

This interview was very welcoming and friendly. Jack Paar, in his usual unassuming manner, played down his knowledge of Goldwater and in his introduction helped humanize the senator quoting self-effacing comments previously made by Goldwater (Appendix B: transcripts *The Jack Paar Show*, March 22, 1963)<sup>12</sup>.

Paar: There are a few little lines here that Barry has said about himself. He kids himself a lot. He said, that “the White House is now ready for me; Jacqueline has redecorated it in 18<sup>th</sup> century décor.”

Barry Goldwater’s appearance during this 15-minute segment allowed him to discuss a variety of topics with Jack Paar, covering personal information about his family and career highlights prior to politics as well as covering his political experience. Always probing political issues, Paar inquired about Goldwater’s perceptions regarding the Kennedy Administration’s handling of foreign policy and U.S. military capabilities. Additionally, Paar questioned Goldwater as to whether he would be a candidate in 1964 and accept a vice presidential opportunity with Nelson Rockefeller? Goldwater replied, “I would not run on a ticket with anybody, I would not want to be vice president. I watched what happened to one of the strongest men in the country in the short space of two years. I would rather be a live senator than sort of a backwoods, background man in the vice president’s chair” (Appendix B: transcripts *The Jack Paar Show*, March 22, 1963).

Throughout the interview, conversation was hospitable and non-confrontational. In addition to political questions, Paar asked more personal questions such as when the

---

<sup>12</sup> Conversation between Jack Paar and Barry Goldwater in this interview reference transcripts from *The Jack Paar Show* March 22, 1963, and was received from the Nixon Presidential Library. Full transcripts are located in Appendix B.



senator first met his wife. This type of exchange between the host and Goldwater allowed the guest to relate to many of the show's audience with his courting story and reflect a more personable side of the politician.

Paar: You met your wife, she was then going with another senator I believe. Did you propose to her in a phone booth?

Goldwater: I proposed to her more than any woman ever had been proposed to. Finally, we were both together in a phone booth in Muncie, Indiana on New Year's Eve talking to her mother and I said, "Honey, once again this time I'm running out of money and patience all at the same time. Will you?"

This interview ended with Paar thanking Goldwater for taking the time to come to the show and wished him good luck with his Senate race. There were no hard news topics covered during the interview, yet Goldwater was able to show his knowledge regarding many political issues. Senator Goldwater was relaxed during the program, taking off his glasses at times and answering sincerely and openly Paar's questions.

More closely connected to the 1964 election and just days after announcing his official candidacy for president, Goldwater appeared a second time on *The Jack Paar Show*. Goldwater spent 15 minutes on the program spoke with Paar regarding a variety of topics. Goldwater had just announced his intentions to run for president at his home in Arizona on January 3, 1964. Three weeks later Jack Paar introduced him as a guest on the late-night talk show.

Paar gave a complimentary introduction and spoke with Goldwater regarding the current political situation. In the opening Paar stated to Barry Goldwater that "We have the best audience we've had here in for a long time." Goldwater quipped, "It's the best

show you've had for a long time" (Appendix B: transcripts *The Jack Paar Show*, January 30, 1964).<sup>13</sup>

During this interview Jack Paar's questioning prompts Goldwater like a campaign commercial. Goldwater is prompted to show his knowledge on defense, connections in politics as well as a critique of his potential Republican opponents also running for the party's presidential nomination. Goldwater is direct, yet diplomatic with his answers. When asked by Paar if he is "happy about the spot you're in now?" regarding the election, Goldwater diplomatically answers.

Goldwater: Yes, I'm happy. Any chance that a man gets to serve his country he's happy in. I don't care if he's successful in the service that he seeks or not...I'm happy that I have the opportunity to try and contribute something to the country that's been so good to generations of Goldwaters that sneaked into this country from England and via Poland and I just want to help pay for our rent, so to speak, on this land.

The conversation then turned to the topic of presidential debates. The Democrats believed in 1960, that Nixon was wrong to debate Kennedy while he was ahead in the polls and did not want Johnson to make the same mistake in 1964 (Shade & Campbell, 2003). Paar asked Goldwater his feelings regarding Presidential Debates and what he would do if he were in Johnson's position.

Goldwater: I wouldn't debate him.

Paar: You wouldn't?

Goldwater: Why buy his audience? Let him get his own. Well, that wouldn't be the motivating thought behind the refusal. I think it's kind of dangerous to subject the president of the United States to questioning or to debate. After all, he has the most responsible job in the world and he might just slip and say something inadvertently

---

<sup>13</sup> Conversation between Jack Paar and Barry Goldwater in this interview reference transcripts from *The Jack Paar Show* January 30, 1964, and was transcribed by the author from *The Jack Paar Collection* DVD. Full transcript is located in Appendix B.

that might, ah, could even change the course of history. I think frankly that President Johnson is being very wise in his handling of the press.

At the end of the interview, Barry Goldwater jokes that he also has an instrument that he plays. This comment was made in reference to Nixon's last two appearances in which he played the piano. He said he hadn't played it lately because the neighbors below "don't appreciate that level of artistry" but maybe he could sometime bore Jack Paar with it. He called his instrument a "thumper," an instrument he received from an associate many years ago. Paar offers the opportunity for Goldwater to come back and entertain them with his musical talents and then ends the interview with a personal note regarding Goldwater's daughter's upcoming marriage in June and wishing him and his family the best.

During both interviews on the *Tonight Show*, Barry Goldwater was able to represent himself as charming and likeable. He was given the opportunity to convince the audience that he was a knowledgeable statesman while presenting a human and personable side discussing his family and friends.

It is difficult to determine if these interviews may or may not have assisted in any future election for either politician. It is important to note that both men were able to show they were intelligent, informed politicians at the same time presenting themselves as likeable. By sharing their private lives with the audience, both Nixon and Goldwater were able to show their commonalities with the audience in hopes to connect with voters.

### 1964 Election Overview

In the 1964 election, Republican Barry Goldwater challenged President Lyndon Johnson, the Democratic incumbent. While Johnson had the full support of the

Democratic Party, the Republican Party was divided and in disarray. Nelson Rockefeller, who was considered more moderate, challenged Goldwater, seen as an extreme conservative. This contest divided the Republican Party between far right and moderate Republicans (Faber, 1965). In addition, grief still followed President Kennedy's assassination, which resulted with some voters that did not originally agree Kennedy, yet struggling with the tragedy, were drawn to support Johnson (Shade & Campbell, 2003).

The major issue during this campaign was America's role in the Vietnam War. Johnson called for a limited American role, while Goldwater favored the use of nuclear weapons if necessary (Saffell, 2004). Johnson struggled to find an effective policy for America. Goldwater's hawkishness towards Communism drew Johnson in different directions. On the one hand, he wanted to establish himself more of a moderate than Goldwater in dealing with the conflict. On the other hand, he did not want to be perceived as weak on the position either (Schlesinger, 1994).

The 1964 campaign introduced the first negative political advertisement with Johnson's "The Daisy Girl" spot (Benoit, 1999).<sup>14</sup> This controversial ad promoted Goldwater as a warmonger and focused on American's fear of nuclear confrontation (Liebovich, 2001). Johnson used Goldwater's inability to effectively communicate to voters against him. In addition to the controversial "Daisy" advertisement, Johnson's campaign attempted to portray Goldwater as an extremist on other issues besides defense and character issues. (Benoit, 1999).

Goldwater, the Senator for Arizona, ran his campaign on the slogan "a choice, not

---

<sup>14</sup> Johnson's "Daisy Girl" spot was an attack ad that portrayed Goldwater as a warmonger. It employed powerful images to evoke its message, using an innocent child holding a flower with a mushroom cloud of an atomic bomb in the background. The ad used the tagline spoken by Johnson "We must either love each other, or we must die." Even though it only aired once in a paid broadcast, it was repeated several times on newscasts. See Benoit (1999).

an echo” (Saffell, 2004). He was greatly appealing to the far right of the party, but was highly disliked by the moderate wing, which contained popular figures such as New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller. As a result, many prominent Republicans did not campaign for Goldwater, thus limiting his ability to win moderate votes from the Democrats (Faber, 1965).

Conservative Goldwater supporters claimed the liberal media had undermined his campaign. This was one of the earliest claims that news media favored liberals in the presidential election, though Nixon suggested that a media bias for Kennedy had been a factor in 1960 (Liebovich, 2001). This was a theme that would be repeated in years to come.

The election was a landslide win for Democrat Lyndon Johnson, obtaining an electoral-college victory of 44 against Republican Barry Goldwater’s six. It was the sixth-largest win in history with the popular vote margin of 61.1 % to 38.5 %. To many it seemed like a foregone conclusion before the campaign even started (Shadegg, 1965).

### Talk Show/Entertainment Program Appearances

#### Between 1964 and 1968 Campaigns

Nixon returned one last time to late-night talk television just prior to his nomination and the beginning of his 1968 presidential campaign against Hubert Humphrey. On November 22, 1967 Richard Nixon appeared on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*, where he joked about his expertise in running for president “not winning, but running.” He also recommended that Johnny Carson would be a good candidate for

president as this conversation from the show reflects (Appendix B: transcripts *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*, November 22, 1967).<sup>15</sup>

Nixon: I heard you talking about Bobby Kennedy. You sound more like Bobby Kennedy than he does and I think you ought to run for President.

Let me tell you a few things, that, that, I'm an expert on how to run for president. Not how to win, but how to run! (Laughter)

Carson: Yes, you are that!

Nixon: I'd do a few things to you. Well, first let me tell you your assets. You're young, 42, right?

Carson: Right.

Nixon: Ah, you come over on television like gangbusters and boy, I'm the expert on how important that is.

Carson: You're not going to lend me your make-up man are you?

Nixon: No, I'm going to lend him to Lyndon Johnson.

Nixon also joked saying that if he ever wants to win an election, the “makeup director on *The Tonight Show* would join his staff,” referring to his makeup debacle during the debates in the 1960 election against Kennedy. This self-effacing humor by Nixon gave the audience an appearance of a humble, likeable guy. He had not yet announced his candidacy to run for president but it seemed he was preparing his image for the campaign.

In addition, Nixon made one other notable TV appearance in the 1968 election: an appearance on one of the more popular TV shows of that day, *Laugh-In*. *Laugh-In* offered witty skits and political barbs but most importantly, the show had very good

---

<sup>15</sup> Conversation between Johnny Carson and Richard Nixon in this interview reference transcript from *Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* November 22, 1967 and was transcribed by the author from *The Johnny Carson Collection: his favorite moments* DVD. Transcript is located in Appendix B.

ratings. In mid-September, Nixon broke from his general election campaign to appear on the show and recite the show's signature catchphrase, "Sock it to me," often done by noted celebrities. Some believe that Nixon's "sock it to me" appearance on *Laugh-In* helped him win the election, as it cast the otherwise formal and stodgy Nixon in a few seconds of self-deprecating humor. Nixon's taped appearance ran on September 16, 1968 (Foley, 1968, p. A-16).

Richard Nixon later appraised his "Sock it to me" cameo as "a stroke that helped people see I wasn't just that Tricky Dick, mean spirited son-of-a-bitch" (Kramer & Barrett, 1995). Paul Keyes, *Laugh-In's* producer, was a good friend of Nixon and helped arrange the appearance. The show had also hoped to get the Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey to appear, saying "What a Good IDEA!" in response to Nixon's "Sock It To ME!" but Humphrey's handlers thought it would appear undignified, so Humphrey did not appear (Archerd, 1969).

There were no late-night talk show appearances during the general election by Nixon, Humphrey or Independent Party candidate George Wallace. However, the use of television during this time by Nixon is a reflection of the evolving trends in campaign strategy tactics. These appearances also reveal a relationship that between politics and the entertainment industry. Nixon was friends with Jack Paar, the entertainer, and Paul Keyes, the producer of the popular program *Laugh-In*.

### 1968 Election Overview

Considered one of the most turbulent campaigns in American history, the 1968 election was filled with ups and downs. The Vietnam War was a key issue for voters and incumbent President Johnson – so much so that after a weak showing in the New

Hampshire primary, he shocked the country on March 31 by announcing that he would not seek reelection. Johnson's withdrawal from the race allowed Vice President Humphrey to enter the campaign as the Democratic Party candidate (Nicholas, 1969).

More turmoil occurred just four days after Johnson's announcement when Civil Rights Activist Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. His assassination sparked riots in more than 100 cities. Following this terrible event in June, after a strong showing in the early primaries, Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated right after winning the California primary. Humphrey, who entered the race late and had not won any primaries, became the Democratic nominee at a tumultuous convention in Chicago (Saffell, 2004).

The Republicans nominated Richard M. Nixon, who was attempting a political comeback after losing the 1960 presidential election and the 1962 California gubernatorial race. After Goldwater's disastrous loss in 1964, the Republicans were hoping that Nixon's experience both in office and as a campaigner would win them the office. Adding to this election was the first time in which both political campaigns, Nixon and Humphrey, were managed by professional advertising agencies for the purpose of packaging the candidates as products. This packaging of candidates was accomplished primarily through television (Pfau, Houston & Semmler, 2007).

The advertisers working on the Nixon campaign argued that voters were not as interested in issues but votes were more influenced by the image of the candidate. The Nixon campaign was more successful in packaging an appealing candidate. The success of his candidacy is considered the result of his campaign's understanding of the importance and power of television (McGinnis, 1969).



Adding to the turmoil of the 1968 election, in addition to the two major-party candidates, independent candidate Alabama Governor George Wallace entered the race. Wallace waged the most successful third-party candidacy since 1924 (Nicholas, 1969). Wallace was a key factor in the race, taking more votes from Humphrey than Nixon. He was especially damaging to Humphrey in the south. Wallace received 13.5 % of the popular vote and 45 electoral votes. Wallace's candidacy influenced the 1968 election, making it one of the closest elections in U.S. history giving Nixon a victory over Humphrey by a slim margin, 43.4 % to 43.1 % of the popular vote.

#### Talk Show/Entertainment Program Appearances

##### Between 1968 and 1972 Campaigns

Though none of the 1972 or 1976 presidential nominees ever appeared on late-night talk television, one eventual two-term president did show up on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* in 1972 before he became his party's nominee. Ronald Reagan, the actor turned politician, made an appearance on this late-night talk show on October 2, 1972, during his term as governor of California.

Reagan made his appearance on the *Tonight Show* as the first guest on the show's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary special. He was the only guest on this particular program who was not a comedian. All other guests on the show were professional celebrity comedians. Unlike other *Tonight Show* programs that had Carson sitting at a desk and his guests next to him, the stage had a living-room look. Guests sat on a couch next to Ed McMahon, Carson's side-kick on the show, and Carson sat in a large chair that looked like it would fit in most living rooms.

Carson, humbled by the Governor's appearance, introduces Reagan with appreciation for him coming to the show (Appendix B: transcripts *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*, October 2, 1972).<sup>16</sup>

Carson: We have a lot of people on the show tonight but first of all I want to thank the governor because I know his busy schedule, he I believe, ah, he took a helicopter in tonight just to be with us on our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. He's had enormous success, as you know, both in the theatrical world and political world. Would you welcome please, the Governor of the State of California, the Honorable Ronald Reagan, ladies and gentlemen.

The two discuss Carson's move to California from New York and in the middle of conversation, Reagan uses his experience as an actor and comedic timing as this following reveals.

Carson: I thank you very much for dropping in. I know how many requests you must get to be at various functions and openings and closings and rallies and ah, I thank you for dropping by tonight to just to say hello and be with us. It's always a pleasure to see you.

Reagan: Listen John, it's a pleasure for (*turning to Ed McMahan*) by the way, John Wayne said to give you his regards (*laughter*).

McMahon: Thank you, thank you governor (*laughter*).

Carson: You're going to start with me tonight. On our Anniversary you're gonna do that to me?

Reagan: No, no, Nancy said to say hello to you.

A display of his acting talent, Reagan was able to have the right timing to show his sense of humor and his likeability. Reagan then complimented Carson on the success of his show and mentioned his wife, Nancy, also enjoyed watching his program. Carson asked the governor if he missed the entertainment business. Reagan diplomatically said

---

<sup>16</sup> Conversation between Johnny Carson and Ronald Reagan in this interview reference transcript from *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* October 2, 1972, and was transcribed by the author from *The Johnny Carson Collection: his favorite moments* DVD. Full transcripts are located in Appendix B.

yes, but feels very fulfilled being able to do what he is doing. The conversation below reflects a very cordial, humanizing and diplomatic answer.

Carson: Can I ask you a question? I know that I've asked you this question before. Since you've been in political life, you're probably more now in the public eye, that exposure politically. Do you ever miss the entertainment business, per se, performing as an actor?

Reagan: Oh, every once and a while when I miss it a little bit, I go up and look at the legislature and have a few laughs (Laughter).

No, I thought I would and I love it, the life I had in show business, I thought it was the most exciting and wonderful life in the world but I must say this has been so exciting, so challenging and to instead of just talking about it to be able to get a hold of something and do something about it. To help write the script, and to succeed in something like for example, our welfare reform, has been so successful that you know that you're saving the people some money. You're doing some good at the same time, it's wonderful. Well listen, Happy 10<sup>th</sup>.

After his response to this last question Reagan mentions a note that someone asked him to read to Johnny Carson. It was from current President Nixon offering Carson good wishes and congratulations on his 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Interestingly, this appearance was just before the 1972 election, in which Nixon was running for re-election.

Reagan: Dear Johnny,

As one of the many who had been guests on your program, I'm pleased to join in saluting you on your 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as host of the *Tonight Show*. It is a milestone that is enthusiastically greeted by scores of loyal fans for whom you'll become a part of their daily living. My congratulations to you for tonight and best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

Reagan hands Carson the note from Nixon. Nixon used the association with Reagan and his appearance to obtain exposure on late-night programming. Though Nixon did not make any personal appearances on late-night talk show himself, on this night, he was able to have a presence and portray a thoughtful and kind personality.

### 1972 Election Overview

As with the 1968 election, the Vietnam War was once again the major issue of the campaign. In the 1972 presidential election voters were offered a clear choice between the political philosophies of Nixon and Senator George McGovern. Nixon, the incumbent Republican president, had not ended the war and McGovern claimed he would end it quickly (Hart, 1973).

Nixon devoted much of his energy to performing the duties of the Presidency, keeping himself rather aloof from the rigors of the campaign details. McGovern was the hard-working underdog trying to unseat the incumbent. McGovern's task was infinitely more difficult. He proposed programs that were opposite of Nixon's. His communication was ineffective and voters perceived his programs to be disruptive toward the course the country were to take (White, 1973).

The Nixon campaign portrayed the antiwar protesters as anti-American and made voters associate McGovern as the antiwar candidate and anti-American. The Republicans successfully depicted Senator McGovern as a radical leftist. He was unable to shake that depiction. Thus regardless of the charges that McGovern made, most Americans paid little attention. Adding to this, just two weeks before the election Secretary of State Kissinger announced the administration was close to obtaining peace in Vietnam (Vermont, 1972, p. 26).

This was the first election that allowed citizens between the ages of 18 and 20 to vote for the president. The Twenty-Sixth Amendment, ratified in 1971, lowered the legal voting age from 21 to 18 (Shade & Campbell, 2003). In the end, Nixon went from one of the closest Presidential races in 1968 to a landslide in the 1972 presidential election. He received 60.7 % of a popular vote, which represented 55.7 of those resident voters eligible to vote in federal elections. His 18 million-vote margin over McGovern was the biggest popular vote margin ever attained by a candidate in a presidential election (White, 1973).

#### Talk Show/Entertainment Program Appearances

##### Between 1972 and 1976 Campaigns

During this gap of appearances on late night talk shows, presidential candidates Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford chose to use the traditional political strategies including advertising, debates and speeches to supplement news coverage versus entertainment programming. These tactics were recommended by their advisers so as to maintain presidential dignity. Additionally, largely due to Watergate and Vietnam, the old cozy relationship between politicians and reporters was destroyed and candidates withdrew into a “cocoon of handlers” (Thomas, 2000, p 27).

#### 1976 Election Overview

The 1976 election was tainted with feelings from the Watergate scandal and Vietnam. This made the voters suspicious of power and those in politics. In addition, the public viewed the media as both powerful and hostile (Stuckey, 1991). The nation’s

mood political disillusion made the setting for a contentious campaign (Shade & Campbell, 2003).

Gerald Ford took over the presidency after Nixon's impeachment and resignation. He acknowledged the emotional context of his presidency, promising to end presidential abuses of power. Initially, Ford had widespread popularity. After his pardon of Richard Nixon, his popularity fell along with the confidence of the American people that he could handle the responsibilities of the job. Furthermore, his campaign had to deal with an image as an incompetent and clumsy stumbler. Ford failed to understand that his problem was one of image and communication and not necessarily of substance (Stuckey, 1991).

Democratic challenger, Jimmy Carter, a devoted "born again" Southern Baptist, ran as an "outsider" who would clean up Washington from the corruption of the past. He promised, "I will never lie to you," which was considered an unusual claim to be made by a Presidential candidate. Although Ford was not involved in Watergate, Carter's campaign portrayed Ford as just an extension of the Nixon Administration. This tactic to present Ford so closely tied to Nixon played into the mood of the country at the time (Saffel, 2004).

Ford, the Republican incumbent president, and Democratic nominee Carter both had issues of likeability. Each campaign tried to design appeals, deal with the media and tailor their public speeches to accommodate the environment of the election. Neither candidate relied heavily on providing a context for his claims, arguments or accomplishments. Instead they both felt that if the facts were laid before the American

public, the facts would speak for themselves and garner them political support (Fraser, 1977).

The initial polls on election day showed the two candidates neck and neck. The final count of the popular vote showed that Carter had defeated Ford by 51 to 48 %, and by 57 electoral votes.

#### Talk Show/Entertainment Program Appearances Between 1976 and 1980; 1980 and 1984 Campaigns

Between 1976 and 1980 presidential election, candidates did not use late-night talk show and entertainment appearances as part of their campaign strategy. Similarly, the following election period, 1980 to 1984, no appearances occurred by presidential candidates on alternative television programming.

Ronald Reagan was in office during these 8 years and was already considered a master manipulator of the press. More than any other politician he understood the importance of mass media communication, how the media worked and how to use it to his advantage. In particular, television fit his persona and his messages and behavior were tailored to conform to the medium's requirements (Stuckey, 1991).

Between the 1980 and 1988 elections, Reagan did not have to bother with entertainment appearance because he had “done that professionally before entering politics” implying he had plenty of entertainment and celebrity awareness from his prior career as an actor (Rich, 2004). Reagan also had appeared previously in 1972 on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson Show* while he was Governor of California.

### 1980 Election Overview

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter initially faced Edward Kennedy as a serious challenger in his bid for the Democratic nominee and re-election. Carter won his party's nomination for re-election and ran against Republican nominee Ronald Reagan. Reagan, a former actor turned politician, dominated the primary elections and easily won the Republican nomination. In addition to the two party candidates, John Anderson, a moderate Republican, ran as an Independent party candidate.

Two main issues dominated the 1980 campaign. The first focused on foreign affairs and America's image as a world leader. The second issue, as in other campaigns, was the economy. The two candidates had very different approaches to their campaigns. Reagan supporters praised him for running a campaign of upbeat optimism compared to a perceived campaign ran by Carter based on despair and pessimism. Carter emphasized his record as a peacemaker, and said Reagan's election would threaten civil rights and social programs that stretched back to the New Deal. Reagan's platform also emphasized the importance of peace, as well as a prepared self-defense (Drew, 1981).

Reagan became well known for his effectiveness as a communicator, particularly on television. Reagan understood the politics of theater and his campaign designed his communication to take advantage of that understanding. Reagan's style came across affably and likeable. Reagan also employed the question, "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" (Schlesinger, 1994). Conversely, Carter's campaign struggled to make a positive case for his re-election. His campaign focused on a "good future – bad future" theme but found it difficult to make the bad charges against Reagan stick (Stuckey, 1991).



Independent John Anderson maintained his position in the race claiming that his purpose was to offer people an alternative to Carter and Reagan in case both their candidacies collapsed. It was also believed that his staying in the race would cost Carter the Presidency and has been called a “spoiler” for the 1980 election (Drew, 1981). On Election Day, Reagan won 51 % of the popular vote to 41 % for Carter and 7 % for Anderson. More overwhelmingly, Reagan won 489 electoral votes to 49 for Carter.

### 1984 Election Overview

The 1984 began with the incumbent president, Republican Ronald Reagan, re-nominated with full support of his party. The opposing Democrats chose Walter Mondale, an established figure to lead their party. President’s Reagan re-nomination marked the transformation of the Republican Party into a cohesive organization with a coherent ideology. Mondale’s selection paralleled the reach toward political power by newly assertive groups within the Democratic Party. Adding to the uniqueness of the election, Mondale’s vice presidential running mate, Geraldine Ferraro, was the first woman selected for nation office by a major party (Pomper, 1985).

Continued to be called the “Great Communicator,” Reagan’s campaign stressed patriotic themes and family values. In addition, as incumbent president he could claim credit for an improving economy and promised to continue to build a “proud and vibrant America” (Saffel, 2004). Reagan’s major theme for this election was his “vision of America,” which consisted of entrepreneurs and citizens voluntarily helping the needy and a nation grounded in religious values. These sentiments had widespread appeal and Americans looked at this vision as their future. In addition, the president had so much

emotional appeal that even those that disagreed with him on particular issues still voted for him (Pomper, 1985).

Mondale did not have the same persona as Reagan and fought an uphill battle just to get his message out to voters. His nomination of Geraldine Ferraro as his running mate was of historic importance but Mondale was perceived as weak and indecisive (Schramm & Mahoney, 1987). He used his nomination of Ferraro as a media opportunity to show himself as a leader. Still, Mondale had an image problem and was never comfortable in front of the camera. Television journalists portrayed a colorless image, which Mondale was unable to make himself appear on television very well and came off looking ridiculous and insincere (Blume, 1985).

Conversely, Reagan used television in the 1984 campaign like it had never been used before. His campaign created a whole new style of electioneering, focusing on image over substance making issues something of the past. Reagan ran the most TV-image oriented campaign since the beginning of the television era (Drew, 1985).

The nightly news perpetuated the image campaign continually repeating Reagan as the 'Great Communicator' and portraying Mondale as boring. "To think that the constant repetition of these images does not have an enormous impact on the electorate would be to have one's head in the sand" (Blume, 1985, p. 185). The Reagan campaign garnered their candidate even a bigger win than in 1980, winning 58.8 % of the popular vote to Mondale's 40.6 %. Reagan's 525 electoral votes (out of 538) is the highest total ever received by a presidential candidate (Robinson & Ranney, 1985).

## Talk Show/Entertainment Program Appearances

### Between 1984 and 1988 Campaigns

Neither George H.W. Bush, the 1988 Republican nominee, nor his Democrat challenger, Michael Dukakis, appeared on late-night talk shows during the general election period. However, 1992 Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton made his first appearance on late-night talk shows in 1988 as a guest on the *Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*.

While still governor of Arkansas, Clinton was looking for a way to salvage his political career after giving a long-winded speech introducing the 1988 Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis at the party's convention. Clinton's speech ran twice as long as the allocated and was criticized by conventioners as too long and was panned by the media (Clancy, 1988).

Clinton appeared on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* on July 28, 1988. Initially, Carson did not like to have politicians on the program and did not want to book Clinton, but when they said he'd play the saxophone, Carson agreed to his appearance. During his introduction of the Arkansas Governor, Carson parodied Clinton's lengthy speech, covering a lengthy biography of Clinton from his education, political career including running George McGovern's campaign in Texas to being first elected governor to mentioning popular tourist locations in Arkansas. Carson's introduction went on for close to four minutes (Appendix B: transcripts *Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*, July 28, 1988).<sup>17</sup>

Carson welcomes him to stage and has a prop prepared for the governor.

---

<sup>17</sup> Conversation between Johnny Carson and Bill Clinton in this interview reference transcript from *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* July 28, 1988, and was transcribed by the author from *The Johnny Carson Collection: his favorite moments* DVD. Transcript is located in Appendix B.

Carson: Well governor, I thank you for coming here tonight and my first question is "How are you?" (*Carson turns over an hourglass timer – audience laughs and applauds*).

Clinton traded quips with Carson and confided that his 35-minute nomination speech, which was interrupted by chants and less polite suggestions that he stop, was actually designed to make Dukakis look good (Callison, 1988).

Clinton: My sole goal was achieved. I wanted so badly to make Dukakis look great, and I succeeded beyond my wildest dreams...Dukakis called me a few days ago and said he thought the speech was great, everything was forgiven and would I please nominate George Bush in New Orleans.

Carson asked him to entertain them with his saxophone and Clinton obliged playing a rendition of "Summertime" with Doc Severinson and the NBC Orchestra. The media applauded the appearance. Media coverage gave Bill Clinton great reviews. The *Associated Press* reported, "Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton has gone from the media doghouse to media darling in one short week. And all it took was a smile, a few self-deprecating jokes and a song (*Associated Press*, 1988).

Additionally, *Washington Post* television critic Tom Shales was quoted saying, "People who watch television love this kind of comeback story. He was so boyish and charming. I'm sure he won a lot of hearts," (Shales, 2003).

Clinton's appearance on the *Tonight Show* used his humor to keep the disastrous Convention speech from ruining his image and career as a rising star in the Democratic Party. The positive reports of his appearance from the press helped Clinton build an image of a likeable guy. This appearance, most likely, assisted in setting the stage for his 1992 run for president.

Interestingly, the arrangement to be a guest on the show was through Clinton's relationship with Hollywood producers Linda Bloodworth-Thomason and Harry

Thomason (Clancy, 1988). This situation once again reflects another connection between politics and entertainment industry.

### 1988 Election Overview

The incumbent vice president, George H.W. Bush, won the Republican nomination in 1988 with strong support from his party. Conversely, Democrat nominee Michael Dukakis was not considered a front-runner for the nomination until late in the primaries. He competed against several Democratic leaders including Jesse Jackson, Mario Cuomo, and Gary Hart. In June, after primary victories in California, New Jersey, Montana, and New Mexico, Dukakis became the apparent nominee for the Democratic Party (Shade & Campbell, 2003).

In the 1988 election, there was a great contrast between the two campaign's abilities to control the news media. Bush's media advisers planned the vice president's appearances in camera-ready settings that provided excellent videotape for the newscasts. Conversely, Dukakis made speech after speech in front of a "drab blue curtain, behind a wooden podium" (Hopkins, 2008, p. 159).

Bush began his campaign by using several attack advertisements based on the strategy that Dukakis was not well known at the beginning of the campaign. These ads defined him as an inexperienced challenger. Though Bush's negative commercials garnered attention, his campaign also produced a series of strong positive ads, such as "The Future." Made in the same style of Reagan's 1984 spots, these ads sought to establish an identity for the two-term vice president. These spots departed from Reagan's ads slightly in that Bush was prominently placed in the commercials whereas Reagan hardly appeared in his own spots. He was shown through excerpts from his acceptance

speech or in family scenes that presented him as an all-American father (Goldman & Matthews, 1989).

Bush's media campaign skillfully supplemented paid advertising with free publicity in the form of staged photo opportunities that were sure to be reported as news. This was a strategy originated in 1984 by the Reagan campaign. The Bush media campaign was controlled and supervised in all respects by veteran media consultant Roger Ailes, who also coached Bush for the debates (Polsby & Wildavaky, 2008).

Unlike the organized and controlled Bush campaign, the Dukakis campaign did not move quickly enough to communicate who Dukakis was and what he stood for. Consequently, the negative series of ads aired by the Bush campaign defined him first, leaving Dukakis to dispute the misinformation (Trent & Friedenber, 2000).

The disarray and confusion of the Dukakis campaign was exemplified by a series of commercials known as "The Handlers." In one of these commercials, "Crazy," a group of Bush media consultants worries that their selection of Dan Quayle for vice president may have been a mistake. The intention was to portray Bush as a superficial candidate whose campaign was based more on image than on substance, but the ads were confusing and seemed at first glance to be pro-Bush. They were pulled off the air, but only after the Dukakis campaign had spent \$3 million to produce and air them (Pfau et al., 2007).

In November of 1988, George H. W. Bush was elected as the forty-first President of the United States of America. Bush defeated Dukakis, receiving 53.9 % of the popular vote and 426 electoral votes while 46.1 % voted for Dukakis, getting him 112 electoral votes. George Bush was the first sitting vice president to be elected in

succession to a retiring president since Martin Van Buren succeeded Andrew Jackson in 1836 (Polsby & Wildavaky, 2008).

### Conclusion

This chapter has chronicled 28 years of presidential elections, 1968 -1988, revealing television's impact on presidential campaigning in America. Since the 1960s, television has surpassed newspapers as the most important and influential news medium in the United States. The television age began in the early 60s and has since evolved to become a significant and influential factor in the outcome of elections.

Since 1968, television has played a pivotal role in presidential campaigning. Nixon credited his win in 1968 to his use of television and his appearance on the popular prime-time program *Laugh-In*. Nixon understood the importance of television before any other politician and used his friendship with Jack Paar to appear on his show and build his image. Nixon appeared three times on Paar's program, selling himself as a knowledgeable statesman and twice playing the piano to show he was a personable guy.

As politics moved through the 1970s, campaigning for the presidency entered a time in which making good television, was essential to successful politics. In essence the candidate need to be appealing and likeable to the viewers on television to make good television. Neither Ford nor Carter offered good television and both were one-term presidents. In the 1980s, Reagan revolutionized the use of television like no one had before. Politicians like Reagan, whose professional skills and experience as a movie actor have made him the "Great Communicator," could overcome mistakes by using the media. He was the "Teflon man," the leader to whom nothing bad including rash statements, ignorance of facts, or policy failure ever stuck.

The end of the '80s also saw a governor from Arkansas, Bill Clinton, make a political comeback using television. Like Reagan, Clinton used his charisma to win over viewers and voters to overcome the criticisms of his lengthy nomination speech. This also set the tone for Clinton's 1992 campaign in which his strategists used television to their full advantage.

The evolution of campaigning from 1960 to 1988 has revealed the growth and use of television by both voters and candidates. In addition, these elections reveal a transgression from substance and issue based campaigns to focus on the candidate's image and personality. Candidates understand that a politician who is not good on television cannot hope to win a major election and are creating their campaigns to ensure good television.

The mass media are the primary mitigating institutional link between candidates and voters. The reality of the political media landscape changed over these past 28 years. Presidential candidates came to understand the changing media and are able to exploit these changes, increasing not only their own popularity but also the importance of television's impact on American culture. This has implications both for the practice of political communication and for the American electorate as a whole.



## CHAPTER 5

### 1992 ELECTION AND THE SAXOPHONE

The role of the media in the electoral process, always controversial, was widely discussed during and after the elections of 1992. For once, however, the discussion had less to do with shopworn issues such as ‘Are the media biased? And ‘Are the media too powerful?’ than with more empirical and analytic questions concerning the new ways in which the candidates were using the media to reach out to the voters and the correspondingly new ways that the media were covering the candidates.  
(Nelson, 1993, p. 89)

#### Introduction

##### Election Overview

Only one year prior to the 1992 presidential campaign, the election seemed likely to be more of a dull predictable event. President George H. W. Bush held a commanding lead in the opinion polls, and his reelection appeared to be inevitable (Quirk & Dalager, 1993). However, a series of unforeseen circumstances occurred that changed Bush’s anticipated reelection. The two most prominent factors effecting this change in momentum included a strong third party candidate entering the presidential contest and the use of interview programs emphasized as a new campaign strategy format to reach voters.

The election of 1992 changed the rules of traditional presidential campaigning. The presidential candidates began to speak directly to individual voters. In the four decades after the 1952 election, political television made the rules for the presidential

campaigns with advertising specialists controlling political television. During the 1992 campaign, person-to-person communication became as important as the mass media advertising and news coverage (Schlesinger, 1994).

Historically, the 1992 campaign marked the diversity of channels of political communication and began to approach the diversity of political interests in American society. It became more and more difficult to communicate to voters through the traditional news channels. Studies showed that the length of news sound bites used by television networks, in which politicians actually appear on the screen explaining their views, was shrinking. By the 1988 campaign, the average direct quote or sound bite from a presidential candidate lasted only 8.9 seconds, a decrease from 43.1 seconds during the 1968 campaign (Hallin, 1992).

The candidates in the 1992 presidential election became aware of the difficulty of communicating information directly through the traditional news process. Because of this difficulty, campaign strategists during this election created new avenues for their candidates to talk to the voters. The catalyst accelerating this change was the Independent third party candidate, Ross Perot. Perot was the first of the three 1992 candidates to realize that the structure of the news media had become so fragmented that it became necessary to find other channels for communication as a candidate. In addition, Perot felt the national news media were as much a part of the “system” as his political competitors (Crigler, Just, Alger, Cook, Kern, & West, 1996). Perot, therefore, began his campaign on CNN’s *Larry King Live*, a cable television interview show.

Realizing the reality that television remained the primary source of information for many voters, two trends in the conduct of network journalism encouraged this change

in tactics. The first was the shrinking sound bite by network news. This made it even more difficult for the candidates to explain themselves to the voters. Second, the context in which the candidate's quotes were truncated by anchormen and reporters, and embedded into commentary, did not give the explanation the candidates liked (Hallin, 1992). Following Perot's lead, the two major party candidates, Republican George H. W. Bush and Democrat William J. Clinton, also felt compelled to use innovative communication avenues based on their perception of inadequate coverage by the traditional news processes.

The candidates appeared on a number of television and radio entertainment programs throughout the 1992 election cycle. These entertainment shows offered advantages over news programs. They provided a less adversarial atmosphere with typically friendlier questions. Each of the presidential campaigns gave high priority to interview programs and call-in shows featuring Larry King, Katie Couric, Arsenio Hall, Phil Donahue, Don Imus and Rush Limbaugh.

Howard Kurtz of the *Washington Post* first coined the term for the entire election referring to this trend as the "Talk Show Campaign of 1992" (Kurtz, 1992, A1, A14.). According to the executive producer of the *CBS This Morning* program, Ted Savaglio, the mushrooming of candidate appearances in these types of formats was perpetuated with the decision by the Clinton campaign to put its candidate on television as much as possible (Kolbert, 1992, p. A10).

Negotiations between the television schedulers and campaign managers were taking place behind the scenes involving dozens of phone calls and proceedings similar to a bidding war. Once a candidate received an offer to appear from one program, the

campaign would take it to the program's competitors to see if they would match the opportunity. The candidates' campaigns pitched the programs against each other, and the programs felt the competition for candidate appearances. According to CNN's *Larry King Live* executive producer Tamara Haddad, "We're competing with each other, so we call everyone we can, everyone we know. And if anybody who tells you otherwise is lying." (Kolbert, 1992, p. A10).

The public also played an important role in bringing this innovation forward. Voters tuned into these interview programs in large numbers to encourage both candidates and the media to expand these appearances into other media formats from regular news broadcasts to MTV (Crigler et al., 1996). For example *The Arsenio Hall Show* top ratings average during its time on television was a 3.9 national rating (www.museum.tv). The night Bill Clinton appeared on the show the ratings rose to a 4.6 nationally (Egos & Ids; Talking Presidential Heads, 1992, Sec. 9 p. 4). The public was attentive to this new format, and program ratings that went up when candidates appeared (Stevens, 1993). These appearances were benefiting both the candidates and the media.

As the 1992 campaign progressed, candidate interviews were conducted with increasing frequency. Research estimates that there were some 243<sup>18</sup> interviews with the major candidates. Of these 243 interviews with major candidates 43 % were from newscasts or news interviews, 5 % from magazine shows, 38 % from weekday morning shows, and 25 % from other kinds of talks shows (Stevens, 1993).<sup>19</sup> This total was more

---

<sup>18</sup> Total interviews include both presidential and vice presidential candidates for the three primary parties. Republicans Bush interviews = 37 and Quayle = 36, Democrats Clinton = 87 and Gore = 41, Independents Perot = 45 and Stockdale = 2 (Crigler, et al., 1993, p. 138).

<sup>19</sup> News includes nightly news interview segments (on ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC, and PBS), news interview segments on CNN daytime news and political shows, news talk shows, national town meetings and late night news show *Nightline*. Magazine shows include *60 Minutes*, *20/20*, *Primetime Live* and *Dateline*

than twice as many candidate interviews than in 1988. Additionally, those conducted in 1988 were more closely tied to newscasts whereas the 1992 appearances were more frequently on entertainment programming (Stevens, 1993). The 1992 presidential campaign changed the political election landscape for all following elections.

## The Candidates

### George H. W. Bush

Bush received his party's nomination without any real opposition. However, as straightforward as his nomination was, his road to another victory became difficult. Historically, an incumbent president who had such high approval ratings would be all but unbeatable, particularly when there did not seem to be any serious opponent. On the heels of the Gulf War victory one year prior, the incumbent president enjoyed the highest approval rating, 89 %, of any president since polling began (Grant, 1993).

However, several issues and campaign mistakes appeared to reveal Bush's vulnerability. First, his own party was not convinced that he was committed to its cause and his campaign underestimated dissatisfaction within his own party as well as in the nation in general. Second, the economy flailed during 1992. Bush was seen as going back on his "read my lips, no new taxes" promise from the 1988 campaign (Abramson, Aldrich & Rohde, 1995). The nation was in a recession and his administration was blamed for the weakening world economic status (Shade & Campbell, 2003). His vice presidential running mate, Dan Quayle, had stirred up controversy attacking the morality

---

*NBC*. Weekday morning shows include morning programs on ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox. Other programs include *The Arsenio Hall Show*, *Donahue* and MTV (Crigler et al., 1993).

of a popular sitcom character.<sup>20</sup> Lastly, popular third party candidate Ross Perot came out swinging at Bush, exposing his faults and mistakes.

George H. W. Bush was going to be the first elected Republican president since Herbert Hoover in 1932 to be denied a second term (Grant, 1993). After owning such high approval ratings in 1991, Bush saw his ratings plummet to 40 % in March of 1992 (Toner, 1992). The economy went into a recession along with several highly publicized gaffes on the president's part, opening the door for a potential defeat.

President Bush, by the identification of his office, had the greatest access to regular news channels, but Bush initially feared that participation in the candidate interview format would be demeaning to the position (Crigler et al., 1996). In May, he told a reporter at the *Washington Post*, "I don't plan on spending a lot of time on Phil Donahue shows. I'm president" (Balz, 1992). However, by the following month, Bush conceded that he was considering joining the "parade of Presidential contenders to the television talk-show circuit" (Rosenthal, 1992).

President Bush never appeared on late-night talk show programs or other entertainment programming during the primary season. He did appear as the Republican nominee in the general election, 26 times during the months of September and October on soft news and magazine type programming. He appeared on *Larry King Live*, *20/20* as well as all three major network morning talk shows (Crigler et al., 1993). However, he did not appear on any late-night talk show programming such as *Late-night with David Letterman*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* or *The Arsenio Hall show*.

---

<sup>20</sup> Dan Quayle had attacked sitcom character Murphy Brown, a high rated television program in 1992, for promoting a woman's choice to have a child out of wedlock.

## Bill Clinton

Unlike President Bush, Bill Clinton's campaign was challenged from the very beginning with problems. Allegations of adultery, draft dodging and use of marijuana were controversial issues the media intensely covered. These three major allegations were hurled against him and collectively ultimately burdened him with the unfortunate nickname of "Slick Willie" (Pomper, 1993). These negatives might have brought Clinton's campaign to an early end, but they did not, and he survived, changing his nickname from "Slick Willie" to the "Comeback Kid" (Grant, 1993).

Several factors contributed to Clinton's survival. First, the Clinton campaign worked effectively on damage control. The campaign had Bill and his wife Hillary, appear together on CBS's *60 Minutes*. Without admitting any affairs, the Clintons acknowledged that their marriage had weathered difficult moments but had grown stronger from the experience. In addition to the damage control, the Clinton campaign was clever as well as fortunate during the primary season. Not only were his primary contenders under funded but he also did not have to run against Jesse Jackson, the potential African-American candidate, which gave him the majority of that vote (Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, 1995).

The focus on getting out its own message rather than getting trapped into reacting to GOP charges was another strength of the Clinton campaign. As Clinton was steadily winning national support, George H. W. Bush made the crucial mistake of underestimating the public's concern over the economy. Nagging news stories of the recession were broadcast into homes across the country on a nightly basis. Sensing the public's dismay over economic troubles, Clinton found the major theme of his campaign.

"It's the economy, stupid," became the rallying cry from the growing group of Clinton supporters (Pomper, 1993). The media caught on to the popularity of the simplistic strategy, and before long, the previously dormant Bush was compelled to go on the offensive.

Although the Clinton camp used the media to advance a positive image, it also understood and respected the press' ability to tear down a candidate. Clinton advisor James Carville referred to the media as "The Beast." With this mindset, Clinton's staff used technological advancements to keep tabs on the media coverage at all times. This allowed for early reaction to negative stories on Clinton and minimal damage (Pomper, 1993).

The Clinton campaign used media to introduce its candidate to the American people and to show him as a successful governor, family man and someone who had succeeded by his own efforts. Clinton did not come from a rich or privileged background. His campaign used alternative media to get that message across to voters. Confidential documents released after the campaign describe the need for the campaign to exploit the "counterpolitical" media (Pomper, 1993). This type of media focused on talk shows. In June of 1992 Clinton made a guest appearance on all three network morning shows as well as *Larry King Live* and MTV. In addition, he broke new ground by appearing on *The Arsenio Hall* late-night television show to grab public attention and appeal to young voters (Grant, 1993).

In the end, Bill Clinton became the candidate for "change" (Grant, 1993). His concise message along with his ability to successfully handle the media opened the door to the White House. He contained the negative story lines and used the media attention



to get his own message out. Clinton's media skills allowed him to gain just enough support to capitalize on Bush's poor public perception.

### Ross Perot

Ross Perot, a self-made billionaire and businessman, stormed onto the scene in 1992, and ultimately become the most successful third-party candidate since Theodore Roosevelt in the election of 1912. The premise of Ross Perot's third-party campaign was that the U.S. economy was in jeopardy due to its growing debt and the failure of "trickle-down" economics, and that he, as a successful businessman, was qualified to fix the problem (Denton, 1994).

Appearing on *Larry King Live* on February 20<sup>th</sup>, Perot told viewers that if they did the legwork to put him on the ballot in all 50 states, he would run for president (Crigler et al., 1993). Perot was the first candidate to understand that the structure of the news media had become so fragmented that it was possible to find alternative means of communicating with voters. He used alternative channels in which he, the candidate, would have greater control over his message. Rather than communicate through traditional conduits mediated by journalists such as the three evening network newscasts and stories by the major newspapers and news services, Perot took his message directly to voters (Pomper, 1993).

Perot tapped into the increasingly pessimistic public mood and before long had a huge volunteer army working to get his name on the ballot for president in all states. Through live talk-show television he inaugurated his campaign, attracted thousands of volunteers and introduced himself to millions of potential voters. This type of television

exposure was more valuable and possibly more credible than any paid advertising campaign would have been.

Even the fact that he had not technically announced himself a candidate did not stop him from moving ahead of both Clinton and Bush reflected in a mid-May *Time/CNN* poll. That poll showed Perot leading with 33 % followed by Bush with 28 % and Clinton in third with 24 % (*Herald Sun*, 1992).

Perot made the economy the focus of his campaign. He aired infomercials detailing his economic ideas, complete with charts and graphs to illustrate his plan. Perot offered conservatives angry at Bush, those who had supported Buchanan in the primary, an alternative (Denton, 1993). As Perot's campaign progressed, Perot appeared on a number of news interview programs such as *Meet the Press* but found the emphasis on policy so distasteful that he essentially withdrew from these types of programs to concentrate on the softer magazine, morning and talk show formats (Pomper, 1993).

On July 16, 1992, Perot, who had not officially announced a candidacy, announced that he was pulling out of the race. But then, returning to the *Larry King Live* show at the end of September, Perot expressed his dissatisfaction that the campaign was not being waged on the issues (Kolbert, 1992). During the interview, Perot announced that he would decide if he would run, "If the volunteers – keep in mind, this is an organization controlled from the bottom up – volunteers, millions of people, decide whether they want me to do it or not. If they want me to do it, we will certainly run to win. No point in doing it any other way" (*Larry King Live*, September 28, 1992).

On October 1 he was back, this time officially announcing himself a candidate. Although Perot's campaign was largely self-funded, he had enough public support to be

included in the presidential debates. At the end of the campaign in November, he would capture 19 % of the vote and cost Bush a second term (Grant, 1993).

In addition to appearing on *Larry King Live* six times during the year, Perot made appearances on all three major network morning talk shows and newsmagazine programming as well as purchased infomercial airtime (Crigler et al., 1993). Like President Bush, he did not appear on any late-night programming such as *Late-night with David Letterman*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* or the *Arsenio Hall show*.

### Late-Night Candidate Appearances

#### Bill Clinton

Much of the audience was caught by surprise when Bill Clinton appeared on *The Arsenio Hall* late-night talk show on June 3, 1992. Campaign advisor Mandy Grunwald, had persuaded Clinton to put on sunglasses and play the saxophone on the show. Wearing a flowered tie and strapping on a tenor sax was a new approach and Grunwald claimed it spoke to an old problem – “the peaceable aggregation of a diversity of interests. The men of factious tempers that Madison warned us about present a paradoxical problem: the need to consolidate the polity’s divergent interests without destroying the divergences” (Meyer, 1993, p. 90).

The producer of *The Arsenio Hall Show*, Marla Kell Brown, confirmed in an interview with the *New York Times* that “The Clinton campaign initially called us, feeling us out” (Kolbert, 1992, p. A10). “It was their idea to play the sax and their idea to wear the sunglasses.”

Bill Clinton opened *The Arsenio Hall Show* playing the saxophone with the show’s band and wearing Blues Brothers type sunglasses. After the number was over

Arsenio Hall comes out and comments during his opening monologue “It’s good to see a democrat blowing something other than another election” (Appendix B: transcripts *The Arsenio Hall Show*, June 3, 1992).<sup>21</sup>

The majority of jokes in Arsenio’s monologue poke fun at Ross Perot. He does stop in between jokes and addresses Bill Clinton: “I haven’t told you yet that I’m glad you’re here, welcome.” After a few more jokes referencing Ross Perot, Arsenio again addresses Clinton, who is still standing with the band and asks, “Are you enjoying this?” Clinton nods his head and laughs.

Hall finishes his monologue and tells his audience that they will be spending time discussing the issues with Governor Clinton and then actress Teri Garr will be appearing on the show. After a commercial break, Clinton is sitting down at a chair next to Hall on stage. As the following transcripts from that show reflect, conversation between the host and Clinton is friendly with Hall allowing his guest to speak as much and as openly as he desires. The beginning of the interview opens up casually with Hall asking about Clinton’s passion for music.

Hall: Did you ever think of playing professionally?

Clinton: Yeah, and I liked it tonight being on the other side of the “Posse.” You know what your drummer said?

Hall: What, what?

Clinton: If this music thing doesn’t work you can always run for president. *(laughter)*

Hall: You carry a lot of people with you. You have more people than Hammer *(referring to MC Hammer)*. There are a lot of guys in your posse today! *(Talking with a more serious tone)* I’m glad you’re here

---

<sup>21</sup> Conversation between Arsenio Hall and Bill Clinton in this interview reference transcripts from *The Arsenio Hall Show* June 3, 1992, and was transcribed by the author from *The Arsenio Hall Best Moments* DVD. Full transcript is located in Appendix B.

today. Let's get down to things. Hum, what do you like ...the old Elvis or (*laughter*), I know you are an Elvis fan.

Clinton: I led a national crusade for the young Elvis.

Hall: Really?

Clinton: Yeah, you know, when you get old, I mean, he got fat like me, (*laughter*) I think it has to be the young Elvis. It's when he had all his energy and real raw fresh power, I mean, it would have been a shame to do the old sound. Had to be the new one.

The self-effacing comments help Clinton show that he is a likeable guy and not a pretentious politician. He is able to talk like a friend to the host as well as the audience about his passion for music and Elvis Presley. Following this light chatter, as Jack Paar did with both Kennedy and Nixon, Hall pursues a similar genre of questioning asking Governor Clinton what his perceived differences are between his candidacy and his opponents'. This gives Clinton a friendly environment to sell and expound on his ideas but also express how he differs from the other candidates. He was able to articulate some of his hopes, ideas and plans for the future if he were elected president. In addition, the topic of religion is infused into the conversation. Hall, the son of a Cleveland preacher, is a prominent activist in Los Angeles and vocal church going entertainer. Often professing his spirituality on his show he mentions Clinton's visit to his local church in Los Angeles. This also offered Clinton an opportunity to appeal to those voters who perceive faith as an important attribute for a presidential candidate.

Hall: You were here recently, I did not get to meet you but you went to my church.

Clinton: I sure did. I met your pastor; he's a wonderful man.

Hall: He is, he is, he has guided me well. Hum, when I talk to kids at church, when I talk to kids in their classrooms, there are a lot of your

people who don't think they should vote at all anymore. They feel you are all the same. Why are you not the same?

Clinton : I'm not the same because I'm talking about things in this election that I've been working on for years that I really care about. I was in South Central L.A. three years before the riots occurred. I came out here and all the politicians always go to Hollywood to meet the movie stars and entertainers you know, to raise money and I gave a speech here three years ago and asked to go to South Central L.A. and meet with the people at UNO and SCLC and those community organizations cuz I could see how terrible it was and how things could get out of hand. I met with about a dozen sixth graders, about my daughter's age, who told me their biggest fear in life was being shot going to and from school. And the reason those kids should vote is this country's been around for more than 200 years, and cuz more than half the time the people have been right and if elected the kind of leadership we needed to move our country through crisis periods, and we're in trouble now. We got a lot of problems and the only way people can have a say is when they are in the driver's seat. You're in the driver's seat at election time, if you don't get in the car you can't drive.

Clinton's appearance on *The Arsenio Hall Show* occurred just after the L.A. riots and the Rodney King incident. There was a feeling of racial tension in the country and particularly in the Los Angeles area, where the talk show was being recorded. Arsenio Hall, a black entertainer, was very involved and interested in these issues, probed Clinton for his perspective on these concerns. Never short on words, Clinton takes this opportunity to reach out to ethnic minority voters in reflecting on his understanding of their lives and issues they face.

Hall: Yeah, you know, when I think about racism, as a black man, I always think of the racism that I experience. During the riots I realized that they're a lot of kinds of racisms we're suffering from. Racisms against a lot of different people. We all hate each other for something you know, we noticed the Korean situation; we notice the anger at just white faces no matter who there were; we're always seeing the hostility towards black faces no matter who they are. How do we deal with racism in America because it's getting out of hand?

Clinton: I think we gotta do two things. First of all, we gotta find ways for people to talk to each other again on a regular, consistent basis. Not just across racial lines but across any income lines. That is, you and I can live in an integrated society but it would be a fairly narrow stratum. But if you go to South Central L.A. or most places in America most workin' people, and low income people, they don't have the interracial contacts that people who are in a stronger income group have. So you gotta have basic contacts. The second thing we gotta realize is that a lot of the racism that was raging in Los Angeles dealt with what people don't do rather than what they do. People, they feel like they don't even exist to people of other races till they walk into a department store and people follow them around to make sure they don't steal anything.

Hall: Hmm hmmm.

Clinton: But day in and day out they get up, they trudge through their lives, they live in substandard housing, unsafe streets, they work their guts out, they fall further behind. Nobody even knows they're there until there's a riot. I think that in the 90s this whole business of economic empowerment has gotta be at the center of the civil rights movement. You've gotta have a lot of the problems. Just relate like the tensions between African American and the Korean community. I talk to a lot of black folks who are convinced the Koreans get preferential treatment at banks.

Hall: For loans (*clarifying*)?

Clinton: For loans, but what they don't know is those folks have an entrepreneurial culture. They work together, they loan each other money. They, they come out of a culture that favors small business. Most of the black families that move to Los Angeles when they did came out of the South and came here for manufacturing jobs. When the manufacturing jobs went away there was only small business and nobody stepped in and said 'here's how you get a loan, we'll make sure the loans are made in this community, we're gonna make sure you learn how to manage these businesses and create markets. None of this was ever done so I think a lot of the problem is these folks are just invisible to each other until they raise hell and you can't run a country that way. We gotta know they're around all the time.

Hall: Yeah, let's take a quick commercial and come right back with Governor Bill Clinton (*applause*).

Returning from the commercial break, Hall changes the tone from racial tension to focus on the candidate himself. Conversation turns to Clinton discussing his shortcomings and his workaholic tendencies. Clinton again speaks several minutes uninterrupted, expounding on what he perceives his faults are again making himself seem more relatable to voters. Following Clinton's explanation of his shortcomings, Arsenio brings up Clinton's use of marijuana, a controversial topic that had plagued the candidate's image in the press. This gave Clinton an opportunity to clarify his comments made to the press earlier.

Hall: Speaking of focusing and communicating, I know you've been through this a billion times but can we get into the smoking the joint thing again (*laughter*)?

Clinton: That's why the saxophone, you see, you have to blow into it so you have to inhale with the saxophone or you'll die (*laughter*). That's how I learned to inhale, playing my saxophone. You blow out and then you have to inhale (*laughter*).

(Hall laughing shaking his head)

Hall: One for Bill (*laughter and applause*)!

Clinton: I tried to do it I just couldn't I wasn't trying to get off the hook, you know I was just making general remarks.

Hall: Okay, let's go, I've heard different people discuss it and I've done my jokes. Okay you got the joint in your hand, (*laughter whoo hooing from the crowd*) okay somebody says EEEAAARR (*sound like someone saying here holding their breath and more woo hooing and clapping from audience*). Now, somebody says EEEAAARR and then what do you do at that point?

Clinton : I took it and tried to smoke it just like a cigarette but I'd never smoked a cigarette before either.

Hall : Hmmhmm. You're not a drinker either, right?

Clinton: Well, I never had a drink until I was 22. I do drink now a little bit but not much. But so anyway I did my best, I tried, but I just



couldn't inhale it. I mean, I wasn't tryin' to get a good conduct medal for saying I did not inhale. I was just nervously pointing out that it was another one of those things I tried to do and failed at in life (*laughter*). I gave it, I was huh 22 - 23 years old, I gave it my best shot.

Hall: Yeah.

Clinton: I mean, I really tried.

After Clinton's explanation, Hall asks him if he would have given the press a different answer now. Clinton responds, "Yes, I'd have just said yes!" After introducing this lighter moment Hall turns, as Paar did with Nixon, to the discussion of taxes and the economy. Also, like Paar and Nixon, the two joked about the host having to pay their share of the taxes.

Hall: I read um, I read that you are contemplating raising taxes for people who make \$200,000 or more.

Clinton: You're gonna have to pay more.

Hall: Yeah, I'm mad about that (*laughter and applause*). Why don't you expound on that and talk about a little what you'll do for the economy. That's part of the LA riots and other frustrations all over the country.

Again, not being short on words Clinton discusses economic issues and speaks straight without any comments or interruption from the host for 3-1/2 minutes. Clinton covers economic topics from California's budget problems, to investing in education, college loans, taxes for the middle class and defense cuts. Clinton, also knowing Hall is a youth advocate, appeases his host by addressing the future of youth in his economic plan.

Clinton: Absolutely, it is. Part of California's problem is you lost a half million jobs in California in 2 years. Your state government is broke. You're a billion dollars in debt, you're cutting back in education when you outta be increasing your investment in education to prepare all these kids for the future. They need to live, so what my theory is, we've got to increase our investment in this country...

So we gotta give them a good gang to be a part of and you gotta have some personal connection. So anyway you have to pay a little more but not a lot more and enough to invest in our people again. That's what we gotta do.

Hall: If it helps our youth I'm down with it. I'll be right back with Bill Clinton (*break to music*).

Returning from the commercial break, Governor Clinton's wife, Hillary, has joined them on stage. Sitting between Hall and Bill, Hillary is introduced by the host. Conversation begins after the introduction with Mrs. Clinton and the couple's relationship.

Hall: Well, you all know this lady (*introducing Hillary*). Yes, (*applause*) yes. The spirit beside the man, not behind him anymore but beside. Through all this controversy have you ever find yourself at home fighting, honestly?

Hillary: No, no.

Clinton: No.

Hillary: Not about anything important. We fight about what movie we want to see.

Clinton: This is the only movie we're going to see for a month and you're gonna make me see this crazy cheap thrills movie. You want to go see *Lethal Weapon III*, when we got all these other movies out there. That's the kind of thing we fight about.

Hall: You know it's hard. I mean, it's hard to think that you don't ever at some point say 'Who is Gennifer?' You know, who the hell is she? And, it's like, I mean...

Hillary: I know who she is, I mean, I've known, I know who she is.

Hall: And you know what her problem is?

Hillary: She's got lots of problems (*laughter*).

This type of exchange helps the Clintons relate to viewers as a regular couple with common arguments as well as help them change the perceptions of a broken marriage

that the media had previously portrayed. No candidate is immune from the criticisms from the media and Hall addresses the pressures of dealing with the press and asks if it has ever been too much for the candidate to continue with his campaign. The issue of fair treatment by the media is nothing new. Paar also addressed this issue with both Kennedy and Nixon when they were his guests during the 1960 campaign.

Clinton addresses this question with his southern accent, calling the press's criticism "taking his licks." Using this down-home language helps show Clinton as articulate but not aristocratic building on the average guy likeability persona.

Hall: Yeah, (*laughter*) Through all the pressure and things you've been through have you ever thought about quitting?

Clinton: No

Hall: Really?

Clinton: No, you know, I would have quit if I just wanted to live in the White House and go to Camp David on the weekends. But if that were the choice I'd gladly stay home where I am with the job I've got and the life I've got. It's a lot better life in many ways on a much more human scale. I got into this race, cuz I thought this country was going down the tubes and we outta change it. And I've stayed in it because I thought I could be a force for change and I wanted the voters to make up their mind. If the voters say, hey, we think some other person will be a better president I will go home a happy man to the life I've got. It's a wonderful life but I would have been a gutless wonder to quit over things I thought were unfair and unsubstantial in the face of the convictions that I think we outta have. So no, I never thought about quittin'. This country doesn't need a quitter and the licks that I've taken are nothing compared to the licks most Americans take. Look at those people in South Central LA are going through. That's a lot tougher than a few days of bad publicity. I mean, if you can't take a few licks, you got no business being president. It's a tough job. You gotta be a tough guy.

Returning back to conversation with Mrs. Clinton, Hall asks her about her role as being an outspoken spouse on the campaign. Similarly, during Nixon's interview with Jack Paar in 1960, Paar had asked Mrs. Nixon if she had been told what to say and do.

Hall: Yeah, (*applause*) hum, well have you kind of, and this is something I heard a political analyst talk about recently, hum (*looking at Hillary*), He said, you kind of were, I use the words "chilling out." He said, you were pulling back a little bit, you've been instructed not to say as much or be as out spoken.

Bill shaking his head no.

Hall: (*looking at Bill*) No?

Hillary: I've heard that but I never know who says it. I think it's wishful thinking on the part of some people (*chuckle from Bill*).

Ending the show, the host turns to Mrs. Clinton and gives her the opportunity to sell her husband and show the couple's unity to the show's audience. By allowing Hillary to express her feelings towards her husband again helps solidify the strength of her conviction of her husband and their marriage and counter what had been portrayed in the press.

Hall: I don't have a lot of time left, Marla just give me a couple of seconds. I'm going to let the lady close the segment (*looking at Hillary*). Tell young America and anyone in America that's watching why they should vote for this man.

Hillary: Because he's got the right combination of a great heart and a great mind and he understands what's at stake in this country. And, if he were not convinced that we could do better and that he could inspire people, particularly young people, to feel good about themselves and to be committed again to this country he wouldn't be in this race. But, he is and he can and that's what we need more than anything to get America back on the right track.

Hall: (*looking at the camera*) I'm not here to tell you who to vote for: vote for somebody! This is Hillary and this is Bill, the Clinton family. Good night.

Clinton spent almost 20 minutes on *The Arsenio Hall Show*, allowing him the opportunity to portray himself as a likeable and regular guy. He was able to counter traditional political media and communicate a more controlled message to voters and let a select audience really get to know him as a person. He was able to sell a likeable personality. With his Southern twang, he was able to humanize himself as he spoke about the issues that he felt were confronting the country while also relating to ethnic audiences. In addition, by Bill and Hillary appearing together on the show, it enabled them to show their solidarity and contradict all the controversy that had been portrayed about them in the media.

Additionally, Clinton's appearance on this show provided him the opportunity to reach more diverse audiences. *The Arsenio Hall Show* distinguished itself by targeting audiences that have been largely ignored by other late-night talk shows: African Americans and Latinos, as well as the younger generation of television viewers, which he identified on several occasions as the "MTV generation" ([www.museum.tv](http://www.museum.tv)). While actual ratings for Clinton's appearance on the *Arsenio Hall Show* were in the single digits, audiences for all three-network newscasts saw the clip of Clinton playing the saxophone and wearing sunglasses (Crigler et al., 1996). In addition to the three major network newscasts covering the show, Clinton's appearance was played numerous times on CNN and NPR. The following reflects the type of additional coverage *The Arsenio Hall Show* appearance received as seen on the *CBS Sunday Night News*:

Plante: In a three-way presidential race, it's not easy for the candidate in third place to get much attention. So Bill Clinton is trying more and more to take his case to the people via TV talk and call-in shows. They work very well for Ross Perot, and it does make for some very different election-year TV.

(Shows footage from The Arsenio Hall Show of Bill Clinton playing saxophone)

Plante: Dig it. This cat wants to be president, and he confessed to Arsenio Hall that he's trying hard to sharpen his television technique. (*CBS Sunday Night News*, 1992)

The network and cable news channels were not the only media covering the candidate's unusual appearance. Several newspapers also wrote about the show, thereby expanding the minimal ratings reach of the show itself to a much larger audience.

This one appearance garnered candidate Clinton a number of additional mentions in the media. The first few days immediately following *The Arsenio Hall Show* newspapers covered Clinton's appearance with various themes. Coverage of the performance often repeated what happened during the program. Some also interjected positive comments regarding the appearance. The *Boston Globe* reported:

Gov. Bill Clinton stepped out of character last night, donned dark sunglasses and played saxophone on the *Arsenio Hall Show*. Clinton played with Hall's band 'The Posse' and, while warming up before the show, offered some one-liners. "it is nice to be on this end of the posse for a change." And he told them, "If I screw up play louder." (Frisby, 1992, p. 28)

Likewise the *Washington Post* noted that Clinton's appearance "from 'Cali' to 'the Rock' (that's California to Little Rock) convinced that his sax-playing gig on Hall's woof-woofing TV show was the equivalent of a Super Tuesday sweep...His performance was almost flawless (*The Washington Post*, 1992, p. C1).

Other coverage put the performance in the context of candidates using alternative avenues to reach voters. Journalistic coverage focused on the analysis of the rise in appearances of the talk show in politics and a new competitor for the news media. The *Boston Globe* stated:

Bill Clinton goes on *The Arsenio Hall Show* in dark sunglasses and plays "Heartbreak Hotel" with Hall's house band. Ross Perot introduces his candidacy

on *The Larry King Show*. George Bush gives a party for the three networks and none of them comes...Technology has made it possible for viewers to sidestep the networks; now voters can sidestep the parties...The question is does Clinton raise himself in voters' eyes by humanizing himself on these shows, or does he look even less presidential? For now, it seems like a chance he has to take. (Siegel, 1992, p. 28)

*The New York Times* predicted that Clinton's appearance was most likely the first of many to come.

It was not the kind of television performance Presidential candidates typically give, but it is not likely to be the last...Politicians and media analysts agree that the rise of the talk show in political culture reflects broader trends, most significantly the declining influence of the network news shows. (Kolbert, 1992, p. A18)

A report from the *Washington Times* associated Clinton's appearance with the evolution of campaigning. The article noted that television was the primary medium candidates needed to use to reach voters.

Television has taken over the process of electing a president, media experts say. Television is the campaign in any meaningful sense so far...There is no other way for presidential candidates to reach the public they want to reach...it's easier for challengers than incumbents to make these kinds of TV appearances. It's more difficult for presidents. (Price, 1992, p. A1)

Coverage was not without criticisms. This appearance set off a series of barbs between the Bush and Clinton campaigns as well as jabs with Arsenio Hall himself. The *Washington Post* interviewed both campaigns for comments regarding Clinton's performance. Each had its own obvious point of view.

"I thought it was embarrassing," said Torie Clark, press secretary for President Bush's campaign. "He looked like a sad John Belushi wannabe...I don't think most Americans want to see their president wearing a goofy tie and sunglasses and blowing on a saxophone, and then talking about smoking pot with a late-night TV host." "What Torie shows is what everybody knows about Bush – he doesn't get it," said George Stephanopoulos, communications director of the Clinton campaign...the point of the exercise, politically speaking, was for Clinton to show voters that "he's a real person just like they are, that he loves music, that he loves

to laugh at himself – and that he has a good idea of where to take the country.”  
(Grove, 1992, p. C2)

The jabs were not just between Bush and Clinton campaigns. Bush conceded to the media that he would begin appearing on different types of programming but not *The Arsenio Hall Show*. *USA Today* carried a response from Hall to regarding Bush’s comments. Prefacing his comments saying:

Snubbed by presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater, who says Bush would consider appearing on talk shows as rivals Ross Perot and Gov. Bill Clinton had – excepting *The Arsenio Hall Show*. Hall lashed out with a startling on-air attack, “Excuse me, George Herbert, irregular-heart-beating, read-my-lying-lipping, slipping-in-the-polls, do-nothing, deficit-raising, making-less-money-than Millie-the-White-House-dog-last-year, Quayle-loving, sushi-puking Bush! I don’t remember inviting your ass to my show. (Graham, 1992, p. 1D)

### Polls

The polls did not reflect that this one appearance made a difference in Clinton’s opinion ratings. Prior to Clinton’s appearance, a May 18 poll tallying a three-way race showed Clinton in third with 24 % of registered voters favoring him compared to Perot with 33 % and 28 % for President Bush (*Herald-Sun*, 1992). Even two weeks after the appearance and additional media coverage, a June 19<sup>th</sup> Gallup Poll still showed Clinton in a similar position at 25 %, Perot 39 % and Bush with 35 % (*The 1992 campaign: On the trail; presidential race not stabilizing*, 1992, p. A25).

It is not easy to determine whether the additional media attention received by this one appearance did anything for his poll ratings. However, Clinton’s media exposure had been expanded because of his appearance on *The Arsenio Hall Show* as well as his continued appearances on other entertainment format programming. These events, along with the additional media coverage each garnered, in conjunction with his history-



breaking appearance on *Arsenio*, assisted with the visibility of his candidacy. By the end of June an *ABC/Washington Post* poll gave Clinton 33 % of the vote, Perot with 30 % and Bush trailing 29 % (The 1992 campaign: On the trail; polls gives Perot clear lead, 1992, p. 18). By mid-August, the polls reflected a Clinton lead and ahead of Bush by 18 % points; 54 % said they backed Mr. Clinton and 36 % backed Bush (The 1992 campaign: On the trail; for Bush, some progress in the polls, 1992, p. 6). Perot had dropped out of the race during this time and was not included in the polling.

### Conclusion

The beginning of the 1992 election campaign saw an incumbent President Bush with a commanding lead in the polls and record high approval ratings. However, throughout this unconventional campaign, he saw his ratings plummet. The Bush Campaign stubbornly kept with traditional campaigning methods while his opponents pursued new unconventional campaign tactics. In the end, his late start onto the talk show circuit, contributed to his defeat and only one term in office.

The three candidates in this election showed varied levels of enthusiasm for the use of the new venue. The 1992 campaign presents intriguing examples in which all three sets of participants were involved in shaping the campaign discourse. Ross Perot was strategic in the use of the talk show format, making his opening bid for presidency on the cable program *Larry King Live* and capitalizing on CNN's new-found dominance garnered from its coverage of the Gulf War.

Overall, between January 29<sup>th</sup> and November 2, 1992, the three presidential candidates appeared in 169 televised interviews including the network newscasts interview segments, news talk shows (weekend morning shows), news magazine

programming (shows such as *20/20*, *Dateline*, *60 Minutes* and *Primetime Live*), and entertainment programs (*Arsenio Hall Show*, *Donahue*, *MTV* and *Nashville Now*). These interviews were “free media” time given to the candidates by the entertainment programs (Crigler et al., 1993). Clinton and Perot alone made 30 of these appearances during the first six months of 1992 (Depke, 1992).

Although it is difficult to speculate on what Clinton’s fate may have been in the absence of these appearances, without the exposure on *The Arsenio Hall Show* as well as other talk shows, the negative press at the beginning of the campaign may have not been overcome. Historically, other candidates in similar a position had failed to change negative perceptions leading to poor coverage and low poll numbers. Without this new communication avenue, which enabled Bill Clinton to reach more diverse audiences and convey messages directly to the voters, his campaign may have fallen apart.

Two conclusions emerge from the strategies and tactics executed by the three different candidates. First, the results of this election reveal that the use of talk shows enabled candidates to deliver their messages more directly to voters and better control their communication. This format gave them more broadcast minutes and allowed adequate time to articulate their thoughts without interruption and without a network anchor truncating or editorializing on the candidates’ messages.

These talk shows provided an alternative form of communication that contributed to a substantive dialogue between the candidates and voters. Inasmuch as talk shows improved both the substance and relevance of information, this election showed how they partially compensated for the informational omissions of the traditional

news and contributed to the democratic process. They potentially may influence electoral outcomes by reaching those voters who do not regularly watch traditional newscasts.

The second conclusion is that both the candidates and the media reaped the rewards of such appearance. Bill Clinton received almost 20 minutes of free airtime on *The Arsenio Halls Show* to discuss his candidacy in a friendly environment. He was able to sell his product, himself, without the cost of campaign advertising dollars. The show's 4.6 % rating enable Clinton to reach 4,236,000 households nationally based Nielsen figures provided by the networks, with each rating point representing 921,000 households (*Egos & Ids; Talking Presidential Heads*, 1992, Sec. 9 p. 4). Access to this large audience was free. Traditionally "free media" was considered regular broadcast news channels where journalists controlled how the candidates appeared and what content was presented. This new alternative venue offers the candidates more control over what they communicate and how it is delivered.

The entertainment media wanted these candidate interviews as they saw their program ratings increase. These appearances helped the program ratings, keeping sponsors and advertisers happy. The network, cable and syndicated programming began to compete to attract the candidates onto their shows. In the end, it is a win, win situation. The candidates reach diverse audiences for free and the media realize an increase in ratings.

What would have happened if Clinton had not been seen in June 1992 on *The Arsenio Hall Show*? The decision by the Clinton campaign strategists to put him on this show as well as many other alternative programs show may have saved his campaign.

Subsequent campaigns reflected the beginning of this new campaign trend, following the lead of this one candidate from Hope, Arkansas.

## CHAPTER 6

### 1996 ELECTION AND THE ELDER STATESMAN

The first major problem this year was that the amount of coverage was down so substantially that it probably suggested to the reasonably attentive viewer and listener that this was not an important campaign. And that is very unfortunate because we did not need any more signals in the process this year to suggest that we ought not to be paying attention.

There was less audience interest throughout the campaign, in part because the audience perceived that the economy is doing pretty well and that the Clinton first term had been, if not exemplary, at least acceptable. But by telling us during the conventions how boring they were, during the debates how little there was new there, and also by providing us with far less news coverage, the print and broadcast reporters signaled us that we did not really have to pay a lot of attention.

Then they turned around and told us how inattentive we were, thereby creating a complete cycle. (Jamieson, Nov. 11, 1996)

#### Introduction

##### Election Overview

The challenge for the White House in 1996, in which Democratic incumbent William Jefferson Clinton was pitted against Republican opponent Robert J. Dole, is not remembered as a crucial moment in our nation's history. Despite campaign issues ranging from taxes and welfare reform to the budget, education, and technology the news media cut its coverage of President Clinton and Bob Dole by roughly half compared to the coverage of the '92 presidential campaign. With no real substantial excuse for its

neglect, reporters and editors simply complained the campaign was dull and it wasn't selling newspapers or titillating viewers (Arena, 1996).

Months prior to the November 1996 election, the media continually remarked on what an unexciting campaign it had been. In October, *Time* magazine lamented that the campaign had been too "boring," noting "a majority of the public said 'dull' when pollsters asked them to describe the campaign" (Carlson, 1996). Similarly, a *Washington Post* headline asked "Hey! Is Anyone Listening?" (Kurtz, 1996, p. 6). These expressed opinions of these views by the media indicated to voters that there was not anything critical during the election. In addition, ABC's chief political correspondent, Jeff Greenfield, commented, "This is the most uninteresting presidential election of my lifetime...you don't have a cutting edge candidate putting anything on the table and Clinton is just running out the clock" was indicative of the campaign (Kurtz, 1996, p. 6).

As a reflection of the media's boredom with the 1996 election, evening news coverage of the campaign by the major news networks<sup>22</sup> declined 20 % from 1992 (Media Monitor, September/October, 1996). Total news coverage of the campaign averaged airtime of 12.3 minutes per night, which was exactly half of what it was during the 1992 election (Media Monitor, November/December, 1996).

Furthermore, almost three-fourths of the airtime, 73 %, consisted no more than the network anchors and reporters discussing the campaign, often in the context of the horse race. Only 13 % of the airtime featured comments from the candidates themselves (Media Monitor, November/December, 1996). Adding to this was the continued decrease in length of candidate sound bites on the evening news programs. The sound bites by the evening news in 1996 were down to 8.2 seconds, compared to 8.4 seconds during 1992

---

<sup>22</sup> Major news networks were ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN.

and from 9.8 seconds in 1988. This overall reduction in coverage gave the candidates less opportunity to present themselves and their ideas directly to the voters (Media Monitor, November/December, 1996).

The decrease of media coverage was not the only area where candidate exposure declined during the 1996 election. Viewership of the debates was also at historical lows. The first debate received 26 % fewer viewers than in 1992, and there was an even steeper decline of 39 % for the second presidential debate. This viewership represented the least watched televised debate since presidential debates began in 1960 (Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2000).

The reduced interest in this election has a few possible explanations. First, is the degree to which both major party candidates, Clinton and Dole, were already known by the voters. Most citizens felt that they knew each candidate fairly well as Clinton was the incumbent president and Dole was a longtime member of the Senate, having served from 1960 – 1996. Furthermore, neither candidate offered the voters or media anything new.

A second issue found in polling conducted after the two parties' conventions revealed that 80 % of the respondents already felt Clinton would be the eventual winner (Lawrence, 1996). Clinton's strong lead in the polls throughout the campaign seemed to add to the lack of interest or suspense as the race never appeared to be very close throughout the entire campaign (Kaid et al. 2000).

Ross Perot was again a candidate in the 1996 election. However, his presence and impact was far less than during the 1992 campaign as he did not enter the race until mid-July and his Reform Party was considered unorganized and in disarray. The media were much less interested in Ross Perot in 1996 than they were in 1992 and his TV news

coverage was almost non-existent compared to the two main party candidates.

Television news featured Perot in only 52 campaign stories during the 1996 campaign, compared to 250 for Dole and 324 for Clinton, with nearly half of those stories (23) concerned the decision by the Commission on Presidential Debates, which excluded Perot from this election year's debates (Media Monitor, November/December, 1996).

This lack of enthusiasm by both media and their audience resulted in a 72-year low in voter participation. Only 48 % of registered voters made it to the polls in 1996 (Kaid et al. 2000). With record decreases in news coverage, viewership and voter participation, the 1996 election was less than exciting. The press consistently labeled the race "a bore" (Diamond, Shepnick, & Stenzler, 1996). Although the campaign may not have been considered a critical election, it was a significant campaign in terms of its communication features. For example, for the first time candidates, media and voters made considerable use of the World Wide Web. Candidates conveyed their messages directly through their own Web sites and provided opportunities for voters to interact with them. The media also used the Internet to distribute campaign news and information on a continuous basis (Kaid et al., 2000).

Another innovation in the 1996 campaign was the granting of free TV time to candidates by the networks. In 1996, a group called the Free TV for Straight Talk Coalition initiated a call for the television networks to provide free TV segments. Under pressure to make time available, the major networks offered some version of free TV time slots, albeit in a variety of formats<sup>23</sup> (Moore, 1996). The free TV movement was

---

<sup>23</sup> Fox New Channel provided the candidates with 10 segments, each one minute in length on specified topics. NBC allocated each candidate five segments of 90 seconds each on its *Dateline* program, again on specific topics. PBS provided 90 second slots, six for each candidate on an alternating night but without predetermined topics. CBS incorporated longer segments, 2-1/2 minutes per candidate on four specific



proposed and promoted as a way to provide general election candidates direct communication with voters and also as a means to alleviate the high costs of media campaigning, thereby decreasing the candidates' reliance on paid political advertising (Taylor, 1997).

The free TV time slots were of some value to the voters as this airtime allowed the public to hear from the presidential candidates directly. In the paid advertising, the two major party presidential candidates rarely spoke directly to voters. In contrast to the paid ads, the candidate was always the main speaker in the free TV time spots.<sup>24</sup>

Although an interesting campaign development, because the free TV time slots were viewed by too few people and were less frequent in comparison to the volume of paid ads, they had only minimal effect on voter information levels (Kaid et al., 2000). In fact, in post-election assessments, few voters could even recalled viewing any of these slots (APPC research, 1997; Mifflin, 1996).

Though new communication tools were used during the 1996 election, unlike the previous election, the use of interview format programming including late-night talk shows was nonexistent. As innovative and successful as Clinton was in 1992 with his appearances on late-night talk television and other interview format programming, candidate appearances were not as ubiquitous on these programs as originally one would have been expected. Clinton, whose late-night appearance on *The Arsenio Hall Show*

---

issues into its evening news program. ABC offered one hour in prime time for direct candidate confrontation with each other but was declined. CNN provided longer segments, 2-1/2 minutes per candidate, for statements broadcast during its *Inside Politics* program (Moore, 1996).

<sup>24</sup> The Federal Communications Commission accepted proposals by the networks to ease federal rules requiring equal access for all legally qualified candidates. The free time offered was exempt from equal time as it became classified as bona fide news events; therefore, third-party candidates could be denied coverage (Electronic Media, 1996).

successfully garnered him additional media coverage during the 1992 campaign, did not make the same type of appearances in 1996.

Candidate Dole, the Republican nominee, did make use of the late-night talk show format to unofficially announce his candidacy. On February 5, 1995, Dole was a guest on *The Late Show with David Letterman*. This was the last of the late-night talk show or entertainment programming appearances by Dole during any this election cycle. Without Clinton or Dole appearing on entertainment or interview format programming the media had less to talk about than they did in 1992.

Though both Dole and Perot each ventured onto *Larry King Live*, these were the only TV appearances outside of traditional news coverage made by any candidate. Neither presidential candidate made late-night talk show appearances or other entertainment interview format programming during this election period. In 1992, the press repeatedly mentioned and reported on Clinton's *The Arsenio Hall Show* appearance and had nothing comparable in 1996 election to report. Absent of these appearances in 1996, the media seemed to focus their commentary and coverage on the listlessness of the campaign. According to postelection analysis by the Freedom Forum titled, "Lethargy '96: How the Media Covered a Listless Campaign," it was unanimously confirmed by the press that this presidential campaign had been exceedingly dull (Simon, 1998).

### The Candidates

#### Bill Clinton

As an incumbent running unopposed for the Democratic nomination, Clinton enjoyed a double-digit lead in the polls during most of the election period. His campaign strategy focused on capitalizing on the strengths of the office of the presidency and to

emphasize his accomplishments. The strategy for the president was that he would run a campaign similar to Reagan's 1984 re-election bid. The focus was to defend the big lead in the polls by placing emphasis on the general prosperity of the nation rather than launching any bold new policies (Dover, 1998).

Clinton's campaign message utilized traditional incumbent tactics reiterating his accomplishments and reinforced his credit for the nation's economic performance. The aim of Clinton's message was to portray him as a president who knew how to use government to address the needs of families. He also positioned himself more of a centrist while promoting the Republicans as extremists (Ceaser & Busch, 1997). Additionally, he again used a slogan that worked in the 1992 campaign asking voters: "Are you better off today than you were four years ago?" In 1992 campaigning against Bush, most people felt the answer was no. However, in 1996, most Americans thought the answer was yes (Pomper, 1997, p. 101).

Clinton's presidency and campaign was not without challenge and controversy. He had spent more than three years in office and rumors about his infidelity continued to grow. As with the 1992 campaign, Clinton's presidency was tainted with media coverage of scandal. His actions did not always appear statesmanlike, as television news media focused on Whitewater, questionable fundraising activity and his alleged philandering (Dover, 1998). In addition to the character issues, in the 1994 mid-term elections the Republicans had a landslide victory and captured control over both houses.

Yet with all of the scandals and the Republican victory in 1994, it did not seem to affect his standings in the polls. Some attribute assistance by the media in two instances. First, the press was constantly repeating polling data that showed him in the lead, which

led to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Second, popular culture had seemingly normalized Clinton's questionable behavior. A *Washington Post* and *ABC News* poll showed 77 % of the voters thought it was more important to have a president “who understands the problems of people like you” while just 22 % said it was more important to have a president of “the highest moral character” (Simon, 1998, pg 288).

Unlike his 1992 campaign, Clinton did not make the same appearances on interview programming. In 1992, he needed the exposure so voters could get to know him. In 1996, Clinton was the sitting president with access to the press as he chose and did not need additional media exposure as part of his campaign. Clinton was able to obtain media coverage for conducting presidential business.

Clinton's re-election never seemed in doubt during any part of the 1996 campaign. Despite lingering doubts about his ethics and character, amid the generally positive economic climate a majority of Americans voted in favor of President Clinton. The Election of 1996 marked the first time since Franklin Roosevelt that a Democrat was elected for a second full term in office. A Baby Boomer, Clinton was also aided by the fact that his opponent, former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, a World War II veteran, never seemed to connect with the voters.

### Robert Dole

The Dole campaign had several of its own obstacles to overcome. First, Dole did not have Clinton's advantage of easy media access granted to a sitting president. Second, he had to convince his own party that he deserved the nomination in spite of ominous warnings in the polls. The pool of Republican presidential contenders in the primaries was large and several were well-funded (Holenberg, 1997). Eventually, by mid-primary

season, Dole emerged as the Republican nominee. However, while Dole was campaigning for his party's nomination, Clinton was preparing for the general election by presenting his image as a strong statesman and leader (Dover, 1996).

Dole had an image problem. Although he was seen as a senior statesman his age was a factor. At election time he would be 73, 23 years older than Clinton. Winning the election would have made him the oldest person first-term president elected to office. Advisor and friend William Lacy outlined additional image concerns and what it would take for him to win the election. While his age and health were a concern, other barriers included perceptions that he was mean and not very likeable and he was already a two-time loser for the office. (Thomas, 1997). Furthermore, polls showed that Americans blamed the Republican-dominated Congress for the government shut-down in November 1995, while Dole was the Senate Majority Leader (Holenberg, 1997).

Almost nothing Dole did could be framed as a success in the media. His message often concentrated on Clinton's character and questioning his integrity. The campaign tried to capitalize on Clinton's highly publicized scandals but was still unable to gain any significant electoral benefit. Even though most reports regarding Clinton's questionable activities were negative in tone, did little damage as Clinton maintained a substantial lead in the polls. (Holenberg, 1997). Adding to Dole's frustration, the public also felt that the press treated the candidates treated equally so Dole received no media bias sympathy (Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation Survey, 1996).

During the campaign, Dole did not make any appearances on television specials or interview programs except for one appearance with his wife on *Larry King Live*. As a strategy tactic by his campaign handlers, Dole was kept away from reporters. The

staffers were worried that his perceived meanness would be revealed to the public. So they decided that to protect him, he would be kept away from TV, radio, newspapers and press conferences as much as possible (Simon, 1998).

### Late-Night Candidate Appearance

#### Bob Dole

Prior to the campaign and his handlers' decision to keep Dole away from television, Dole made an appearance June 3, 1993, on *The Tonight Show*. With his unfriendly reputation as a senator well established, at the beginning of the show Jay Leno referred to Dole as being "from the original 'Star Wars' Darth Vader himself." When announcing Dole as a guest on the show, Leno poked fun at the senator telling his audience, "tonight we're going to make him feel right at home. We put some raw meat and a scratching post in the green room" (Levenbrow, 1993).

In addition to this *Tonight Show* appearance, Dole made an appearance on *The Late Show with David Letterman*. During this show, on February 5, 1995, Dole informally announced his candidacy for president. Although Perot had announced his candidacy on *Larry King Live* in 1992, Dole became the first major party candidate ever to announce his candidacy for president on late-night talk show television (CNN, 1996).

On the *Letterman Show*, Dole appeared slightly uncomfortable and out of place. He nervously sat down with the host for cordial conversation. During the program Letterman inquired about Dole's relationship with the president since the Republican landslide in the 1994 mid-term election. As the following dialog reflects, Dole attempted

to humanize himself and show he had a sense of humor (Appendix B: transcripts *The Late Show with David Letterman*, February 5, 1995).<sup>25</sup>

Letterman: Speaking of the – ah – the vice president and ah, of course President Clinton himself. What is the nature of your relationship with the president these days? Has it changed any since the big Republican landslide in November?

Dole: Ah, yeah...*(laughter)*. Yes, it's changed *(both host and Dole chuckle)*. No, we actually have a very good relationship. President Clinton is a very articulate, very smart, very nice guy to sit down and visit with and ah, you know I, when he first came I gave him a check for \$250 for his jogging track.

Letterman: I remember reading about that.

Dole: I did not want him running out in the street scaring people and things like that so we...*(laughter)*.

Letterman: Laughing

Dole: Well ah; I gave him this check drawn out of my own bank account. Something many congressmen don't do.

Letterman: WOW! You're loaded up tonight, aren't ya? You're ready to go *(laughter)*!

Dole: But he decided to stay on the streets. I think he likes the streets.

Letterman: He's running outdoors still?

Dole: He's still running – and I think that's still one of the problems. But, ah, in any event, ah

Letterman: When you gave him the check did he send it back?

Dole: Well, when I went down to see him he did not cash it. But he has it framed. It's hanging in his little office, there and when he leaves, it's not in the Oval Office, he goes in this little square office and it's back in there. In a nice little frame and I said just keep it, it's fine with me. So he kept it. Well, we have a good relationship and Vice

---

<sup>25</sup> Conversation between David Letterman and Bob Dole in this interview reference transcripts from *The Late Show with David Letterman* February 5, 1995, and were received from the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics, University of Kansas. Full transcript is located in Appendix B.

President Gore is a nice person. Not known as one of the comedians in Washington, but you know.

In addition to making Clinton a format for his jokes, Dole also added a short jab at Vice President Gore. After that exchange, Letterman followed with questioning regarding Dole's relationship with the Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich. This discussion opened up the opportunity for Dole to mention his intentions to run for president in 1996. As this conversation reveals, Letterman then inquires about the senator's relationship with Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich.

Dole: Oh yeah. We've had a good relationship for the last several years. I think it was a little rocky there several years ago, but ah, Newt is the Speaker of the House, he is the only Speaker we've ever had named Newt and ah...

Letterman: Laughing...That would be good on a bumper sticker wouldn't it?

Dole: Yeah but, we've never had a president named Bob either, so you know...

Letterman: OH! (*Audience applause with hoots and hollers*)  
Now all day today I was under the impression that you, in fact, had committed to running for election in '96. Now you have or have not?

Dole: I have not.

Letterman: You have not.

Dole: But, I'm going to run.

Letterman: You are going to run for president in '96?

Dole: In '96, yes.

With this, Dole made what he called his "informally official" declaration for the presidency on this show. Then, he read a scaled-down version of the "Top Ten."

Drawing the association of Congress balancing the federal budget by cutting spending 30



%, his “Top 10” was 30 % shorter and only had a “Top Seven.” Dole awkwardly began his list while David Letterman was asking him to name his category. This again allowed Dole to poke fun at the president and vice president trying to show his sense of humor and alter the perception of his mean demeanor.

Dole’s appearance and announcement on *The Late Show with David Letterman* did not immediately change the media’s perception of him and they were not surprised he announced his intention to run for president. What did surprised the media was the forum chosen for the announcement. *Time* magazine wrote of Dole’s appearance:

The news did not surprise, but the forum sure did. Bob Dole has wanted to be president almost forever, this will be his third try and an announcement was expected soon. But not last Friday night, and certainly not on David Letterman’s *Late Show*. But why not? Richard Nixon later appraised his “Sock it to me” cameo as “a stroke that helped people see I wasn’t just that Tricky Dick, mean spirited son-of-a-bitch.” So Dole took a page from the Nixon playbook and for the same reason. If he feared that he’s seen as stiff and sardonic, still perceived as a hatchet man by those who recall his slash-and-burn campaign tactics as Gerald Ford’s 1976 vice-presidential running mate, well, maybe he was right to use network TV’s hippest show to lighten his image. (Kramer & Barrett, 1995)

*The San Francisco Chronicle* saw this appearance as an attempt by Dole to change his image.

Dole’s deadpan comments were aimed not only at tweaking Bill Clinton, but also at facing down perhaps an even bigger foe in the 1996 race: himself. Trying to parlay early front-runner status into an aura of inevitability with the GOP, Dole must overcome two personal handicaps to win – his septuagenarianism and his reputation as the Freddy Krueger of U.S. politics. (Roberts, 1995)

Dole did not enjoy these kinds of appearances. At a tribute dinner for Sen. Jack Danforth, Dole announced, “I won’t do MTV and no more talk shows, because two are enough. Letterman was too intimidating. You don’t know what’s coming. But, I think he’s a Republican. I know Leno is” (Berger, 1995, p.1G).

Instead of Bob Dole himself appearing on television during the 1996 campaign, his strategists employed Elizabeth Dole as a surrogate speaker for her husband. Elizabeth Dole was seen as a stronger speaker than her husband and more appealing to voters (Trent & Friedenber, 2000). She made several campaign appearances in support of her husband. In place of Bob Dole making personal appearances on late-night talk shows during the campaign, his wife was seen on *The Tonight Show* riding a motorcycle with Jay Leno and wearing leathers. She took to a motorcycle and roared on to the set of Jay Leno's *Tonight Show*, wearing not her usual pearls and pastel-shaded tailored clothes but jeans and a leather jacket emblazoned with the words "Bikers for Bob." In addition, she showed up as a spoof with Letterman on October 12 to present "Top 10 Reasons to Elect Bob" (In spoof on Letterman, Mrs. Dole presents 10 reasons to elect Bob, 1996).

Ironically, after losing the election, Bob Dole made several television appearances on entertainment programming including *The Late Show with David Letterman*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *Saturday Night Live* and *Suddenly Susan*. If elected Dole would have been the oldest person inaugurate in their first term as president. Instead, after 45 years in politics, Bob Dole became an entertainer.

### Ross Perot

In his second bid for the presidency, Ross Perot was much less of a factor in 1996. He announced his intentions to run for his Reform Party nomination via *Larry King Live*. However, any initial excitement about his campaign quickly faded as he took his United We Stand America movement down what was viewed as the traditional political road. This was a stark contrast to his grassroots organization that garnered positive press in

1992. The media response to the Perot campaign was less enthused (Pomper et al., 1997).

Further minimizing Perot's impact was the fact that the Commission On Presidential Debates excluded him from the presidential debates. Although like the Perot campaign of 1992, Perot '96 took to the airwaves in an interesting way. In addition to his infomercials, which did not received the attention from the media or audience that they did in 1992, Perot ran a number of spots attacking the debate commission's decision to exclude him from the debates. These ads were one of the rare instances where the media found Perot newsworthy. Additionally trying to get more media attention during the final days of the campaign, he stepped up his attacks on Clinton's ethics and fund-raising. In the end nothing seemed to work for Perot and he ended up with only 8 % of the popular vote in the general election (Kaid et al., 2000).

### Conclusion

The 1996 election did not offer much excitement and certainly not at the level of 1992 Presidential campaign. Two primary reasons can explain Clinton's victory. First, he was an incumbent president with a prosperous economy and a country at peace and most Americans felt they were doing well. Second, Clinton had the fortune to be opposed by Bob Dole, a candidate who had a likeability and image problem.

The election seemed to be dominated by two main themes, character and the economy, but neither garnered much interest from voters or the media. Dole's campaign tried to make the election about character while fighting an incumbent president managing a booming economy. Voters seemed more interested in tomorrow's job prospects than the personal shortcomings of the candidates.

Throughout the campaign with all the scandals, Clinton enjoyed a consistent lead in the polls. Conversely, Bob Dole's image problems plagued his campaign. His reputation as a mean and grumpy old statesman stayed with him throughout the campaign. While Bill Clinton celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1996, Bob Dole commemorated his 73<sup>rd</sup>. Dole was seen as old enough to be Clinton's father and unlike Reagan before him, in this Presidential campaign many felt that Dole was just too old.

Further complicating Dole's campaign was the fact that his staff did not trust him to speak directly to the media so they tried to seclude him from the press. His campaign seemed to lack focus and the media felt the campaign lacked substance. Adding to the boredom of the election was familiarity. The voting constituency was all too familiar with both primary party candidates as one was the sitting president and the other a long time senator. Neither had much new or exciting to offer and third party candidate Ross Perot was never taken seriously.

The entertainment level of the 1996 campaign had not lived up to what it was in 1992. Clinton was the incumbent president and did not need the additional media exposure he received in 1992 on the talk show programs. In combination with his handlers trying to keep him away from the press as much as possible, Dole did not feel comfortable campaigning on entertainment programs like late-night television.

A bored media consistently complained that neither candidate gave them anything entertaining to talk about. "The headlines are very negative and make it sound boring," said Emily Rooney, political director of Fox News. "I really feel like the press has written it off, as if there's no chance the race could become interesting or that Dole can win it" (Kurtz, 1996, p. 6).

During the 1992 election, entertainment played a much larger role in the election and media coverage than 1996. The preceding election had all candidates on entertainment programming revealing a personal side of themselves and giving the media something to talk about. In the end, the campaign of 1996 was not an event that seemed to capture the attention of the U.S. public or the news media. To sum it up by ABC correspondent Evan Greenfield, "It is not the function of the political process to be entertaining. This is not an interesting race, and we cannot make it so. It is like vintners: Sometimes the crop is not that good" (Kurtz, 1996, p.6).

## CHAPTER 7

### ELECTION 2000 – BEFORE FLORIDA THERE WAS AL AND DUBYA

*We've come a long way since the days of Richard Nixon on "Laugh-In" and Bill Clinton's saxophone stint on "Arsenio Hall." Now it's pretty much a given that in addition to devising a Social Security plan, trading barbs over foreign policy and posing for photos with farmers and small children, the road to the White House includes a stop on Leno and Letterman.*

*(Wizda, 2000)*

#### Introduction

#### Election Overview

It is difficult to write about the 2000 election without mentioning the surprising finish. Although at the end of the voting no clear winner was announced, it is important to remember that, before the Florida debacle there was a campaign. The 2000 election was one of only three elections in U.S. history, along with 1876 and 1888, in which the popular-vote winner did not receive an Electoral College majority (Nitz, Cypher, Reichert & Mueller, 2003). This election was considered one of the most exiting and most competitive contests in recent U.S. history along with being the first election of the new millennium (Kaid, Tedesco, Bystrom & McKinney, 2003). What the 1996 election lacked in excitement and intrigue was more than made up for during the 2000 election.

This unusual political battle in American history began as the nation was beginning a new century. The incumbent President, Bill Clinton, was finishing his second term and therefore, was ineligible to run for re-election. And yet, his legacy was

uncertain. Although the economy was good and the country was at peace, many voters were apprehensive about Clinton given the scandals that tainted his tenure and were happy his term was coming to an end (Dover, 2003).

With no incumbent president running and with several challengers from both the Democrat and Republican parties vying for nomination, it was not until after a number of primaries occurred that Democrat Al Gore and Republican George W. Bush surfaced as the two parties' contenders. Gore was the incumbent party vice-president with over 20 years in political office while Bush was the sitting Governor of Texas with just six years as governor as political experience.

Green Party candidate Ralph Nader was another significant contender in the 2000 election. Democratic supporters of Gore's candidacy accused Nader of being a "spoiler." Nader posed a serious threat to Gore because of his strong appeal to liberal reformers and environmentalists. Many political observers believed Gore and Nader were competing for the support of the same voters. Nader received just less than 3 % of the popular vote but since the election was so close, many believe that Gore would have won if Nader had dropped out of the race (Dover, 2003).

Before the 2000 presidential election came to the cliff-hanger ending in Florida, it was a hard-fought campaign, which led to the closest electoral outcome in decades. This campaign was a traditional contest in many ways, exhibiting well-known communication patterns among candidates, media and voters. However, in some very important ways, the 2000 campaign was the setting for new and innovative communication approaches during a presidential race.

The 2000 campaign offered interesting communication circumstances. The use of traditional media such as news coverage and advertising both presented unique elements to this election. Traditional network news gave presidential candidates little airtime to talk to the public. News anchors and reporters spoke more than six times the amount of campaign talk than was coming directly from the candidates. And as in 1996 and 1992, research reveals a decrease in the total length of airtime and soundbites allotted by network news programming. The airtime for the 2000 campaign represented an average of 12.6 minutes per night, just half of the 24.6 minutes it was in 1992. Not only were the candidates outtalked in news coverage by the anchors and reporters, but the average length of their soundbites was shorter than ever at just 7.8 seconds. This trend was a continuation of the historical decline from 8.2 seconds four years prior, 8.4 seconds in 1992 and 9.8 seconds in 1988 (Media Monitor, November/December 2000).

Even though the news coverage of candidates decreased the advertising spending increased significantly. The number of spots aired in this presidential election increased 82 % compared to the 1996 election (Walkosz, 2003). Furthermore, the 2000 election marked the first time in history that political parties outspent the candidates on political advertising in a general election. In 1996, Clinton and Dole spent \$71 million combined on television advertising while the candidates' parties spent \$8 million combined. In 2000, the Bush and Gore campaigns spent a combined \$70.8 million on television advertising while their parties purchased \$81.4 million, a ten-fold increase (Kaid et al., 2003).

In addition, the use of alternative communication vehicles including the Internet and television entertainment programming continued to evolve. Although the Internet



was used during the 1996 election, this was the first presidential election in which it played a prominent role. Internet usage was much more sophisticated than in 1996 and went beyond that of simple communication and interaction with voters.

Internet use in 2000 is notable for a couple of reasons. First, the campaigns used it to raise an excessive amount of money. The ability of campaigns to use the Internet as a fund-raising vehicle eligible for federal matching funds is the most significant development for the Internet in campaign 2000. Although the Internet was a newfound way of raising campaign funds, overall it accounted for a small percentage of a campaign's budget. The 2000 election proved how the Internet might have potential as a significant campaign resource (Denton, 2002).

Political communication in 2000 marked a turning point in which candidates used websites in new and innovative ways to provide citizens with news and information. Both campaigns developed e-mail lists, which they used to maintain regular contact with local supporters. For example, *Gore Mail* and *Bush News* contained links to websites carrying the candidates' messages. In addition, the Internet coverage of the campaign helped fill in gaps from network news for voters interested in more information. For example, more than 55 Internet outlets had a presence at the Republican convention while the major networks did not air most of both conventions in favor of their regularly scheduled summer programming (Pomper, 2001).

In the 2000 campaign, both presidential candidates used the Internet to distribute information, raise money and recruit volunteers. The use of the Internet as a message vehicle during this campaign signaled an important turning point in political communication (Wicks, Souley, & Verser, 2003). The dramatic speed of the Internet, its

relatively low cost and its ability to attract voter-initiated contact were all features of the medium that made it particularly useful (Denton, 2002).

In addition to using the Internet, the voters also relied less on newscasts and more on the TV talks shows to hear candidates deliver their messages. A study from the Pew Research Center for the People released February 5, 2000, titled, “The Tough Job of Communicating with the Voter,” noted a decline in traditional media viewing for news and the rise of talks shows as a growing source of news. The study indicated that although political activists received much of their news from papers, 51 % of marginal voters indicated that they obtained their information from comedy programs such as *Saturday Night Live* and 9 % said they regularly received political information from Letterman and Leno.

This study reflected the trend that late-night television, especially for the less politically involved or less informed voters, had become a staple of political information and knowledge. This implies that late-night television provided cues for the politically uninformed, which they eventually used when casting their votes.

No other previous presidential election had used talk show appearances by candidates as extensively as during the 2000 campaign. Candidates began to appear on these shows early in the election year. Beginning January 1, 2000, to election time, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *The Late Show with David Letterman* hosted both major party candidates at least once. In addition, during the general election Jay Leno also hosted third party candidate Ralph Nader.

Each candidate had his own challenges with image throughout the campaign. The media coverage – the “Stiff Guy vs. the Dumb Guy” (Sella, 2000, p. 72), “Al and Dubya”

(Peyser, 2000, p. 38), Gore being called a liar while Bush was a nincompoop (Perkins & Perry, 2000) – did not benefit one campaign over the other. In addition to the news media mocking their characters, late-night comedians were constantly promoting these perceived personality flaws. For example, after one debate Jay Leno said, “the two candidates worked well together because whenever Bush couldn’t think of a fact, Gore would make one up for him” (Denton, 2002, p. 260).

Both Gore and Bush used the late-night talk shows as a way they could show their personalities were different from the know-it-all and nitwit being portrayed in the media. In addition to countering these perceptions, both used the appearances as an opportunity to show they were likeable. In addition to performing skits on the shows each candidate was able to portray himself particularly adept at self-deprecating humor. Even Green Party candidate Ralph Nader was invited on to *The Tonight Show*, attempting to be humorous and likeable and using a rubber chicken prop that fell flat with the audience.

While voters are using late-night talk shows as a source for campaign information during elections, candidates actively are seeking out appearances on these programs as part of an emerging campaign strategy. Candidates repackaged their message to a fragmented market that does not watch the news or read newspapers. Appearances on these shows began a lasting trend in presidential elections as candidates try to reach additional voters. Interestingly, these groups of voters that watch late-night television are often swing voters and may be the ones who decide the outcome of the elections (Schultz, 2004).

## Candidates

### Gore

As the incumbent vice president, Al Gore wanted to embrace President Clinton's policies but not Clinton the person. By all accounts, the vice president was able to boast about being in office during the longest period of uninterrupted economic growth, low unemployment and three consecutive budget surpluses as campaign reasons to elect him as president. Instead, he was reluctant to align himself too closely with the Clinton administration for fear of alienating voters who were disgusted by President Clinton's personal behavior (Pomper, 2001).

Gore did not utilize traditional incumbent strategies of claiming the successes of the administration he had part of the last 8 years. Although Gore's campaign mentioned the administration's achievements, he did not highlight them. Instead of campaigning on past accomplishments like traditional incumbent strategies, Gore reframed his campaign around future progress. With a strong economic environment, Gore could have asked the same question Clinton asked during his campaigns "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" However, his campaign reworded the phrase asking, "The question is, will we be better off four years from now than we are today?" Gore's question refocused the campaign around whether voters would believe that he was the right person to create a better future, a much more challenging task than had he argued that present economic success is sufficient to elect him (Denton, 2002, p. 97).

Along with his diverted campaign strategy, Gore was not perceived as likeable. Unlike the charismatic Clinton, Gore did not make the emotional connection with voters. At first, his advisors tried to have Gore be himself and act in public like he acted in

private. This turned out to be a poor decision as he came off as being robotic and insincere and just could not make himself appear the same as in private. He came across too intellectual and, unfortunately, looked most at ease when talking about sophisticated, technical issues (Simon, 2001).

In addition to Gore's emotional detachment with voters, a number of misstatements raised the question of his honesty. Such gaffes included the famous statement about inventing the Internet and his reminiscing about hearing the union song as a child that was not actually written until after he was an adult. This led to an image of being an exaggerator and it seemed to haunt his campaign right up until Election Day. A poll right before the election indicated that 66 % felt that Gore would say anything to get elected, while only 43 % said that of Bush (Hacker, 2004).

Throughout the twists and turns of the 2000 campaign, the Gore's team devoted enormous time, planning and energy working the press. Often his campaign strategists would communicate to the media through leaks, talking points, document releases, preemptive strikes, whispers, and the dangling of exclusive interviews. Gore's campaign aggressively tried to shape media coverage to its advantage (Kurtz, 2000).

To counter the media's portrayals, the campaign scheduled him on several talk show programs. Gore's campaign realized that it needed to get him out to reach the voters who do not regularly watch network news. The campaign utilized numerous talk show programs during the general election. The two late-light talk shows leaders, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *The Late Show with David Letterman*, were an important part of their strategy. "Part of running for the presidency is introducing yourself on your own terms through your own experiences and these programs really

afford you the opportunity to do that,” said Gore spokesman Chris Lehane. “The common denominator in all of them is that they’re great venues and forums to reach large groups of people in a way that conveys a sense of who the real Al Gore is” (Hutcheson & Pugh, 2000 p. A18).

Gore’s strategists felt strongly that these programs were important communication vehicles for the campaign. Gore spokesman Mark Fabiani said, “Hitting non-news television show is a recognition that in this day and age particularly, working mothers and fathers don’t get their news from the evening news programs solely” (Moore, 2000, p. 8A). Gore appeared once on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* during the primaries and then twice during the general election period. He also made an appearance on *The Late Show with David Letterman* during the general election. He had been scheduled to appear on *The Late Show* during primaries but Letterman was rushed into emergency heart surgery, preempting Gore’s plans.

### Bush

Up until this election, the only political office held by Bush was his then current position as the governor of Texas. Coming from a political family, Bush announced his intentions to run for president in June 1999. Through the primary elections he defeated John McCain and gained the party’s nomination and initially had a double-digit lead against Gore in the polls (Simon, 2001).

As the challenger, his campaign style was traditional with the focus on attacking the current administration. His campaign consistently attacked the Clinton administration, and thus Gore, promising to restore honor and integrity to the White House.

But, Bush also had to overcome his own character issues that were being portrayed in the media. The media raised questions regarding Bush's level of intelligence and suggested he had a frat-boy image. A perception was created that he was under informed and unprepared to be commander-in-chief. The Bush campaign focused on portraying Bush as a moderate rather than a right-wing conservative while blurring issue differences and portraying Gore as dishonest (Hacker, 2004).

Bush did not approve of leaks from campaign staff because he thought it diminished his stature to have aides disclosing in advance what he was going to say. He preferred to announce his proposals himself rather than try to stretch each event into a two or three-day story. His aides were convinced that the opposite approach taken by Gore made him look like a creature of his staff (Kurtz, 2000 p. F1).

However, like Gore's campaign, Bush's campaign employed the use of talk shows to contradict the misperceptions about his personality as portrayed by the media. Bush appeared on both *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *Late Night with David Letterman* during the primaries and then a second time during the general election.

Bush "is going on these shows because there are millions of Americans who watch them, including millions of women, and that's a very important group in this election," spokesman Ari Fleischer said. Campaigns view talk shows as a way to let voters see the candidate "with their own eyes and their own ears, no filters, which is the way the voters gain the most," Fleischer also said (Moore, 2000). "It's a way of reaching out to voters who may not wake up every morning and look first to the political pages of their newspaper to find out what's happening in the presidential campaign," said Karen

Hughes, Bush's communications director. "It's a way of reaching out to swing voters" (Hutcheson & Pugh, 2000).

### Nader

Ralph Nader was known first as a public activist. A long-time consumer advocate, Nader first gained national attention with his attacks on companies such as General Motors. He is known for his watchdog group Public Citizen, which is a consumer advocacy organization with influence in politics, health regulation, legal affairs, trade and environmental issues (Dover, 2003). In 2000, Nader was the Green Party nominee running for president.

Nader's campaign did not take any campaign donations from corporations or big business, choosing only to accept funding from individuals. By limiting his access to funding, compared to the large amounts being raised by the Republican and Democratic Parties, it was difficult for Nader to be heard. In the end, Nader garnered only 2.7 % of the vote. Nevertheless, the Green Party candidate was blamed for Gore's loss in the election acknowledging that Nader voters nationwide would have preferred Gore to Bush.

Unlike the Democratic and Republican parties, Nader's Green Party did not have the resources to buy equal amounts of advertising. He relied primarily on grass roots efforts such as rallies and town hall meetings. Like Gore and Bush, he did appear on at late-night talk television accepting an invitation to appear on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. Since he was not as helpful to ratings as his opponents, few talk shows saw the value in having him appear and was not scheduled on other programs.



## Late-Night Candidate Appearances

### Gore

Gore made several talk show appearances during the 2000 election year. He appeared four times on late-night talk television including three times on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and one appearance on *The Late Show with David Letterman*.

### *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*

During the 2000 campaign season Gore made three appearances on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. His first appearance was on February 11, 2000, during primary season, which was followed by a second cameo appearance on September 19, 2000, as the cue card holder. His final appearance was on October 31, 2000, one day after Bush made his appearance.

### First appearance – February 11, 2000

The vice-president was laboring to loosen up his image and was one of many primary candidates going on the talk show circuit just before Super Tuesday. At the beginning of the show, Leno's opening monologue mocked Gore's stiff manner, saying, "computer hackers actually shut down Al Gore for two hours." This set up a game-show parody that preceded Gore's entrance. When Gore first arrived on stage, Leno apologized for making fun of him to which Gore quipped back, "That's okay, we have a kind of a family ritual. We just sit around the dinner table every night around 11:30 and

make jokes about you” (Appendix B: transcripts *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, February 11, 2000)<sup>26</sup>.

Loosening up his personality and trying to shake his geeky image, Gore also discussed his college basketball career. During Gore’s interview with Leno he was asked about the primary candidate contenders such as Bill Bradley. In following conversation Leno inquires as to the sporting similarities between Gore and Bradley.

Leno: Now, Dan Quayle, when he was here, he said you’re a heck of a good basketball player.

Gore: Uh-huh.

Leno: Do you think you could go one on one with the other guy there?

Gore: Well, you know, what you may not know is that I was also a college basketball player. And the difference between me and Bill Bradley is I don't make a big deal out of my career (*laughter*).

Leno: Oh, that's very good! Let me put one down here for Al Gore! Yeah, that's all right! Really? You feel maybe he's, yeah, you...

Gore: I mean, you know, the two of us together averaged about 34 points a game.

Leno: Really? Really?

During the show Gore attempted to diminish his nerdy persona and portray himself as athletic as his Democratic opponent. This allowed him to show he had some commonalities with those voters who are sports fans. Showing his quick wit, when asked by Leno which of the Republican candidates he would rather face in the campaign, Gore quickly answered, “Whichever one loses.”

---

<sup>26</sup> Conversation between Jay Leno and Al Gore in this interview reference transcripts from *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* February 11, 2000, and were acquired from *CNN* and *Fox News* excerpts via Lexus Nexus. Copy of partial transcripts is located in Appendix B.

### Media Coverage

This appearance garnered Gore some praise for his performance by the press. The *Boston Globe* observed, “The vice president proved that he is capable of displaying a deadpan wit, one rarely seen when the notoriously earnest candidate is addressing a crowd from a podium” (Milligan, p. A37). “Gore had a few good lines,” noted the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Feb. 11, 2000, p. A23). Though he garnered some good press, it did not alter much on the campaign trail. Other primary candidates such as Bill Bradley, John McCain, and George Bush were also making primary appearances of their own on late-night talk television.

Much of the media coverage of talk show appearances during primary season was dedicated to reporting on all of the various candidates vying for party nominations. A few instances such as this from the United Press International focused its report to specifically reviewing Gore’s February 11<sup>th</sup> appearance on Leno.

So much for Al Gore’s debut on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. The vice president, who has labored for six months to loosen up his image on the presidential campaign trail, made his first appearance on the NBC program Thursday...Gore managed a few good lines of his own. (Sobieraj, 2000 p. B2)

### Second Appearance – September 19, 2000

Gore made his second appearance on *The Tonight Show* as an unofficial guest, performing a short skit with Leno at the beginning of the show. During Leno’s usual monologue and reading from cue cards, told his audience Tuesday night, “Now, according to the latest polls, Al Gore is the handsomest, smartest, most qualified ... what?”

The camera then panned over to show Gore holding up cards that Leno was reading. “Look who the cue card guy is,” Leno exclaimed in mock surprise. Gore broke into a laugh. It was a prearranged gag, but the audience seemed amused.

“It's the man who invented the cue card, Al Gore. Wow!” Leno said. “Nice to see you, sir.”

The Democratic presidential nominee stepped to the front of the stage and shook hands with the audience. Gore said he liked Leno's abbreviated monologue "because you had to cut short the jokes about me" (*CBS News*, 2000)<sup>27</sup>.

### Media Coverage

Although Gore was only on the show for a few minutes, the media gave him some additional exposure such as this note from the Associated Press.

Gore made a beeline to the NBC studios to tape an appearance on *The Tonight Show* just hours after his Republican rival Bush appeared on Oprah Winfrey's television show. Gore stayed on the *Tonight Show* set for just a minute or two but it was enough to get him on television. (Hunt, 2000)

*The New York Times* reported this cameo appearance as “presidential candidates revealed a new campaign strategy: sight gags. On Tuesday, Al Gore made a cameo appearance during Jay Leno's monologue, holding cue cards” (James, 2000 p. A19). Similarly, *USA Today* called the appearance a “bit” (Moore, 2000 p. A8).

### Third appearance – October 31, 2000

Gore's third appearance on *The Tonight Show* was the night after Bush's October 30<sup>th</sup> appearance. This time he was an official guest and he sat down with Jay Leno for

---

<sup>27</sup> Conversation between Jay Leno and Al Gore in this interview reference transcripts from *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* September 19, 2000, and was transcribed by the author from video from the Library of Congress No. 1931 VBQ 5366. Full transcript is located in Appendix B.

friendly conversation. The following reveals the host and Gore discussing his family and Halloween (Appendix B: transcripts *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, October 31, 2000)<sup>28</sup>.

Leno: My first guest, running as the Democratic candidate for president of the United States – you know it’s amazing to me that I get to talk to these people, we do jokes about them and God bless them. I thank them for coming here. They get us to the party and it’s always amazing. These people change history. Ladies and gentlemen, Al Gore!

Leno: And a happy Halloween, sir!

Gore: And to you – you’ve got a lively crowd tonight. And the band is ah ...

Leno: This must be rough for you cuz you...I know you’re a big fan of Halloween. I went to one of your Halloween parties once.

Gore: Yes, we’ve always enjoyed Halloween. We’ve got four children and we now have a grandson we’re looking forward to introducing to Halloween. We’ve always had a good time and... some of the parties... you saw one of them.

Leno: The thing that amazed me... the kids have a little mask whereas you and Tipper... you’re like four-year-olds. You have these elaborate.. I never saw such elaborate costumes. We have pictures here. This one...

Gore: Oh – oh.

Leno: This one here... Look at this, look at this, this is the year you went as what? The Republican healthcare plan? What is that? (*Shows picture of Al and Tipper Gore as mummies*).

Gore: That’s why we did the patient’s Bill of Rights.

Revealing he dresses up for Halloween and that he and his family have a tradition of celebrating the holiday together, Gore was able to show a different side of himself

---

<sup>28</sup> Conversation between Jay Leno and Al Gore in this interview reference transcripts from *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* October 31, 2000, and was transcribed by the author from video from the Library of Congress No. 1932 VBQ 5367. Full transcript is located in Appendix B.

during this interview. Leno showed pictures of him dressed up as a mummy, werewolf and Frankenstein. This allowed Gore to show a diverse side of his personality, that he can have fun and dress up as well as being a family guy.

After the discussion about celebrating Halloween, Leno changed subjects to the campaign. The topic of President Clinton came up and about an article that is being published

Leno: ... Now this week, President Clinton gave an interview and it came in this Esquire magazine that was supposed to be out next week – if you could see that look. Now where he says – he always seems to say something controversial right before everybody else is getting ready to do something. I don't know why that is. I have friends like that.

Gore: You're like that.

Leno: I'm like that, I'm like that? But he says he wants the Republicans to apologize for the impeachment, which of course that was just one line in the interview but you know how they pull that out. You have any reaction to that?

Gore: Well, I am still waiting for the Republican Congress to apologize for electing Newt Gingrich as the speaker. I don't want Newt to take that personally. I think that contracted the agenda pretty bad.

Leno: Now is the president out campaigning with you? I can't quite figure this out.

Gore: No ah, well Martin Sheen is going to go out with me to this rally after this show. But seriously, no I made a decision that I'm going to campaign on my own. I'm campaigning as my own person and my own voice with my own agenda for the future and you know that's just what feels right to me. And I appreciate his help getting out the vote, to be doing, you know, a few things but we're not going to campaign together because I'm running on my own.

This moment seemed uncomfortable for Gore because part of his campaign strategy was to distance himself from President Clinton and now on national television he was directly confronted with the issue. He deflects it with the comment of Martin Sheen

joining him instead. Martin Sheen portrayed the president, Josiah 'Jed' Bartlet, in the *West Wing*, a popular prime time drama at the time. Leno did not push the issue either and moved on to questions from the audience.

- Leno: ...Now we have, we have audience questions. These are real Americans.
- Gore: Did you guys fill these out? (*audience cheers*)
- Leno: Yes they did. These are not the Jim Leery plant guys. Let's see, here you go, here's a hard-hitting question from Cathy. "If you win, what is the first meal you will order as president?" Oh, please, what is the first meal you will order as president?
- Gore: Well, if it's as close as they are saying it is, breakfast. If the returns come in early on election night, probably a Happy Meal from McDonald's.
- Leno: Here's one from Phil Cassill from San Diego. This is interesting. Oh, this is interesting! I did not know this. "Do you think making voting compulsory like they do in Australia?" Guess they have to vote in Australia. "Would it be a good move for this country? Making it "compulsory?"
- Gore: That depends. That depends on how many electoral votes Australia has.
- Leno: Really?
- Gore: No, I mean, more seriously, I want to, I want our country to be that kind of country where people want to vote. Where they think it makes a difference because we're in charge of our destiny. And, that means that campaign finance reform is important, that we are shooting straight and telling people exactly what the tough choices are. And, I think that when we have that, people are going to vote in much larger ages.
- Leno: Here's one. Oh, here's one about me. "If you're elected president, how do you prepare yourself for the next four years of Jay's monologue? And, you'll be great for me, by the way. I've got, I just want to say, personal things aside...oh!
- Gore: Right now I have my technical adviser of the staff working on a J-chip.

- Leno: J-chip? Really? What is that? And how is that?
- Gore: In this case, J stands for you, Jay.
- Leno: Really?
- Gore: Any offensive political humor is automatically...
- Leno: Just wiped off? And, you're not kidding, just look at that grin! That is actually a very sneaky grin.
- Gore: Actually, I have also given some thought to other major changes. Instead of these boring Saturday radio addresses I've been thinking about a Presidential monologue every night.
- Leno: Oh that would be good! If I can help you out there, sir, you let me know! Well, this is probably the last time I will see you until the big day and ah...
- Gore: Just a week away.
- Leno: It has been a pleasure. I've appreciated you coming by and seeing us, you've been a good sport putting up with all the jokes over the years. Good luck. Vice President Al Gore!

This segment followed a similar format that Jack Paar used in the '60s with Kennedy and Nixon, ending the candidate's interview with questions from the audience. Gore was able to show he can think on his feet, with answers that seemed honest and genuine. Because Leno really did not press him on serious issues, Gore was able to relax and reveal more of his sense of humor. Furthermore, the candidate was able to show he had more personality than the "stiff guy" portrayed by the media.

### Media Coverage

The media gave Gore positive reviews of his performance on the *Tonight Show*. The New York *Daily News* headline read "Gore's No Bore" and reported:



Vice President Gore dressed up as a presidential candidate for Halloween on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* last night and said he wasn't going to ask President Clinton to come to the aid of his campaign... Instead, relaxed in suit and tie, Gore bantered with the late-night host, who welcomed the vice president with a warm embrace. (Moritz, 2000 p. 24)

The *Express* headlined the vice president's Halloween appearance as "Gore Scores Monster Hit with Audience," (Moore, 2000 p. A8).

### *The Late Show with Letterman*

Gore's only appearance on *The Late Show with David Letterman* was September 14, 2000. When Gore entered the Ed Sullivan Theater, where the show is recorded, he was met with a standing ovation. He proceeded to walk over and shake the hand of an audience member who earlier in the show was identified as a Texan who liked his governor. When Gore sat down Letterman quipped, "You never miss an opportunity for a vote, do you?" (Appendix B: transcripts reproduced by *CBS News* of *The Late Show with David Letterman*, September 14, 2000)<sup>29</sup>.

Music playing and turns to Prince's song *Kiss*, "*Ain't no particular sign I'm more compatible with I just want your extra time and your ....Kiss*

Letterman: So sweet lips, is that what they call you now? That was some kiss you gave Tipper the other night at the convention! You realize people were watching, right?

Gore: I have been surprised at the amount of commentary and reaction to it. I really have, because to me, that was just a little peck.

Letterman: Al, how long have you been on the road (*laughter*)?

This exchange between Gore and Letterman allowed the vice president to portray himself as a passionate husband. It also humanized him and allowed him to be seen as

---

<sup>29</sup> Conversation between David Letterman and Al Gore in this interview reference transcripts from *The Late Show with David Letterman* September 14, 2000, and was acquired from *CBS News* reproduced transcripts via Lexus Nexus. Transcript is located in Appendix B.

less stiff and having real emotion. Letterman carries on with Gore and then makes fun of Bush's open mike blooper, where he called a reporter a name, unaware that his microphone was still on.

Letterman: Say, I – I know you don't necessarily like to trash talk the competition but you just gotta, I mean, there must be a moment when you think, this is gonna be good. You know with the mike thing and all.

Gore: That kind of thing could happen to anybody. The mike is open. I mean, you know...

Letterman: It's constantly on.

Gore: Yes. And if you're with your running mate on stage and the crowd is cheering, you know, you just say whatever's on your mind.

Letterman: Has anything like that ever happened to you?

Gore: Well, I hope not (*laughter*).

Letterman: You know what I'm talking about?

Gore: I'm not sure what you mean, Dave. What are you getting at (*laughter*)?

Letterman: Just go ahead. I don't know where this was. But we have videotape now of...

Gore: Oh, no. What? What (*laughter*)?

Letterman: The vice president and Joe Lieberman. Roll the videotape.

Gore: Uh-oh.

(Begin clip of skit)

Gore: Hey, you know what? I have to go on the Letterman show. That show is so lame.

Lieberman: Oh, yes, big time.

This skit shows Gore and Lieberman mimicking the incident of Bush talking to Cheney while unaware a mike was still on for others to hear. The skit reveals a joking Al Gore, having fun and playing a comedic role. Gore acknowledged his own nerdiness and appeared laid back and confident. Comedy was not the only focus of the interview. The host questioned his views on global warming, which Gore was happy to discuss in detail. Letterman kept things relatively friendly except at one point during the interview he tried hard to get answers to a few more substantive issues such as the plea bargain of Wen Ho Lee, who was accused of mishandling nuclear secrets. Gore awkwardly deflected the question calling Letterman a “wunk” and saying “hey, this is supposed to be a comedy show.”

Following others before him Gore also came prepared with his own Top 10 list.

Gore: I hold here in my hand, Letterman...

Letterman: Yes.

Gore: The Top-10 rejected Gore-Lieberman campaign slogan:  
Number 10: Vote for me or I'll come to your home and explain my 191-page economic plan to you in excruciating detail.

Letterman: Yes.

Gore: Number 9: Remember, America, I gave you the Internet and I can take it away. Think about it.

Number 8: Your vote automatically enters you in drawing for the \$123 billion budget surplus.

Letterman: Wow!

Gore: Number 7: With Lieberman on the ticket, you get all kinds of fun new days off.

Number 6: We know when the microphone is on.

Letterman: Yes.

Gore: Number 5: Vote for me and I will take whatever steps necessary to outlaw the term, "Wassup!"

Number 4: Gore-Lieberman: You don't have to worry about pork barrel politics.

Number 3: You'll thank us in four years when the escalator to the moon is finished.

Number 2: If I can handle Letterman, I can handle Saddam Hussein.

And the number-one rejected Gore-Lieberman campaign slogan: I'll be twice as cool as that president guy on "The West Wing."

The jokes created for the program allowed Gore to depict himself as a more likeable guy, and by making fun of himself he could influence the image portrayed in the media. Although Letterman did ask a few questions regarding global warming and foreign affairs, he did not pressure Gore for in-depth or detailed answers.

### Media Coverage

Much of the media reported on what was discussed on the show and the skit pre-recorded with Lieberman. Gore also received points towards improving his image. *The New York Times* did say that both should keep their day jobs when reporting on Gore's skit appearance on Letterman with his vice presidential running mate Joe Lieberman.

EVERYBODY IS A COMEDIAN – They will both be keeping their day jobs, but Vice President Al Gore and his running mate, Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, tried their hand at comedy yesterday. Coached by his daughter Kristin, a professional comedy writer, Mr. Gore made jokes at the expense of his opponent, Gov. George W. Bush, on CBS's *Late Show with David Letterman*. Mr. Gore showed a film of him and Mr. Lieberman before a microphone at a rally. (Perez-Pena, 2000, p. A31)

A second report in *The New York Times* acknowledged that these shows gave Gore a chance to change the perception of his personality. In their coverage of his

appearance they remarked, “Though the content is vacuous, these guest spots matter a lot in terms of media imagery. Since the Democratic convention, the wooden Al Gore seems to have disappeared and his poll numbers have risen; talk shows give him a chance to keep the laughing, kissing Al Gore visible” (James, 2000 p. A22).

## Bush

### *The Late Show with David Letterman*

George Bush made two appearances on *The Late Show with David Letterman* in 2000. He first appeared via satellite during primary season and the second time in person as part of the general election.

#### First appearance March 1, 2000

George W. Bush appeared via satellite for his first appearance on *The Late Show with David Letterman* on March 1, 2000. It was during primary season and his schedule would not accommodate him appearing in person. During the satellite interview Bush gaffed repeatedly. With a satellite delay, timing of jokes did not work and he often just stared at the camera with a nervous laugh. Letterman started the interview cordially, asking Bush how he is staying so rested looking (Appendix B: transcripts reproduced by *CBS News of The Late Show with David Letterman*, March 1, 2000).<sup>30</sup>

Letterman: My God! You look like you've been on vacation. You look like a million damn dollars. How do you...

Bush: Well, I appreciate that.

Letterman: ...how do you do that? Because I know that campaigning is difficult work. How do you look so youthful and rested?

---

<sup>30</sup> Conversation between David Letterman and George Bush in this interview reference transcripts from *The Late Show with David Letterman* March 1, 2000, and was acquired from *CBS News* reproduction of transcripts via Lexus Nexus. Transcript is located in Appendix B.

Bush: Fake it.

Letterman: And that's pretty much how you're going to run the country?

The interview went down hill from there as Bush made questionable jokes in apparent reference to Letterman's recent bypass heart surgery.

Letterman: Let me remind you of one thing, Governor, the road to Washington runs through me.

Bush: Well, it's about time you had the *heart* to invite me (*crowd boos*).

Letterman: You're winnin' delegates left and right, governor.

Moving on, Letterman mentions one of Bush's slogans and asks about it.

Letterman: You often say – "I'm a uniter, not a divider." What does that mean?

Bush: It means when it comes time to sew up your chest cavity, we use stitches as opposed to opening it up (*audience boos again*).

Letterman looks towards the audience and shrugs his shoulders. This was not considered one of Bush's better campaign moments. Poor timing and bad jokes coupled with awkwardness of the satellite delay all contributed into the bad performance. The media jumped on this opportunity to criticize.

### Media Coverage

Bush's first appearance on late-night talk television was not well received. *The New York Times* called it, "a comic flop he had to be to elicit groans and boos from the audience, as he did with jokes about Mr. Letterman's recent heart surgery...He was slow to ad-lib; at times he offered one-word answers then stared blankly into the camera. Mr. Letterman asked if he was tired of jokes about flunking a pop quiz about world leaders. "Nah," said the governor, and stared" (James, 2000 p. A22).

*USA Today* said, “Bush came across as overly manic and a trifle forced in his satellite sit-down with David Letterman” (Shapiro, 2000 A11). The *London Times* called Bush’s appearance “a disaster,” and went on to say it, “reinforced the public perception of Bush as a slow thinker....It did not help that he chose Letterman's recent heart surgery as the topic for one of his alleged gag...identified a new dynamic in the race—the Pinhead Factor” (Helmore, 2000 p. 63).

#### Second appearance October 19, 2000

Bush attempted to redeem himself by making a second appearance on the show. This time Bush appeared in person and sat down on stage with Letterman. As reflected by the following transcript, Bush had a better exchange with the host and was not booed by the audience (Appendix B: transcripts *The Late Show with David Letterman*, October 19, 2000).<sup>31</sup>

Letterman: And now tonight ladies and gentlemen we’re pleased to introduce our next guest from the great state of Texas, Governor George Bush.”

Letterman first brings up an issue being reported by press in which Bush was overhead making a negative comment about a reporter. He made a comment to his vice presidential running mate, Dick Cheney, unaware that his microphone was still on.

Letterman questions him about this mishap.

Letterman: Welcome, Governor. Glad to have you here.

Bush: Glad to be here.

Letterman: So let me ask you this first, right off the bat. What is the deal with you and the reporter? What, what is, so as I understand it the mike

---

<sup>31</sup> Conversation between David Letterman and George Bush in this interview reference transcripts from *The Late Show with David Letterman* October 19, 2000, and was transcribed by author from video from the Library of Congress No. 1497 VBQ 4423. Transcript is located in Appendix B.

was still on and they over-heard you calling a reporter a name? So in essence they were listening to you...

Bush: I'm glad somebody was (laughter)

Letterman: And oh, oh, I do that kind of crap every night (*Bush and audience laugh*)! I mean, I'm apologizing to somebody for something but when that happened I said to myself, this is, this is the only honest moment of the campaign, when you called that guy an as\*\*le (*bleep*). So, and, and, why not (*laughter*)!? Now did, did you ever feel the need to apologize to him for saying that?

Bush: Not really (*Letterman laughs at that answer*).

Letterman: Really? I'm always writing letters of apology.

Bush: Yeah, well.

Letterman: Honest to God, that's what I do half my day.

Bush: It was inappropriate that people heard me say that.

Letterman: I suppose. Ah, as, as, did, did everybody just descend on you and say "Oh my God, guess what you've done? You've just called this guy a horrible name!" Or, was it like, so what, let's keep moving?

Bush: Well, some people were a little concerned about it.

Letterman: Yeah?

Bush: It's like that lady, when I was workin the rope line said, "Young man, I'm goin to wash your mouth out with soap." I said, "Just don't use Lava."

Letterman: But, you know, just find me the person that hasn't said that word and I'll give 'em 1,000 bucks! You know, that's how I feel about it.

Bush: (*Scanning the audience*) I was lookin' (*referring to looking for someone in the audience who hasn't said that word*).

Letterman: Yeah...But you know, the same, like with John McCain when after his concession speech, there was a reporter there and they – he said, we told you to just get the hell out, and I said great! How about a little of that, why can't we have a little honest emotion?

Bush: We did...



Letterman: Now, did, did the polls move at all on that? Was that any kind of pivotal moment in the campaign?

Bush: I hope not. I don't think so.

Letterman: But it would be great if it shot sky-high, wouldn't it?

Bush: Then we'd have everybody with an open mike. You know but ah, I really don't pay attention to the polls that much.

Bush was able to deflect any additional fallout from this open mike mishap while showing a sense of humor and apologizing to people who overheard him. The exchange made Bush seem more human and like a regular guy with typical emotions and as a person who can get upset and misspeak when he gets annoyed.

Letterman then changes the conversation to the presidential debates. The last of the three presidential debates had just concluded and Letterman asks Bush his impression of how they went, whether he thought he did well in them and how important they are as part of the campaign. Letterman admits he only saw part of the first two and very little of the last debate.

Letterman: What, what was the feeling based on the evidence your campaign had? Did you feel you'd done all right? Did you win?

Bush: Well, a lot of folks don't think I can string a sentence together and so when I was able to do so, the expectations were so low...

Letterman: Right.

Bush: All I had to do is say "Hi, I'm George W. Bush" (*laughing*).

Letterman: Are the debates the most important part of the campaign?

Bush: I think they're *an* important part. I think the convention was an important part. The whole...for me kickin off the campaign was an important part because a lot of people, you know, weren't sure what I am made out of and I wanted to have a pretty good start.

Letterman: Now, now more than ever people are voting on impression versus substance. Is that still true?

Bush: I don't know if that's true or not.

Letterman: Really?

Bush: I hope they're voting on substance.

Letterman: Yeah.

Bush: After all, I'm for the people.

Ironically, the show that is being used by the candidate to improve voter perceptions is asking him if likeability is more important than substance. Bush's answer of substance versus impression seems slightly hypocritical since his appearance is for the purposes of creating a positive image.

Letterman then turns to a serious subject. Unlike his interview with Gore, Letterman tackles more controversial issues with Bush. He begins by pressing the governor about the death penalty in the state of Texas.

Letterman: Aaahhh, we make, we make a lot of jokes about you. Ah...electrocuting people in Texas and I know you don't electrocute them, but is there a circumstance that you can imagine, have you ever thought about this that might change your view on capital punishment?

Bush: Well, obviously if the system were unfair I'd think about it. But, ah, it's a serious business. It's, I hope you're not laughing at the expense of victims or people that are put to death, of course.

Bush turns the tables with this comment, surprising the host and putting him on the defensive.

Letterman: Absolutely not, absolutely not.

Bush: It's a serious business and I...a man asked me a question the other night. This is part of the debate where you were asleep...(audience laughs). But a man named Leo asked me a very serious question.

He felt that I was gleeful over the fact that we were executing people in Texas. And I told him I wasn't. I said this is serious. But my job is to uphold the laws of my state and I do. And, ah, yeah, it's a tough business. I happen to be one of those people that believe that if the system is fair that it's going to save lives.

Bush holds to his conviction but Letterman keeps pressing the issue. Much more so than on any topic he covered during Gore's interview.

Letterman: But, but, well probably so, but nothing you can imagine would cause you a change of heart here? I mean the, the...

Bush: Well, if I was convinced lives weren't being saved. If the death penalty did not save other people's lives.

Letterman: Perhaps if someone was wrongly executed.

Bush: Well, definitely on that, of course. I'd be pretty worried about that. And we, in my state of Texas, we got lawyers looking at every single case. People got full access to the courts and ah, I believe that every person that's been put to death have been guilty of the crimes charged and have had full access to the courts of law, both at the state and federal level.

Letterman: Do we have that, like the scene in the movies, that they are sitting by the phone waiting for the call from the governor?

Bush: Not in Texas. In Texas the governor can't grant clemency. I can grant a 30-day reprieve that's what I can do. And, I did so, by the way, on a case in which there was some doubt as to whether or not the person committed a part of the crimes in which they were charged. In Texas, you can't be put to death unless you committed two capital offenses and there was a man who committed a murder and a rape and there was a question about rape and DNA and evidence that could have exonerated him. And, we, I put the 30-day stay on him so we could analyze the evidence. It turned out he was guilty of both.

Letterman: Are the number of executions in Texas so far greater than any other state using the death penalty now?

Bush: Aahh, I think that's probably true.

Letterman: Yeah. And, is there a reason for that?

Bush: Yes, because we are a death penalty state. Some states are not death penalty states.

Letterman: How many are there?

Bush: I can't answer that.

Letterman: Is it like in the 20s – 27 or so?

Bush: I don't know, sounds about right. Secondly, our prosecutors seek the death penalty and ah, they're, they seek the death penalty.

Letterman: Now you do know more about this than I do. Because people are certainly opposed to this, and are...but the notion of this whole topic just makes me very uncomfortable, very squeamish and I think people that oppose the death penalty would absolutely agree with that.

Bush: I think so too. I'm sure people who are for the death penalty look at their conscience. I do. This is a very serious subject matter and people who are against the death penalty, you're against the death penalty?

Letterman: You know, I – I – I see in certain circumstances that yeah, it might suit it here and in other circumstances I think geeze, I don't know if I would be comfortable with that. I just don't know.

Bush: That's fair. That's normal and ah, our society is a society that is a society of law. Our state passed this law and my job is to uphold the law. And I do.

Letterman: Do they ever determine whether it has deterred crime? Is it a deterrent of crime?

Bush: Well, I think yeah, that it's a hard statistic to prove, but if I could be convinced it did not deter crime ah, I may change my opinion of the death penalty. One thing we shouldn't do is have the death penalty to seek revenge. We shouldn't be seeking revenge.

Letterman continued to press Bush and argue with him at times on other serious topics such as global warming, foreign affairs and the Middle East, and drilling oil in Alaska. At the conclusion of the interview, made tradition by other candidates, Bush ended the interview by bringing his own Top 10 list.

Letterman: You've prepared, as it seems to be traditional – the Top 10 list?

Bush: I do.

Letterman: Oh great! What's the category?

Bush: First of all, it's from the "Home Office" in Crawford Texas.

Letterman: Oh, Crawford Texas.

Bush: Yeah, come out of Crawford. Hi everybody. The top 10 changes I'll make in the White House.

Letterman: Oh, here you go.

Bush: Are you ready?

Letterman: This is right up your alley.

Bush: Yep. Number 10...

Letterman: Number 10.

Bush: To save taxpayer dollars, calls to winning sports teams will be collect. Number 9: new rule at cabinet meetings, you can't talk until you ride the mechanical bull.

Letterman: Have you ever been on a mechanical bull?

Bush: No.

Letterman: Yes. Do they still have those down in Texas?

Bush: Yes.

Letterman: Yes.

Bush: Number 8.

Letterman: It's another form of capital punishment, I believe, isn't it?

Bush: Good-bye boring presidential radio address, hello, Dick Cheney spins the hits of the '80s, '90s and today.

Letterman: There you go – pretty good.

Bush: Number 7—Make sure the White House library has lots of books with big print and pictures.

Number 6—Just for fun, issue executive order commanding my brother Jeb to wash my car.

Number 5—First day in office, my mother's face goes up on Mount Rushmore (*showing an imposed face of Barbara Bush on Mt. Rushmore*).

Letterman: Wow. Well, look there.

Bush: Number 4—Look into hiring a security guard for our nuclear secrets.

Number 3—Will not get sick on Japanese leaders like other President Bushes I know.

Number 2—Give Oval Office one heck of a scrubbing.

Letterman: That'd be a job for Cheney – That would be Cheney's job right?

Bush: Number 1—Tax relief for all Americans, except smart-aleck talk-show hosts.

Letterman: Hey, wait a minute. Well, listen I hope you've enjoyed your time here.

Bush: I have.

Letterman: I've enjoyed chatting with you. It's been a lot of fun. It's been interesting.

Bush: Thank you, sir.

Letterman: And the election is, is it just three weeks away?

Bush: A little less.

Letterman: Well good luck to ya and we'll see what happens.

Bush: (*Looking at Letterman directly*) I'm askin' for your vote.

Letterman: All right. Win or lose, comeback and see us again.

Bush: Thank you, sir.

Letterman: Governor George W. Bush ladies and gentlemen – We'll be right back.

Bush was assertive, cordial and portrayed himself as a candidate with convictions. He was not flustered at Letterman's constant probing about his stance on issues or what he would do in hypothetical situations. It was a more aggressive interview than any other candidate appearance on late-night talk show. According to the Media Research Center, Letterman asked Bush "four times as many hostile questions" as he did Gore during the vice president's appearance (Perkins & Perry, 2000). Although the interview seemed more typical of those found on news interview programs like *Meet the Press*, in the end, both host and candidate seemed pleased with the exchange. One reason both parties were happy with the face off: The show posted season-high ratings in households with a 4.8 rating (Bernstein, 2000, p. 4).

### Media Coverage

After this second appearance on Letterman, Bush's reviews were not necessarily full of praise but much better than his first appearance reviews. Much of the media's comments compared Bush's first performance to second.

This review by *The Washington Post* gives a somewhat favorable impression of his appearance. "Bush was no knee-slapper today, but he held his own with a couple of good lines" (Romano, 2000 p. A11).

*The Dallas Morning News* seemed relieved its governor did not bomb a second time:

Well, it's over. George W. Bush finally took David Letterman's bait and survived an appearance on *CBS Late Show* Thursday night. It was by no means all fun and games. In fact, both Letterman and Bush were at their best during surprisingly animated and cogent discussions of the death penalty, tensions abroad and energy policy. (Bark, 2000)

The *Washington Times* noted that this interview was more serious than most previous late-night appearances.

Mr. Bush appeared last night on a rather serious version of the *Late Show* with Mr. Letterman, in which the comedian interviewed the Texas governor at length about the death penalty and the Middle East crisis...But Mr. Bush did get a stab at comedy on that show as well, reading off his “Top Ten” list of things he will change when he becomes president. (Sammon & Boyer, 2000, p. A3)

*The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*

First Appearance March 6, 2000

Bush’s first appearance on the *Tonight Show* was during the primaries. Several of his opponents also made appearances on the show during primaries including John McCain, Al Gore and Bill Bradley. During Bush’s visit, the program opened with a skit making fun of his poor performance on a quiz about foreign leaders, which occurred earlier in the campaign. Leno was filmed walking through the hallways of the NBC studios, anxiously looking for Bush, who was in his dressing room reviewing the names of foreign leaders. The Associated Press reported the following transcript of Bush’s March 6th appearance on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* (Johnson, 2000).

Bush: “Who is Tony Blair?” “Who is Boris Yeltsin?”

Leno, acting surprised, appeared in disbelief as the governor appeared not to know the names of the British prime minister and Russia’s former president. Bush, pretending to be frustrated with himself, said he was conducting a daily briefing with one of his advisers. At that point, the camera panned back to show Bush speaking with “Jeopardy” host Alex Trebek.

Leno: Governor, listen, I’m not going to tell anybody you don’t know who Boris Yeltsin is.



Bush: What are you talking about? This is my daily brief from one of my top foreign policy advisers.

Trebek: All right governor, once again the category is foreign leaders. Who was the prime minister of Israel from 1996 to 1999?

Bush: Who is Benjamin Netanyahu?

Leno: Yes (*pumped a fist in the air cheering Bush on*)!

After his introduction by Leno, Bush sat down for an easier interview on this show than he had with Letterman just days prior. They have a friendly conversation and Leno asks him about being a partier when he was young, which was a character issue tainting Bush's campaign.

Leno: You've talked about this in the past, and you would get kind of wild, and you used to drink a bit when you were a young man. See, like to me, like Al Gore looks like he's been running for president since he was in the eighth grade.

Bush: Yes.

Leno: But when you were out at a frat party, and whoo, having a good time at Yale, and partying with the boys, did you ever think, you know, I don't want to have that beer. I might be running for president. I mean, did that ever cross your mind? Did it ever...

Bush: No.

With the self-effacing skit at the beginning and throughout the entire interview, Bush seemed to be more relaxed than his previous late-night appearance on *The Late Show with David Letterman*. Leno gave Bush time to prepare as the skit was planned over several days of talks with top Bush aides. The show also indicated beforehand that their interview would focus on personal details such as how he met his wife (Burger, 2000, p.24).

Leno did not press the governor on serious issues. Bush also appeared to give honest and genuine answers. Other than the skit, the canned jokes were at a minimum, which was a lesson learned from his first appearance on Letterman.

### Media Coverage

Much of the media coverage compared this appearance favorably to the disastrous time with Letterman. The New York *Daily News* described it as a comeback.

George W. Bush tried to make a comedic comeback last night, taping a skit for Jay Leno's *Tonight Show* mocking his inability to name foreign leaders. It was Bush's second late-night TV appearance following a disastrous cameo last week on David Letterman's *Late Show*. (Burger, 2000, p. 24)

Similarly, the *St. Petersburg Times* stated, “Less than a week after he bombed with David Letterman, George W. Bush sought a comedic rebound Monday on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*... The governor gave it as good as he got” (*St. Petersburg Times*, 2000, p. 4A).

### Second Appearance October 30, 2000

Bush’s second appearance on the *Tonight Show* was just weeks prior to Election Day. Like his previous appearance during the primaries, he performed a skit with Leno. This time he made fun of his mispronunciations of words. Correcting Leno on how to pronounce flammable (Appendix B: transcripts – *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, October 30, 2000).<sup>32</sup>

Bush: Jay – Jay, you can’t light that in here. The stuff in the closet’s highly flammablable.

---

<sup>32</sup> Conversation between Jay Leno and George Bush in this interview reference transcripts from *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* October 30, 2000, and was transcribed by author from video from the Library of Congress No. 1931 VBQ 5366. Transcript is located in Appendix B.

Leno: Thanks for the warning, governor, but I think the word you're looking for is 'flammable.'

Bush: Flammablable.

Leno: No, I hate to correct you, it's flammable.

Bush: Jay, Jay, look at the sign (*pointing to a sign saying flammablable*).

Sitting at his desk after the skit, Leno introduces Bush to join him on stage.

Leno: My first guest, you know, running as the Republican candidate for president of the United States. From the great state of Texas, please welcome Governor George Bush.

Bush: I have a little headline of my own here (*he has come on after Leno's headlines section*). It's kind of an advanced preview.

Bush hands a cardboard display to Leno and he holds it up to show the audience.

Leno: Oh, November 8. Wednesday, November 8, the *Los Angeles Times*, this is the headline.

HEADLINE READS: **BUSH WINS**

Leno: There you go.

Bush: There you go, that's right.

The conversation on the *Tonight Show* is again very friendly. Leno asks about Bush's family, including his parents and wife. The two seemed more like two friends having a casual conversation instead of Bush being a guest on a television show.

Leno: How's mom and dad doing? Okay?

Bush: They're nervous.

Leno: Yeah?

Bush: Yeah.

Leno: Do you think mom's more nervous for you than she was for your dad?

- Bush: I don't know. Might be a tie. But I know she's darn nervous. And a...she's still telling me what to do, though, after all these years.
- Leno: Who's more competitive, mom or dad? I probably know the answer to this but...
- Bush: I'd have to stay mom.
- Leno: Yeah.
- Bush: Yeah.
- Leno: You know, she was on this show once and when she shook my hand, I thought it was Arnold Schwarzenegger.
- Bush: She's shaking mine like that too.
- Leno: (*Pretends Barbara Bush is squeezing his hand*) "I guess you're not doing any jokes about my husband tonight are you" and I said No! She's very strong.
- Bush: She's a strong-willed woman.
- Leno: She's a strong-willed woman. And your wife, Laura, is here. She's a big part of the campaign.
- Bush: She's right over there (*pointing to his wife*).
- Leno: Has she ever given you campaign advice?
- Bush: Yeah, quite frequently. She gave me a little advice tonight. She said, whatever you do, do not try to be charming, witty or debonair. Just be yourself.
- Leno: Just be yourself. That's good advice. Shows that the woman knows you. I know the campaign trail, this must be a nightmare, because everywhere you go, in fact, I'm sure you've had this happen to you...when Al Gore was here one time, we were talking... just out on the parking lot...He went "shh" and I looked over and there was a guy with one of those shotgun mikes aiming at us. He was like a quarter mile away. He's picking up every little thing that you say.
- Bush: Yes, I know what you're talking about.
- Leno: Big time. You know what I'm talking about big time!

Bush: Big time.

Leno then ended the interview segment with questions from the audience in a way similar to how he ended his interview with Al Gore and Jack Paar ended of his interviews with both Kennedy and Nixon in 1960.

Leno: These are... we asked people to fill out questions... What embarrassing childhood story could Barbara Bush tell us about you?

Bush: Well, she probably could tell one about my brother Marvin.

Leno: No, not Marvin, forget Marvin!

Bush: He actually urinated in the steam iron one time.

Leno: Urinated in the steam iron? You know, an ordinary man can be president apparently.

Bush: Marvin's not running. Sorry Marvin, about that.

Leno: I hope they weren't your pants they were pressing.

Bush: That's right!

Leno: Here is an interesting one. This is from Terence Bates. "Who is your favorite president?" Besides your dad, obviously.

Bush: Well, I've got a couple. I'd say Ronald Reagan. The reason why, I loved his optimism. An optimistic man who picked a really good administration. He had a set agenda and he knew how to delegate. I like Abraham Lincoln, of course. A really fantastic president who dealt with incredibly serious situations. And, did it well.

Leno: A high school teacher: "What would you tell students who want nothing to do with voting? They have no faith in politics or politicians? What would you do?"

Bush: I would say, first, I can understand their cynicism. People have been let down. That in order to encourage the young, politicians need to tell the truth. That she needs to tell her students this country is founded upon the participation of our citizens. We're only as good as the willingness of our youth to participate. And their votes do matter.

Leno: Then you get the government you deserve.

Bush: Yeah.

The questions were very benign and did not invoke any controversial topics.

Bush was able to show his more personable side. He spoke about his wife, parents and siblings and appeared sincere when answering the question about voter participation and cynicism.

### Media Coverage

Most of the media reporting on this performance focused on the self-effacing skit and the relaxed mood of the interview. The New York *Daily News* complimented Bush, saying:

In a fresh sign of his growing confidence that the election is moving his way, George W. Bush let Jay Leno remind voters last night that Bush sometimes exhibits what might be called no controlling verbal authority...Bush cheerfully let himself be the patsy in a skit poking fun at his malapropisms that opened his *Tonight Show* appearance. (DeFrank, 2000, p. 18)

*The Mirror* also noted the friendly atmosphere during the program. "George W. Bush poked fun at his opponent in the US Presidential election on a TV chat show, donning an Al Gore mask joking with Leno and saying he was "scary" (Lines, 2000 p. 2).

### Nader

#### *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno – September 12, 2000*

The Tonight Show extended an invitation to Green Party candidate Ralph Nader, who appeared on the show September 12, 2000. Unlike Bush and Gore who were the first guests on the program, Nader is the second guest following comedian D.L. Hughley.

Nader does not perform in a skit but does come with his own props (Appendix B: transcripts *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, September 12, 2000).<sup>33</sup>

Leno: And now, the man who is running for president on the Green Party ticket...Critics say he has no chance in winning but he believes he can make a difference. We'll find out why. Please welcome Ralph Nader.

Leno: How are you, sir? Welcome, sir, it's nice to finally meet you.

Nader: Thank you.

Leno: Now here's something that has always fascinated me...since I'd been in college and I thought I'd just follow since I was a car guy and a...you always seem so...and I was wondering...what do you do for fun?

Nader: Strawberries.

Leno: Strawberries? Is this your weakness? Oh, strawberries.

Nader: Yes.

Leno: Really? So that's your thing...what you do...Your idea of a good time. Chocolate covered?

Nader: Once in a while.

Leno: Oh, oooh.

Nader: It's vitamin C.

Looking confused at this answer, Leno changes the topic and asks Nader about being a consumer advocate and his favorite past time activity. Nader gives a brief background regarding his consumer advocacy and then discusses his passion for baseball as he displays some odd mannerisms while is mocked by D.L. Hughley, who is sitting on the couch next to him. Leno then discusses Nader's frugality pointing out that he flies

---

<sup>33</sup> Conversation between Jay Leno and Ralph Nader in this interview reference transcripts from *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* September 12, 2000, and was transcribed by author from video from the Library of Congress No. 1907 VBQ 3925. Transcript is located in Appendix B.

coach and refuses to use a private plane before moving on to the topic of politics and the election.

Leno: ... So what do you offer that Gore and Bush don't offer?

Nader: Since you asked, Jay, for over 35 years I have been fighting for the regular people in this country in all kinds of ways and unlike Bush or Gore, I'm not for sale.

Leno: You're not for sale?

Nader: Not for sale (*applause*).

Leno: So okay, let me ask you this. Okay, suppose a corporation, a good-hearted corporation says, "Oh boy, we like what Ralph Nader's saying. We wanna give you some money for your party." Would you take it?

Nader: No, never. Because corporations are artificial entities. Just human beings should participate. Corporations can't vote. All though Bush is really a corporation running for president, disguised as a person. But that's okay.

Leno: uh uh (*applause*) but...

Hughley: Now I'm going to vote for you, Ralph.

Leno: But it takes a certain...ah, it seems like, ah, it seems like it takes a tremendous amount of money... I mean tremendous amounts of money. That almost, ah, you can't get it from these single donations. That almost seems like you have to have that sort of...

Nader: That's the kind of dirty money politics might get for elections. I mean, a public election should be publicly funded and we're practicing what we're preaching. We're not taking any corporate money, no PAC money, no soft money, just contributions from individuals.

Leno: So, if you'd have to vote for Bush or Gore who would you go for?

Nader: I can't vote for none of the above.

Leno: No? Let's say it's just, ah, comes along it's just Bush or Gore. What would you do?



Nader: I would invoke the cruel and unusual punishment provision of the U.S. Constitution and punt!

Leno: Really? That's, that's it?

Nader: Yeah!

Leno: Okay, now tell us about these presidential debates. It all...it seems like years ago when I was a kid and I can remember a smoke-filled room and my father watching TV and a convention would start and you wouldn't know who would get the nomination until after 3, 4, 5 – 10 ballots. Now it's all decided a year ahead of time like these debates. Now, it's Bush and it's Gore, that's it. Why aren't you in these debates?

Nader: Well, two thirds of the American people polled 2 to 1 want four-way debates. They want more excitement, they don't want to fall asleep in front of the TV set watching a dry debate. They want all kinds of subject matters discussed that the two big ones don't discuss. You ask me the question and the only explanation I can give you as to why Bush and Gore are afraid to have me to debate in the Presidential debates...

Nader takes out a rubber chicken – some of the audience laugh at his attempt of a joke. But for the most part the joke falls flat.

Leno: There you go. What...this comedy's not easy, is it, Ralph?

Nader: This is it. This is what it's all about. What have they got to hide? What are they afraid of?

Leno: Let me ask you something. Do Bush and Gore decide who they debate?

Nader: Yes. Because the Presidential debate commission is a private company created and funded by the Republican and Democratic parties. So it's their little plaything and they can decide who else is going to get on. They let Ross Perot in 1992 and they don't wanna...

Leno: Why did he get in?

Nader: Why he got on?

Leno: Yeah.

Nader: I think because of the huge public pressure and he's a billionaire and he was all over the TV.

Leno: All these people wrote and said they wanted you or somebody or Pat Buchanan on this debate, that it would happen?

Nader: It would happen if they wrote to the networks because the networks decide, NBC, CBS, ABC, CNN... they are all thinking of sponsoring their own debates.

Leno: They all seem to think you don't have the experience to (*looking over at the other guest*).

Hughley, joins in the conversation, showing he doesn't take Nader all that seriously either.

Hughley: No, I would just... This chicken made me hungry. That's what I was saying... I was actually thinking about two-piece and a biscuit but that's just something else. Hey, look here if you want to ride cold with these people that's respectful. I love that, you know. I don't know I want a president ride next to me (*referring to flying coach*)... "Hey, hand me the peanuts, prez." That's scary.

Nader: Hey, wait a minute. You remember you used that crack some days ago...a couple of minutes ago about two people voting.

Hughley: Yes.

Nader: Listen. A couple of weeks ago we jammed the Coliseum in Portland, Oregon; 10,500 came, no band, no food, just to hear the politics of joy and justice. You think Bush or Gore could ever attract that kind of running?

Hughley: In Portland, Oregon? They don't have nothing else to do. Everybody who lives in Portland, Oregon, are in the witness protection program.

Nader: What are you going to say when we do the same thing in Boston, Minneapolis and Seattle?

Hughley: I think you are epitomizing the American dream and I am ignorant of politics. I know that I respect you a great deal and I know Firestone should be scared to death of you right now!

Hughley defuses Nader's defensive tone with his humor while Leno changes the conversation to a topic that has given Nader news coverage regarding his advertising.

Leno: I wanna show you a commercial. If I had one criticism of you it would be that you're a little staid, a little dull. Okay, but I saw a commercial and thought were there more commercials like these it would get you sued. This is the commercial that got him sued by MasterCard.

Nader's ad that imitates the current MasterCard advertisement is shown.

Leno: There you go. And you got sued over that, right?

Nader: Yeah.

Leno: Now why? Who?

Nader: MasterCard sued me saying that they had a trademark in word priceless. When you put a price on priceless, they say I infringed their trademark. So here we go. It's not enough corporations own everything. Now they are taking over dictionaries...

Leno: Well, it's been good to see you mix it up a bit. And I hope maybe folks will give you a chance and you get a shot in those debates (*shakes hands with Nader as he gets up to leave*) Mr. Ralph Nader. We'll be right back.

### Media Coverage

This appearance on late-night television garnered Nader only minimal press and most of it positive. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* viewed Nader's performance as an attempted copycat performance but not well-executed. His attempts at humor fell flat and he did not appear like a regular guy but seemed to highlight his eccentricities.

Even Ralph Nader, a man rarely known to crack a smile, much less a joke, is getting into the talk-show act. The Green Party presidential nominee pulled out a rubber chicken on Leno's show Tuesday night to illustrate his assertion that the other candidates are afraid to debate him. Audience reaction: silence. (Hutcheson & Pugh, 2000, p. A01)

Similarly, the Associated Press noted that, “Nader’s chicken stunt backfired when fellow guest, comedian D.L. Hughley, began cracking jokes at Nader’s expense....The gag drew tepid laughter” (Lindlaw, 2000). Other media accounts were similar.

### Polls

It is difficult to determine whether any of these appearances made a difference in any of the public opinion polls. Since early September 2000, the results of most opinion polls had been very close. Additionally, since the candidates’ appearances on late-night were relatively close to one another it is unclear as to whose appearance may, if at all, effected the polling numbers.

For example, a September 12 Gallup poll prior to Gore’s first appearance reflected Gore ahead of Bush 49 % to 41 %. Gore’s first appearance was on the *Late Show*, September 14. Gallup Polls reported after his appearance by the Associated Press on September 18 had Gore still leading Bush 49 to 41 % (Lester, 2000). However, another AP report on the Gallup Poll out September 29<sup>th</sup> reflected a sharp change in numbers with the election at a tie, both at 46 % (Lester, 2000).

The debates that occurred October 3, 11 and 17 likely influenced the polls in October. In the beginning of the month on October 4, a Gallup Poll reported Gore back in the lead 48 to 41 %, but then a poll on October 19 put Bush in the lead 48 to 42 % over Gore. One week later, *The New York Times* reported on another Gallup poll taken October 20 – 22 that showed the race narrowing, with Bush 46 % and Gore with 42 %. *The Times* report noted that the frequent change in polls was a reflection of the number of undecided voters (Elder, 2000, p. A25).

*USA Today* reported the numerous changes in the polls since Labor Day this way.

Since Labor Day, Bush and Gore have exchanged the lead eight times in the USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Tracking Poll. Three times, the leads have been outside the poll's margin of error—signs of significant shifts. The other five shifts have produced leads within the margin, meaning there was a small chance the leads weren't actual. (Benedetto, 2000, p. 5A)

It is impossible to determine how much the late-night appearances affected the polls versus other influences like the presidential debates and the number of undecided voters.

In addition to making the late-night talk television circuit, both Bush and Gore ventured onto several daytime talks shows including those hosted by Oprah Winfrey, Rosie O'Donnell, and Regis Philbin. For the first time in the history of *Saturday Night Live*, the presidential candidates made fun of the themselves. In separate taped appearances for a special *SNL* show that aired just prior to Election Day, Bush and Gore reinforced their own stereotypes as, respectively, a habitual word mangler and a pedantic glory hog (Farhi, 2000 p.A1). Bush purposely mangled words and Gore sighed loudly (Appendix B: transcripts *Saturday Night Live*, November 5, 2000).

Bush: When they asked me to help introduce tonight's special, I felt frankly ambivalent. Although I'm a big fan, I have seen things on the show I thought were, in a word, offensive.

Gore: Well, you know, I was one of the very first to be offended by material on 'Saturday Night Live.' And I'm glad to see that the governor has joined me in condemning it.

While campaign speeches gave them exposure to a few thousand voters at a time, 10 million or more potential voters were watching them on *Saturday Night Live* (Young, 2000, p. 5).

### Conclusion

The 2000 campaign had added more excitement for the media and voters compared to the 1996 election. Both candidates used entertainment programming as never before. As discussed in previous chapters, candidates occasionally appeared on talk shows in the past, but in the 2000 presidential race candidate appearances took off. During 2000, these candidates appeared nine separate times on late-night talk television.

These appearances by the candidates offered their campaigns several benefits. First, they received additional media exposure and face time on television. As overall network news coverage declined and with consistently shortened soundbites, these alternative venues allowed the candidates to speak directly to the voters. In comparison to the news, George Bush received 13 minutes on Letterman during his October 19 appearance, which was more than his total on television news combined for the three major networks during that month. Similarly, Gore's appearance on Letterman on September 14 gave him more coverage than he received by three networks in the entire month of September (Media Monitor, 2000).

Compared to the 1996 coverage that focused on a boring campaign, 2000 offered up entertainment. The candidates appeared on a variety of entertainment programming, including kids' programs, comedy shows, daytime talk shows, traditional nightly news and late-night talk shows. These appearances garnered the candidates additional media exposure, but much of the coverage focused on the candidates' appearances themselves and not their policies. By the end of the 2000 election, evaluation of presidential candidates on the basis of their entertainment value had become well entrenched by the

media. Reporting seemed to promote its use as this Associated Press headline reveals, “Talk shows become obligatory on campaign trail” (Good, 2000).

The news media may not have actively covered the candidates’ press conferences, but they did cover the late-night appearances. A *USA Today* article reflected this perception of the use of alternative format stating, “Talk show appearances, especially on shows as big as Winfrey’s, also help candidates control the news coverage of their campaigns...The footage is bound to make it into the nightly newscasts” (Moore, 2000, p. 8A). Similarly, the New York *Daily News* coverage sounds more like an opening monologue itself, “Say, did you hear the one about the guy running for president?” This *News* article went on to discuss how both candidates have, “turned to yuks to help bring in some votes, spending valuable campaign time trying to outdo each other, often with self-deprecating shtick, on national television (Young, 2000, p. 5).

The media also reported that campaigning was becoming more about likeability and personality rather than issues. Ironically, some of these stories came from the same networks that improved their ratings by hosting the candidates on their entertainment programs. An example of this focus on likeability is seen in an interview on the *Today Show* between Host Matt Lauer and his guest Jonathan Alter, a columnist for *Newsweek Magazine* (*NBC Today Show*, October 20, 2000).

- Lauer: More than just exposure, though, isn’t it? Isn’t this more about likeability?
- Alter: It is. Likeability is one of the key issues this, this year. If, if, if likeability becomes the standard, that would tend to favor George W. Bush. If issues are more the standard, the polls show that people agree more with Gore on the issues. So Gore, Gore made a very interesting point earlier this morning on *TODAY*. He said, ‘If this is about you and not the candidates, then the country will be better.’ And if, he's betting that it is about the voters. And if that’s true, he’ll

win. If it's about the candidates and their likeability, it's going to be a much closer deal.

Lauer: Is it, though, Jonathan, a disturbing trend in American politics, that it boils down to this towards the end of a race?

Alter: Well, it, we, we don't want to make too big a thing out of a good laugh. I don't want to get too, you know, pontifical about it. But it is a little bit troublesome in that this is not what presidents do. Presidents are not TV shows, like Gore is not a spin-off of the Clinton show. They, they have a serious job to do and when you get involved in this much trivia this close to the election, it can distract the voters from what the real issues are.

Likewise, the *USA Today* notes the appeal for the candidates to show their personalities on these shows, "Candidates like appearing on these shows because they have a chance to come across as personable, and the interviews are mostly friendly. Some media critics say that talk-show appearances can sometimes provide more substance than news programs can" (Moore, 2000). Even Letterman questioned George Bush on his show regarding people casting votes on based on their impressions of the candidates.

As issues have given way to the focus on personality, political strategists have increasingly used an appearance on Letterman or Leno as vehicles for the voters to feel closer to the candidate's persona. These shows help humanize the candidate to the voter. Given the viewership profile, late-night talk shows provide an opportunity to woo younger and swing voters while mitigating the negative images being portrayed by the media and by showing they have a sense of humor. Gore's late-night media blitz offered him the chance to change the "stiff" Al Gore, and show the laughing, kissing Al Gore. Bush was able to string coherent sentences together while speaking clearly and acting like a regular guy.



Appearances on late-night talk shows provide additional airtime as campaign coverage by traditional news media decline. Further, more and more voters, particularly young Americans, choose to get their political news from alternative sources like late-night talk television.

Throughout the 2000 election, campaign strategists emphasized personality to construct a comforting persona of the candidates. Through this approach, candidates were seen as personalities and not politicians. Sadly, this was the primary objective of the two primary parties during the first election of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So an election that had serious implications and the potential to determine matters ranging from the composition of the Supreme Court to the state of the country's nuclear arsenal was not a campaign focused on issues. Instead, it ended up concentrating on whether a particularly gregarious fraternity member would beat the serious science club geek.

## CHAPTER 8

### LATE-NIGHT STRATEGY – CONCLUSION

*Why is a political campaign like duck hunting? Barry Goldwater gave the answer back in 1964, when he was asked why he wasn't campaigning for minority votes. "We ought to go hunting where the ducks are," he explained.*

*The candidate has to go where the voters are. The voters are not going to come looking for the candidate, especially these days. We live in a depoliticized era. Only 15 % of the public actually goes looking for campaign news, according a poll taken this year by the Pew Research Center.*

*So where are the ducks—sorry, the voters? A lot of them, especially women, are watching talk shows like "Oprah" and "Rosie O'Donnell" and "Live with Regis." The candidates have to go to them: What do you do when you've got a close election with a lot of tuned-out voters? You try to lure them in....Oprah has over 7 million viewers, Jay Leno, 6 million, David Letterman, Regis Philbin, and Rosie O'Donnell at least 4 million each. You know, that's a lot of ducks. (Schnieder, CNN World Today, October 20, 2000)*

#### Summary

This study's primary focus was to chronicle the use of late-night talk television by presidential candidates during general election periods beginning with its first use in the 1960 election and continuing through the 2000 campaign. Though late-night talk television was not used in every election since 1960, this research reveals an ever-evolving use of late-night talk entertainment programming by presidential candidates. In addition to reviewing the appearances of presidential candidates during general election periods, the study also comments on appearances of those politicians who appeared on late-night prior to their candidacies. This 40-year period of time included 11 elections,

and 20 different appearances by nine candidates. The appearances consisted of four different late-night talk show venues with five different hosts.

This study surveys the first 40 years of appearances of presidential candidates on late-night talk television beginning with Nixon and Kennedy in 1960 to Bush and Gore in 2000. Many presidential candidates have used late-night talk shows as an alternative venue to communicate to voters. This study chronologically reviews a historical trend in presidential campaigning and uncovers an increasing use of late-night talk television as a political communication forum. Media use and influence have evolved from campaign to campaign and by the 2000 campaign, late-night talk shows were seemingly an obligatory appearance.

Presidential campaigns are important to the governance of our country. Through these elections, the authority of the government is given by the approval of the American people. Besides the two-party structure, which is entrenched in America's political system, communication is a distinctive characteristic of presidential elections. The media's role in this process is a conduit disseminating political information upon which voters select those who lead this country.

### Conclusion

Several factors have emerged in this study contributing to the increasing use of alternative program venues such as late-night talk shows. First, the evolving media environment where television is the primary source of political information has affected how campaigns are constructed. Second, the time devoted by news agencies to election coverage has been drastically reduced, and third, so has the focus of coverage. Reporting is less focused on substance and issues and is more focused on image and personality.

Fourth, research has shown that an important determinant in voter decision-making is the candidate's personal character and likeability. Fifth, alternative programming allows candidates to reach relatively apolitical audiences. And lastly, both candidates and the media realize financial benefits when candidates appear on late-night talk shows.

### Changing Media Environment

Since the 1960s, television has surpassed newspapers as the primary medium through which voters receive their political information. Over those past few decades, television has risen to dominate political coverage of elections and has become a powerful and influential vehicle in how the presidential campaigns are presented to voters (Dover, 1994). Most voters do not have direct contact with presidential candidates and, therefore, base their perceptions on information gleaned from what they see on television. For most Americans, the mass media are their link to the political world and insight to presidential candidates.

As a result, today's presidential campaigns are essentially mass media campaigns that are led by the television industry (Liebovich, 1998). Political campaigns are primarily about communication and how messages are disseminated to the public. A candidate's primary goal is to develop messages that will persuade voters. Throughout a presidential campaign, voters are confronted with a multitude of messages that are packaged in many forms. Traditional forms of campaign communication such as political advertising, candidate debates, televised party conventions, and broadcast news coverage are staples during an election. As Trent & Freidenberg (2000) state, regardless of what strategies candidate use, they must do and say whatever will enhance voter

perception of them. This study reveals that beyond these traditional strategies other tactics have been employed by candidates to appeal to voters.

### Election News Coverage

The evolving media environment is making it more and more difficult for candidates to communicate directly to voters. Traditional network news has trended toward giving presidential candidates less and less airtime to talk to the public. Candidates' messages are paraphrased by news anchors rather than coming directly from the candidates. Several studies reveal that network news from the 1960s to 2000 devoted less time to covering presidential campaigns, which makes it difficult for candidates to communicate their messages (Makower, 1988; Sabato, 1991; Hallin, 1992; Steel & Barnurst, 1996; Farnsworth & Lichter, 2003). These studies reflect that the time allotted by network news programming including soundbites has decreased significantly between the 1960s and 2000. In addition, the average length of news stories decreased from 43 seconds in 1968 to only nine seconds in 2000, while the number of stories was reduced by 20 % over this same time period. By the 2000 election the research revealed that soundbites were averaging slightly over seven seconds each (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2003).

Additionally, campaign coverage by the news media rarely focuses on issues. Research has shown that reporters tend to frame stories around the theme of the "horse race" (Benoit, Hansen & Stein, 2003; Just, Crigler, and Wallach, 1990; Robinson & Sheehan, 1983). In horse race coverage, campaign reporters consider every aspect of the campaign as a tactical effort to gain votes. Journalists repeatedly tell voters who is in the lead, who is falling behind, and who is likely to win the race. This concentration of the

“horse race” aspect of campaigns comes at the expense of the candidates’ messages on issues.

### Image Versus Substance

One issue that television journalism seems to emphasize is the candidate’s character or personality. Jamieson, Auletta, and Patterson (1993) found that media assessment of the character of candidates has grown and includes aspects such as personality, past private conduct, physical looks and family. Television has particularly increased the focus on character questions of political candidates. The public image of a candidate is developed through attempts by both the media and the candidate’s staff to define who the candidate is. For example, with Kennedy, much of the media’s focus was on his Catholic religion while in 1992 the news reports focused on Clinton’s extramarital affairs. This forced both campaigns to redefine the impressions made by the media to reassure voters that these were not character issues that would affect their ability to run the country.

Similarly, in 2000 the media had a heyday with Al and Dubya and the characters they portrayed for each. Most of the media coverage referenced the characteristics of Gore as a liar or boring and stiff and Bush an incompetent partier rather than focusing on the candidates’ positions on issues. Instead of addressing these unflattering images directly, the candidates used self-effacing humor and alternative media venues to appeal to voters.

In addition, political opponents try to define their competition. Political rivals have often raised the issue of character or personality. George H. W. Bush was first to define his opponent Michael Dukakis in 1988 as an inexperienced challenger, forcing

Dukakis to spend time and effort trying to dispel the images that Bush's campaign created. Taken together these inputs often create an inaccurate and shifting image of a candidate in the minds of the voters.

#### Late-Night Talk Television and Candidate Likeability

Regardless of how the images are created, candidates realize that voters consider character important and associate this with the candidate's likeability (Characters, 2000, p. 7A). Therefore, everything a candidate does or say contributes to the shaping of his image. Research by Atkin and Heald (1976) suggested that likeability is viewed as a personal attraction toward an individual candidate rather than an ideologically based evaluation. It has become less necessary for candidates to discuss their abilities than it is for them to show that they are a likeable people.

Voters now expect candidates to be entertaining and funny and generally appear "likeable." Graber (1972) asserts that over time, a candidate's likeability and personal characteristics have become as important to getting elected as experience and qualifications. Likeability has become a critical factor in campaigning as research has shown that appeal to personal qualities is a strong predictor of voter choice (Marshall 1984; Benoit & McHale, 2003).

The growing popularity of television as a source of information and the concentration of news coverage on personality and character has impacted presidential campaigning. Being good on television has become increasingly important for presidential candidates. Being good on television is being able to appeal as likeable to viewers. A candidate that can effectively use television as a communication tool to show their personable, honest and intelligent along with other characteristics that reflect the

qualities voters want in a presidential candidate and seem to correlate with likeability (Graber, 1972; Trent et al., 2001). It is also perceived that being good on television is associated with good governance and therefore, successful presidential candidates and presidents need to produce good television (Pfau, Houston, & Semmler, 2007).

By the late 1960s and '70s, it became apparent in presidential elections that making good television was essential to successful politics. Those candidates that made good television became successful leaders and those that did not were one-term presidents. For example, during their campaigns, Ford and Carter concentrated their messages on facts and not personality. Both tried to appear appealing in the media but neither was successful. They simply did not make good television and each left office tainted with the image of incompetence after losing reelection.

Although George H. W. Bush was also a one-term president, his television persona was not bad, it was that his competition, Bill Clinton made better television. Clinton's campaign understood the importance of appeal on television. Campaign strategists for Clinton were also more focused and aggressive in using alternative television media to gain exposure to sell their candidate's personality than Bush's campaign during the 1992 election. In 1992 election, better television won.

Conversely, Nixon, Reagan, and Clinton all took advantage of their abilities to communicate through television to win elections. Nixon was the first to understand the importance of television and attributes his appearance on *Laugh-In* as a key factor in his win in 1968. Likewise, Reagan was a master of televised political discourse and was labeled the "Great Communicator." He communicated through the medium utilizing an intimate and conversational nature.



Similar to his predecessors, Clinton's campaign embraced the use of television and appeared on more entertainment style programming than any other candidate before him. Clinton used his Southern speaking style, "taking his licks," to appeal to television audiences. Prior to his presidential candidacy, he used his charisma on television to salvage his political career. Clinton appeared on the *Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* in 1988 to rescue his political image after being criticized extensively in the media for his long-winded speech introducing Michael Dukakis at the Democratic convention.

Although more prominent since Clinton utilized different programming to reach mass audiences in the 1992 election, such tactics have been employed since Nixon/Kennedy in 1960. Clinton was not the first presidential candidate to appear on an entertainment show, but he was the first to make the new venue a central part of his campaign.

Because of the trend toward less detailed and quantity of news coverage combined with the fact that the media focus more on image rather than issues, the use of alternative television programming by presidential candidates has accelerated. Research confirms that the use of talk shows, in contrast to news coverage, offers voters information about the candidate's personality attributing to their likeability (Ridout, 1993). These changes are important and affect the conduct of national presidential campaigns.

In today's mass media culture, voters seem to want more than just speeches and policy papers from their candidates. They want to get to know them as people. Late-night television allows candidates a chance to display their personalities in a way other formats do not provide. Candidates are encouraged to appear on these programs because

they will be perceived more favorably and will be less critically reviewed than on traditional news shows.

Each talk show has its own script, providing an opportunity to view the candidates as persons. Talk shows are a less volatile atmosphere than traditional interview news programs and offer up easier and less intensive questioning (Graber, 1996). Most often, these late-night interviews are nonconfrontational and allow the candidates to engage in light banter. Yucking it up with the host is a good way to diffuse negative perceptions about them and also to recast themselves as cool, hip and likeable. These glimpses into the humanity of political candidates that began with Nixon and Kennedy evolved to where by 2000 successful candidates displayed a convincing range of emotion to the electorate.

We have seen where moments of passion, personal reflection and humor possible within this programming format do more for the candidates than a seven-second news soundbite or a 30-second television commercial. Candidates prepare and plan carefully for these appearances. Behind all the talk show chat is a carefully crafted political strategy. Candidate campaign strategists develop jokes and one-liners that their candidates can use during the interview to show they have a sense a humor and create moments to make the candidates stand out on these programs.

The perception of a political candidate is a man in a suit and tie. Candidates go on late-night talk show television to reveal a more personable side of themselves. Several different tactics have been employed by candidates to appeal to the voters watching these talk shows including the use of musical instruments. Nixon showed a different side of himself by playing the piano on *The Jack Paar Show* in 1962 and then

again in 1963. Similarly, Bill Clinton appeared on Johnny Carson in 1988 playing his saxophone. Four years later, he picked it up again as a presidential candidate, wearing dark sunglasses and playing with the “Posse,” the band on *The Arsenio Hall Show*.

Other candidates tried displaying theatrical skills by participating in skits on late-night talk shows. George Bush and Al Gore both participated in separate short parodies making fun of themselves and their images that had been portrayed in the media. This self-effacing humor was intended to show they possess a quality of humanness and they did not take themselves too seriously. The candidates made fun of themselves as a way to change the perception of a liar and incompetent word fumbler depicted by the media.

Candidates on these programs have used humor in various ways. In addition to skits, candidates practiced one-liners that their campaign strategists created for them. One common script used by several candidates is supplying their own Top-10 List on the *Late Show with David Letterman*. Dole, Gore and Bush all appeared “holding in their hand” a Top-10 List that made fun of both them and their opponents. This is now a *Late Show* tradition for candidates.

Sometimes attempts at humor did not always work out so well. For example, when Ralph Nader grabbed a rubber chicken during his appearance on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* to imply that Bush and Gore were afraid to debate him, the humor did not come through and did not appeal to the audience.

There are risks to the use of talk shows if the candidates do not live up to the expected performance. Bush also failed during his first appearance on *Late Show with David Letterman*. Bad timing and bad jokes while appearing via satellite rather than in

person affected his performance and ability to gain strong appeal from the show's audience.

Humor is not the only tactic used by candidates to appeal to late-night audiences. Appearing on late-night talk television also allows the candidates to show the personal sides of their lives. The discussion of family occurred in every interview of a presidential candidate on late-night talk show. Nixon and Jack Paar shared a story of the two families vacationing together and Paar partying with Nixon's daughter. Goldwater discussed with Jack Paar how he proposed to his wife as well as his daughter's upcoming wedding. Wives, parents, children and grandchildren were part of conversations on late-night appearances by Reagan, Dole, Gore, and Bush. In addition, Hillary Clinton appeared with Bill on *The Arsenio Hall Show* to portray a strong marriage and to support her husband.

These conversations are safe and candidates are able to show a personal side of their lives. Topics like family allow the candidates to connect with a broad range of audiences easier than discussions of a missile crises or ethnic riots. It is useful for candidates to show a personal side of their lives to relate to audiences and voters. It allows them to make a connection that is difficult to do during soundbites on the nightly newscasts. Although being personable is important for candidates, they still need to prove they are knowledgeable and late-night talk shows allow the candidates to discuss both family and politics.

Politicians enjoy appearing on talk show programs because most hosts, unlike news reporters, allow their guests to present their issues and agendas in their own words and from their own perspective (Graber, 1996). While candidates are able to show that

they have a sense of humor and can talk about their families and share personal stories with audiences, they also get to portray themselves as knowledgeable statesmen.

Candidates on these talk show programs were able to discuss their perceptions and criticisms regarding the prominent political issues of the time period. Nixon, Kennedy, and Goldwater all commented on Communism and the Cuban missile crisis. Reagan was able to get a plug in on Johnny Carson's show for welfare reform. Clinton discussed in detail his ideas for education reform with Arsenio Hall, and both Gore and Bush covered the environment and taxes during each of their appearances.

Another significant advantage derived from late-night talk show appearances is that the media are quick to report and review each appearance. These guest spots give the candidates additional exposure through media appraisals that follow each appearance. The media replayed Clinton's saxophone performance on *The Arsenio Hall Show* over and over again. Similarly, much of the media reporting, particularly in 2000, assessed how the candidates performed. Therefore, the candidate's media exposure is increased because the media review their appearances the next few days in their coverage.

A special relationship exists among the show's host, the guest, and the audience. While candidates offered different styles and talents, the talk show hosts also were very different. Jack Paar enjoyed the discussion of politics, often to the criticism of the news media of the time period. He drew fresh notions from politicians when such figures were not a ubiquitous TV presence and invited several different politicians on to his show.

Though Paar invited politicians from both the Republican and Democratic parties, he was accused of conservative biases during his interviews (Appendix B: transcripts – *The Jack Paar Show*, March 8, 1963). In contrast to Paar, Johnny Carson preferred not to

book politicians on his program and during his time as host invited very few politicians and never revealed his political preferences. Similar to Carson's style, Jay Leno, does not reveal his political preferences on his show. However, unlike Carson, he has welcomed several politicians onto his program.

With a much different style than the *Tonight Show* hosts, Arsenio Hall, host of *The Arsenio Hall Show*, was very outspoken on his program regarding his political preferences and about controversial issues. Bill and Hillary Clinton appeared together on his program and at the end of the show he implied his support for Clinton. Though his program aired only a few seasons, Hall used his show as a forum for such issues as the riots in South Central Los Angeles and the plight of inter-city schools (Appendix B: transcripts *The Arsenio Hall Show*, June 3, 1992).

Paar, Carson, Leno, and Hall rarely, if ever, asked difficult or contentious questions to their political guests. On the other hand, David Letterman was not always so accommodating. During Bush's October appearance on the *Late Show*, David Letterman greeted him with a litany of questions on public policy issues concerning global warming, pollution in Texas and the death penalty. Letterman's questioning of Bush in 2000 was considered more hard-pressed and serious than any other candidate had ever received on late-night talk television to date (Baum, 2005).

### Reaching the Apolitical Audiences

If American political leaders wish to communicate with members of the public who are not predisposed to seek out political information, they must put the information where these potential voters are likely to notice it. Baum (2005) confirms that by focusing on candidates' personal qualities rather than multifaceted policy debates,

entertainment television allows candidates to appeal to the relatively apolitical, entertainment-seeking audience.

Candidates are now opting to use alternative avenues like late-night talk shows to communicate their messages and sell their images. Politicians have used these programs as a venue to build awareness of their images with the apolitical audiences. Nixon appeared on *The Jack Paar Show* three separate times and once on *Johnny Carson* between his 1960 candidacy and the 1968 presidential run to increase familiarity of who he was among this voter group. He was able to portray himself as a likeable guy. Similarly, politicians have used late-night as a catalyst to broaden their national awareness and likeability prior to seeking the presidential candidacy. For example, both Reagan and Clinton appeared on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* while they were state governors and just a few years prior to running for president.

By turning to nontraditional media outlets such as late-night talk shows, the candidates reach millions of voters who do not regularly watch network news or Sunday morning political programming. Talk shows are where a large number of the voters get their information, and they appeal to the politically less informed. Younger audiences are marginally attentive prospective voters and particularly difficult to reach through traditional media outlets and make up a large portion of the audience that tends to view late-night talk shows for political information.

This research depicts candidate appearances on the talk show genre as a performance where discussion of fun and pleasure supersedes substance and job relevant issues. Apolitical voters watch these programs for entertainment, not information. However, with candidates appearing on these programs, apolitical voters learn about the

candidates' personalities and how well they like those candidates, which determines their voting decision (Williams et al., 1976).

Political strategists have altered the election process. Presidential campaigns have been reconstructed to include the use of the late-night talk shows as a more efficient means to an end. This has moved us into the age of image politics where entertainment television genres have become a significant factor in determining election outcomes.

### Financial Benefits

Late-night talk show programming allows candidates to sell their images to a diverse audience but it also has substantial financial benefits for both candidates and the media. The candidates receive “free” television exposure from these programs. As advertising expenditures have increased and news coverage has decreased with each election, the ability to supplement the exposure and coverage for candidates with these free appearances is invaluable. A telling example of this was in 2000, when Bush received more speaking time in one evening on *Late Night with David Letterman* than he had gotten the entire campaign between Labor Day and his October appearance from the three major networks combined. Gore also saw similar benefits in the month he appeared on *Letterman*. Candidates cannot overlook this opportunity if they want to be successful in reaching a large number of voters.

Interestingly, the savvy entertainment industry, wise to strange compromises, has become more aggressive in seeking out candidates for appearances. It is important to remember that the media are a business and candidate appearances on late-night television boost ratings. Higher ratings mean higher profits. The increases in ratings for these types of programs offer the media more income than just covering the candidates on



their newscasts. When Clinton appeared on *The Arsenio Hall Show* and with Bush and Gore on *Letterman* and *Leno*, the ratings substantially increased for these programs. These economic benefits clearly explain the motives for both the networks and the candidates.

All of these elements that tie the production of late-night talk shows together make it a desirable use of television for politicians. Appearances on late-night television serve as an important means to make up for the decline in traditional news coverage. As the number of campaign stories has decreased and the length of soundbites shortened, candidates have found late-night television a venue that helps fill the void in news coverage to reach voters. Candidates no longer only rely on news coverage to help convey their messages to voters.

Over time, the use of talk shows to supplement political news coverage and advertising has become popular. By the 2000 election, this television genre had become a primary vehicle to reach voters allowing candidates to bypass traditional media venues. With the challenges of the changing television news industry, fragmented audiences and the large number of media outlets, late-night television has become a forum for presidential candidates to reach large audiences and sell themselves to the public.

The use of late-night talk shows as a primary political forum reduces the impact of the traditional news on the electoral outcomes and ultimately affects the democratic process. Democracy is enhanced by the greater availability of issue information. Interestingly, late-night talk programs, for the most part, do not discuss difficult and controversial issues. The use of talk shows represent a major change in the way politicians are packaging their campaign information and communicating to voters. If

this is where a large number of voters receive their knowledge about candidates then their decisions will be based more on candidate personality and less on issues or policies.

Nevertheless, the link between politics and entertainment is now fully institutionalized. Media outlets now present late-night comedians not as escapists from hard news but as legitimate commentators upon it. This new sphere of cultural activity has resulted in the transformation of political campaigning that is now strongly based on public opinion of the candidates' personalities. As Bernays (1928) observed about the media years earlier, "Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute the invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country" (p. 9). If late-night entertainment programming is becoming as important for political information gathering as the nightly news, then what type of functioning democratic society do we have?

The conclusions from this study reveal implications for electoral outcomes and for democracy. The mass media's role in the electoral process is important to understand because elections are not just decisions, they are a way of making decisions, and the media are a conduit for the information obtained to make those decisions. The modern media landscape is fragmented and diversified and political knowledge no longer results from many people using the same media for the same purpose. Different programs appeal to different audiences or voters, and the level and depth of coverage of issues varies greatly.

Entertainment shows may be useful for candidates to sell their image, but the benefit to the democratic process is debatable. When looking at the use of these alternative venues for campaign communication, the question arises as to which vehicle

is better for obtaining candidate and issue information. What is best, a 20-minute conversation with Arsenio Hall or a seven-second soundbite on the evening news?

Presidents are not comedians on TV shows. Gore was not a spin-off of the Clinton show or G.W. isn't a sequel to the G.H.W. Bush series. They have a serious job to do and when they get involved in this much trivial discussion during elections it can distract the voter from real issues.

Although the attraction to late-night may be a culmination of these factors, the frustrating and disappointing issue that exists is that if you want to be an informed voter it is difficult to find the information you want from the media. One must dig deep for the issues and substance in an election. The media do not readily supply it. What is important to the mass media is not always what is important to voters.

It is important to remember that the mass media are a for-profit industry, protected by the First Amendment, that make decisions based on financial benefit over democratic benefit. Decisions regarding programming, news stories, guests and topics are based on what will obtain ratings. Ratings are important because ratings equate to dollars for the individual media entities all competing for the same money. Decisions are not made based on what will inform the viewers best. As one program director said to me years ago, "It's all about the dough" (personal contact, Citadel Radio program director). Therefore, to be truly informed today, one must work at discovering the important facts on their own and cannot rely on the media to have anyone's best interest ahead of its own.

The Internet has become a tool for those truly interested in the important issues but that is limiting. Not all citizens have easy access to this tool or the savvy to

maneuver through it to discover the information desired. This tool is not the panacea, for it has as much misinformation as it does truthful information, and one must be astute enough to determine which is which.

In an idealized vision of democracy, voters should make their choices solely on the issue positions put forward by the candidates. However, it seems that the current process of evaluating presidential candidates is more concerned with whether they are ready for late-night television rather than how well they will be able to govern the world's largest economy. The implications of these alternative uses of television, such as late-night talk shows, does carry a sea of change for the ways in which political candidates are evaluated and ultimately elected. Such historic evolutions do more than define our politics. They also trace the arc of American history.

#### Study Limitations and Future Opportunities for Study

As with many studies, this one is not without its limitations. This study was limited to chronicling appearances of primary party presidential candidates during an election period on late-night talk television. In addition to these appearances, many other politicians ventured onto late-night television that this study did not review. John McCain, Bill Bradley, Hillary Clinton, Rudy Giuliani, and Michael Bloomberg, to name a few, have all appeared on late-night talk shows as presidential hopefuls.

Along with presidential candidates, vice-presidential candidates have made appearances on both of these late night talk shows, in addition to other entertainment programming, that were not included. Al Gore as the vice-presidential candidate campaigned on late-night talk shows as did Dan Quayle, Dick Cheney, and Joe

Lieberman. Further study regarding the appearance and scheduling between presidential nominees and their running mates offers additional research opportunities.

Another area not analyzed but potentially interesting is a review of the candidates' wives and family member appearances on late-night talk shows and entertainment television. Hillary Clinton, Tipper Gore, Elizabeth Dole, Laura Bush, and Nancy Reagan all made separate individual appearances on talk show programs on behalf of their husband's candidacies. Al Gore's daughters also went on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* to support their dad. Analysis of the effects of these appearances would present additional content to this study.

There are several additional talks shows and entertainment programs not covered in this study. For example, Nixon embarked in entertainment early on appearing on "Laugh-In" with his infamous "Sock-it-to-me" line along with Bill Clinton's appearance with the "boxer versus brief" question on MTV. Several appearances by candidates have also occurred during elections on *Saturday Night Live*, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, *The Colbert Report*, *Oprah*, *Regis Philbin*, *Phil Dohahue*, *Rosie O'Donnell*, *Queen Latifah*, *Ellen DeGeneres*, *Good Morning America*, *The Today Show*, *60 Minutes*, *20/20* and *Dateline*. Further investigation of these appearances would add to the story of the use of alternative programming for campaign purposes.

As the news media become more entertaining, and entertainment becomes more informative, academia must continue to research its effects and blending. We have seen since the 2008 election sitting President Barack Obama appear on late-night talk television. Not to sell his personality or image, he already won, but to sell his ideas and policies. Obama has appeared on several different talk shows and entertainment

programming since taking office from the Sunday morning talk show circuit to *American Idol*. This too may be a trend in the future to study as a way for elected officials to govern and communicate their policies to constituents.

The images and public perceptions of political figures are key components to the electoral process. History has frequently referenced the sweat on Nixon's forehead during his debate with Kennedy in 1960 and its negative effect on his image. Is it possible that "image" has completely replaced substance in our evaluation of politics? Or is it the progress of television, the medium that has been the catalyst for shifting campaign tactics, is being accommodated by modern political campaigns? Modern day candidates, recognizing the changing times, are joining the list of politicians appearing before them on entertainment television.

Although his legacy does not include his innovation in the use of television as an image builder, Richard Nixon was the first politician to utilize this opportunity to his benefit. More than anyone else, Nixon set the standard for campaign practices that are still used by candidates today. He ushered in the modern political era and presided over the dawn of the television age. As we see our most recent politicians emulate his approaches, you have to wonder if, somewhere, he may be smiling?

This study will hopefully contribute to historical journalism literature with perspective on television influences of political campaigning beyond paid commercials and traditional news. It may also be valuable to historical political campaign literature, the strategic process of political campaigning and the changing use of the media by politicians.

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY OF LATE-NIGHT TALK SHOWS,

HOST AND NETWORK

<u>Talk Show Program</u>	<u>Years Aired</u>	<u>Host</u>	<u>Network</u>
The Jack Paar Show	1957-1962	Jack Paar	NBC
The Tonight Show With Johnny Carson	1962-1992	Johnny Carson	NBC
The Arsenio Hall Show	January 3, 1989 – May 27, 1994	Arsenio Hall	FOX
The Tonight Show with Jay Leno	1992-Present	Jay Leno	NBC
The Late Show	1982-1993	David Letterman	NBC
The Late Show with David Letterman	1993-Present	David Letterman	CBS



APPENDIX B

TRANSCRIPTS OF LATE-NIGHT TALK SHOW APPEARANCES

## Appearance Transcript Summary

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Show</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Transcripts obtained</u>
Kennedy	<i>The Jack Paar Show</i>	June 16, 1960	Transcripts received from Kennedy Presidential Library
Nixon	<i>The Jack Paar Show</i>	Aug. 25, 1960	Transcripts received from Nixon Presidential Library
Nixon	<i>The Jack Paar Show</i>	Feb. 8, 1962	Leo Egan, February 9, 2000 <i>The New York Times</i> , pgs 1 & 8
Nixon	<i>The Jack Paar Show</i>	Mar. 8, 1963	Author transcribed from DVD <i>The Jack Paar Collection</i>
Goldwater	<i>The Jack Paar Show</i>	Mar. 22, 1963	Transcripts received from Nixon Presidential Library
Goldwater	<i>The Jack Paar Show</i>	Jan. 31, 1964	Author transcribed from DVD <i>The Jack Paar Collection</i>
Nixon	<i>Tonight Show with</i>	Nov. 22, 1967	Author transcribed from <i>Johnny Carson DVD - The Johnny Carson Collection: His favorite moments/ Carson Productions Group.</i>
Reagan	<i>Tonight Show with</i>	Oct. 2, 1972	Author transcribed from <i>Johnny Carson DVD - The Johnny Carson Collection: His favorite moments/ Carson Productions Group.</i>

Candidate	Show	Date	Transcripts obtained
Clinton	<i>Tonight Show with</i>	July 7, 1988	Author transcribed from <i>Johnny Carson DVD - The Johnny Carson Collection: His favorite moments/</i> Carson Productions Group.
Clinton	<i>The Arsenio Hall</i>	June 3, 1992	Author transcribed from Video <i>The Best of the Arsenio Hall Show</i>
Dole	<i>The Late Show with David Letterman</i>	Feb. 5, 1995	Received from the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics/University of Kansas
Gore	<i>Tonight Show with Jay Leno</i>	Feb. 11, 2000	Acquired from Fox News, (aired 2/11/2000) and CNN News, (aired - 2/11/2000) transcripts via Lexus Nexus
Bush	<i>The Late Show with David Letterman</i>	Mar. 1, 2000	Acquired from New York <i>Daily News</i> and <i>CNN</i> transcripts March 2, 2000 via Lexus Nexus
Bush	<i>Tonight Show with Jay Leno</i>	Mar. 6, 2000	Acquired partial from <i>Associated Press</i> March 6, 2000
Nader	<i>Tonight Show with Jay Leno</i>	Sept. 12, 2000	Author transcribed from video at Library of Congress - No. 1907 - VBQ 3925 - <i>Tonight Show with Jay Leno</i>

Candidate	Show	Date	Transcripts obtained
Gore	<i>The Late Show with David Letterman</i>	Sept. 14, 2000	Acquired from CBS News transcripts <i>Gore Does Dave</i> , September 15, 2000 via Lexus Nexus
Gore	<i>Tonight Show with Jay Leno</i>	Sept. 19, 2000	Author transcribed from video at Library of Congress- No. 1931 -VBQ 5366 <i>Tonight Show with Jay Leno</i>
Bush	<i>The Late Show with David Letterman</i>	Oct. 19, 2000	Author transcribed from video at Library of Congress - No. 1497- VBQ 4423 <i>Late Show with David Letterman</i>
Bush	<i>Tonight Show with Jay Leno</i>	Oct. 30, 2000	Author transcribed video at Library of Congress- No. 1931 - VBQ 5366 <i>Tonight Show with Jay Leno</i>
Gore	<i>Tonight Show with Jay Leno</i>	Oct. 31, 2000	Author transcribed video at Library of Congress- No. 1932 - VBQ 5367 <i>Tonight Show with Jay Leno</i>

Transcripts: John F. Kennedy on The Jack Paar Show  
(Peggy Cass, Ann Bancroft, and Walter Kiernan, Paar's sidekick in studio), June 16,  
1960

Transcripts received from the Kennedy Presidential Library.

Paar: Now ladies and gentlemen, I should like you to meet the man that many of you came tonight to see and tuned in to hear. Let me tell you a little story about my feelings about this kind of show, and asking such distinguished guests. I feel that there's a small service I can perform here because this is an unrigged unloaded kind of show. We have no great point to make, nothing is rigged against anyone. There's no Larry Spivacks or Mae Craigs - who do their job very well, but I have noticed if you watch political programs, they are asked political questions and the answers are political answers and sometimes I must say I watch shows for half hour and when it's all over no one said anything when it's all over. But there is a chance that in this relaxed atmosphere of The Tonight Show you can meet people who aren't on guard, not as tense, and perhaps not as political as you would meet them on other news-type shows. I do not pretend for a moment to know much about politics. It interests me not too much, really. I don't pretend to know a lot about what I am about to ask, I'm going to give you the chance to ask questions too. Senator Kennedy said he'd be most delighted to let you ask him questions. I think Mr. Kennedy came tonight because he thinks he can reach people who wouldn't ordinarily watch news programs or a portion of them wouldn't and I say again, all candidates in the two parties are most welcome here and all have been asked. I would ask you to give a real *Tonight* welcome, to the senator from Massachusetts, Mr. John Kennedy.

Paar: I must say you're a brave one, off the beaten path of the kind of thing you'd talk about. You're always welcome here and your brother too. This is Peggy Cass, who's dying to meet you, from Massachusetts. Miss Bancroft the great actress. This is Walter Kiernan.

Kennedy: I know Walter.

Paar: We're delighted to have you here. How would you like us to ask the things that come in our heads.

May I ask you a tough question so I don't look too naïve,

Kennedy: Whether I a democrat or a republican?

Paar: There was some confusion earlier. Ingo Mario Hansen's brother came in. He thought you were a Republican.

Kennedy: You straightened him out.

Paar: I said you were a socialist of course. I jest. You'll see the whole thing later. You can sniff what you will. I'm amazed. You're thinner than I imagined, have you lost weight on the campaign.

Kennedy: Well yes, we've won in 7 primaries since January. We began in NH in March and finished Oregon may 20<sup>th</sup>, so I am thinner. it's a good diet. I heard miss cass talking about someone losing 30 pounds. this is another way it can be done.

PC: You really clobbered them in Oregon. I was really very pleased.

Paar: You're being partisan (sotto voce, disapproving)

Kennedy: I'm not sure Senator Morse would agree with that.

Paar: Senator Morse! Now there's a one nobody knows what he is. I mean no one is really sure what Senator Morse is. he's tried them all hasn't he?

PC: He switched over.

Overlap

Kennedy: Senator Morse in the senate.

Paar: Would it be rude of me if I called you John?

Kennedy: That would be fine.

Paar: Because if you make it it would be nice for my daughter to know that we have this small arrangement, jack and john.

I'm going to ask you a tough question. Mr. Stevenson thinks you're an excellent candidate. Mr Symington thinks you're a plsendid candidate. Mr. Johnson thinks you're a good candidate -- as vice president, Would you accept the vice presidency?

Kennedy: No I think I ran for vp in 1956 at democratic convention and was beaten by Estes Kefavuer by 20 votes. I'm now running for the presidency. As you know jack, if you run for any office, or you attempt anything and you say I'll settle for second prize that's where you end up. I'm running for ht presidency. If I'm defeated I'll campaign very hard for the ticket, but I'll remain in the senate.

Applause

- Paar: How close do you think you are to getting the nomination?
- Kennedy: I think we are going to be nominated now. I did not think so two or three months ago. But we have run in 7 primaries and we've been successful in all of them. I think we're going to win in Los Angeles and I also think we're going to win in November, but I do think we'll win in Los Angeles. I'm looking forward to running against the vice president.
- Paar: Senator, I remember when Estes Kefauver toured in those primaries as you did. It's the way to do it, to go out and test yourself in each state. Estes Kefauver did that. And suddenly the convention came and they just couldn't find him. It just did not happen. Could this happen to you?
- Kennedy: It's possible. But I would remind you that there hasn't been a president of the United States elected in this century in either party who hasn't first won at least one primary. My own judgment is that the voters will not accept them in April or May, I don't think the voters will accept them in November. Why should you say that 1400 delegates who should be the next president of the United States. I think they should let all the rest of people in to determine that selection. We have primaries for governor, senate, house. This office is far more important than all the governors, senators combined. I say that after serving in the Congress for 14 years. This is the key office. Especially at this time. Therefore it seems to me very proper that anyone who wishes to be nominated by the Democratic party should first be willing to take the long road through New Hampshire, Wisconsin, West VA OR and all the rest. My judgement is what's true in the past is true now. The Democrats will not nominate a candidate who has not won at least one primary. It just so happens that I am the only candidate who can say that.
- [laughter]  
applause
- Paar: John, you had everything. Anything you wanted to do you could have done. Why did you go into politics?
- Kennedy: Well, I worked for a newspaper from 1940- 1945 and I went to the United Nations conference in SF then Potsdam. It's quite obvious, and has been will be true even more, that all the great decision that will affect the lives of everyone in this room now will be made by the United States government and their allies across the world and by the communist governments. They'll not be made -- this has never been as true, since the administration of Roosevelt, the government has played a greater role, but it's particularly great since the end of World War 2. The United States is really the only guardian at the gate against the communist advance. The responsibility is heavy on us. As an interested citizen, I cannot think of a

greater privilege, then serving in the House or the senate. now after a long time, the presidency is the key office, what we've seen in the last six weeks, indicates that the judgment of the presidency, his responsibility his competence his experience his vigor really is going to decide whether we will live in peace, in security, what our relationship with the communists, with the people around the world. It's the president, not the senate, not the house or even the combination. This is the great office therefore I run for the presidency for the same reason I ran for the house, this is the place where action is going to take place, affecting the lives of our people and every people in the next four and 8 years.

Paar: Senator, as I once told your brother when he was here talking about something very serious – before I ask you how we can save our country, at first may I sell you – [he holds up his pen, turns to camera] I apologize, this is kind of a democracy too,

Girls! Lipquick the famous roll-on lipstick [audience laughter] is showing its summer colors. Watch –

Lipquick ad  
For new colors -  
Pinkinese, peach poodle

Paar: WE have two minutes.

PC: Senator I would like to ask you a few questions if I may. none of those other people who have run in primaries, I'm not too bright, but is it not that they were afraid that they would lose. None of those other senators have had the nerve to get up and be counted in those states because they know they might not win. You thought you might lose and would have been counted out of the contest so I think that's very good of you to run where you could have gotten clobbered.

Kennedy: it's nice of you put a neighbor on the program.

Paar: It's just a coincidence.

PC: I don't want to vote for somebody who doesn't have the guts to get up and run in a primary. I feel that very strongly. And another thing, when you do run, don't you go into the convention with so many delegates promised to you. So If you go in a few more primaries, you'll got first shot out of the barrel. Don't they say you have to win right away to win?

Kennedy: They say that, yeah,

PC: I don't believe it.



Laughter

Kennedy: but there aren't any more primaries.

PC: I don't mean any more primaries, I mean in the convention.

Kennedy: I think we'll either have the votes reasonably soon or perhaps we'll never have them at all. But my judgment is we'll have sufficient support.

Paar: Could there be a coalition that stops you?

PC: There is one.

Paar: There is?

PC: Well there are people banding together to stop him.

Paar: I gather that.

Kennedy: Naturally every other candidate desires to win and therefore they always try to stop the frontrunner. And they'll decide later which of them will be nominated, which they'll stop them. I don't object to that at all. I'd much rather be in a position to be stopped, than to join with somebody to stop somebody.

PC: Be a stoppee rather than a stopper.

Paar: We have to take a Theme and then we'll go out to the audience.

[Paar makes a T sign with his fingers to camera. Jack Paar show bumper comes up.]

Paar: It's strange senator, because I have to fill now for just a moment, and then we will have a full 25 minutes. It's embarrassing to run a show this way in this particular situation but you understand and you knew full well when you came on.

Have there been any amusing things that have happened since you've been campaigning that you could tell me in 30 seconds?

Laughter

Never worked with a show like this....

Kennedy: I was made an honorary Indian and I now cheer for our side on TV.

Laughter

*Otherwise it was not very amusing.*

Paar: You have two children?

Kennedy: I have one.

PC: Caroline.

Kennedy: My brother is the one with seven.

Paar: Bob Kennedy has 7 children and he was named Father of the Year. He was Right?

Now we'll have a theme, then we'll be back.

[Jack Paar Show card/bumpers. Ad for *Play Your Hunch* show. ]

Paar: [cuts back mid-conversation] I don't know the exact wording. Did they withdraw the invitation?

Kennedy: They advised him that they couldn't be sure of his safety.

Paar: What does this all mean to you? How does it affect us?

Kennedy: President has taken a number of trips around the world. It was possible in any of these countries for the communist to organize a demonstration. It might not have been as serious as the one in Tokyo. They could have done it at any time but they did not do it because they were pursuing a different policy, which was going to lead up to the summit.

Now since the U2 incident and the failure of the summit. They have reverted to an almost Stalinist tactic, one they haven't employed in several years. I would think this indicates, this was an attack not only on the United States, but an attack on the president personally, it think it indicates that we're in for a very dangerous and trying period in our relationship with the communists. The big problem of course is how can we live in the same globe with them. Both powers possessing nuclear weapons that can destroy us all, and protect the peace, and protect the security of our security and the security of the free world. That's really the dilemma for the next decade. And now as a result of the new tactics, I would say it's the most difficult period for us that we've faced since the beginning of the Korean war. I think the problem for us is to build our strength here so they don't feel they can continue to carry out hostile actions against any president and the United States. I think they think that the balance of

power is moving in their direction, that we're on the decline. I don't think we should permit that and WE should be prepared to make a sufficient effort in the United States that they would feel they want to live in peace with us, obviously now they're carrying out an attack on us.

Paar: If this is as serious as it certainly looks, couldn't this affect your campaign - that you're too young a man. Or they'll say that times are this serious, this man is too young. Has that crossed your mind?

Kennedy: And others.

Laughter

It's crossed their mind. I came to Congress the same day as Mr. Nixon. He's about 4 years older. I think the problem for the next president and really for the people of the United States, to select a president who's responsible, who's had long experience, competent and devoted to the interests of the United States who's vigorous and constant in the application of his responsibility. Without in any way criticizing the president, which would be extremely wrong at this moment, I do think we have had an administration based on long experience, and age. I think this is a job that requires a constant vigilance.

Paar: How old are you?

Kennedy: I'm 43. A year older than Theodore Roosevelt who was a pretty good republican president. I would say that the problem is not the 4 years that separates Mr. Nixon and myself. The problem is which candidate if I'm nominated I presume he will - can best mobilize the resources of the United States and the free world so the balance of power will begin shift in the direction of the free world, rather than move in their direction. That's the basic issue. And the people of the United States will have to make a judgment as to who can do that.

Paar: Senator I know you're willing you told me this afternoon you would do it. You'd like to answer questions from the people. Walter, walk in the audience. Let's have responsible questions from responsible people.

Audience Twitters

Walter: You have a question?

Q: My name is Richard Hamilton from Elizabethtown Pennsylvania. Would you care to comment on Cuba, do you feel our state department has tactfully handled that situation?

Kennedy: My disagreement on handling Cuba stretches back several years. Their present policy I support. I don't have any criticism at all of the last few months with Cuba. The mistakes that were made in earlier years. The United States did not encourage they associated intimately with dictators. Our reputation as a friend of freedom which I consider to be the most valuable asset we have in Latin America and Africa and Asia, have failed in recent years, we maintain intimate relations with Batista, we did not use our great influence to persuade him to open for free elections so The Cuban people could make a selection. Batista stayed too long. And Castro seized power. So the Cuban people never had made their views felt in the interim. It's disastrous what's happened in Cuba. The ties with the communists are closer and closer. But For the present, I would pursue the same policy. I don't think an intervention would be wise under present circumstances.

Q: I'm tom Westbrook, from fort --, Georgia. Senator, do you think Russia or communist china is our worst enemy at this time?

Kennedy: Russia has the greater power, but the Chinese communists if it's possible to judge that, are in a more belligerent and dangerous period of their national development. the soviet union has sufficient national development so that they realize if war came they would be destroyed. But I think the Chinese communist that have a population of over 700 million people that if perhaps a war came they would emerge successful. Today It's rather difficult to judge these matters today the Chinese communist are moving through a more dangerous period of their development. The greater risks are in this particular area.

Q: Senator, My name is Don Allen from Chicago. The problem it seems to me is we don't overcome is the fact that the communists send fellow travelers like they did in Tokyo and they appeal to the youth at an immature age. Why don't we send salesmen? The democratic countries send salesmen to sell democracy to that country and to develop

Walter [leans toward questioner]: Could you tighten it up just a little bit? I'm afraid the question might be so long that...

Kennedy: Yes I understand the question. The question is why can't we do what they do. The majority of the demonstration while it was acting on orders from Moscow was handled by native Japanese communities. We really have to depend on the people in those countries. Do they value freedom? The United States , we can do several things. WE can maintain a strong national defense second to none. Secondly we can within our own country build the kind of society that makes people want to follow our example. thirdly we can assist these people moving into their own economic development. In the final analysis, they have to believe in freedom

themselves I don't think you can sell freedom in a package. You have to believe in it and want to live under that kind of a system. And after all, the communists have not been successful in gaining control of any country in the last 14 years, really since world war 2, except by force with the possible exception of Cuba and we don't know what's going to happen in Cuba. People have rebelled against their control in every country. Poland, Hungary, East Germany Tibet. I don't think people want to live under a communist system at all. Now students are in a revolutionary frame of mind against the existing power. In the long run, the best asset we have is the desire of people to be free.

Walter: Here's the younger generation senator, and a girl. WE haven't had a question from a girl.

Q: Senator, I'm Marilyn McMillan, when and where do you think political education should begin?

Kennedy: I hope we're all -- from the time we can get up enough strength to walk down at 14 or 15 to walk down to the headquarters of a candidate for local office or the office of the presidency and offer your services. There isn't any doubt in my mind that there are very few jobs that you can't do as well in politics at 17 or 18 as you can at 70. Because most of them consist of hard detailed legwork, stamps and all the rest, living material, and I assume you if you know of anybody who can move of any age [laughter ] we'll be happy to have them help us.

applause

Paar: Senator, this is an historic moment in a sense that I am interrupting what might be the next president of the United States with this.

[“Having a party?” Paar reads copy, then cut to “José” at a table on set. Real Lemon for summer drinks. See how simple, just pour. The actor sings a little ditty on stage. ]

Paar: Do you have an opinion – you must have an opinion - on reassessing our views perhaps accepting Red China into the United Nations?

Kennedy: No I wouldn't accept them into the United Nations, nor would I recognize them until their policy changed. They've carried out hostile actions against us the Indians, the Burmese, the Laotians. I don't think you could possibly change a policy, in a sense reward that hostile activity. Until their policy changes, we can always hope it would change. I don't think we should recognize them or bring them into the United Nations. If they give an honest demonstration of their desire to live in peace with us, our policy

could change. I must say they're giving the opposite indication in their belligerence is increasing. I would not under present conditions.

Paar: Senator Kennedy, your name is never mentioned, or hardly mentioned, without comma, and then something about the catholic question. I'm asking what the people perhaps might not wish to ask, but do you feel this catholic issue nationally while it did not appear to be so in west Virginia, which is certainly not a catholic state at all. What was the %?

Kennedy: 4%

Paar: Well that hardly counts. 4%. Do you think national this is an issue?

Kennedy: Yes I think it's an issue, but before W VA it was the dominant issue. Every time I made a speech and we had a press conference everybody asked me about religion. So I think It's an issue because people are interested in my attitude toward constitutional freedoms and all the rest. I strongly believe in it as anyone in the United States. I think they understood that in west Virginia. The problem is it will be discussed in this campaign. I don't object to it.

Paar: Do you think your own party might feel it's a handicap that a presidential candidate be catholic.

Kennedy: Yes, they may. Because Governor Smith's experience wasn't wholly successful. We've never had a catholic president. But Are you going to say to me that 30-40 million people the day they are born become disqualified from ever being president. I don't think that's how this country is set up. What we're entitled to have is a question and an answer on how a candidate feels about various matters that affect the relationship between church and state, then when the candidates answered it, and give evidence that his answers are honest, can't we move on to some other matter?

Paar: Yes... you said a very moving thing in West Virginia. You said: Am I to lose this nomination because the day I was baptized. That was a moving thing. Another question, Walter?

Walter: There's a man from new Hampshire has a question.

Q: My name is Jimmy Raggus, Nashua New Hampshire. I like to tell the senator: senator, What do you think of the voters of New Hampshire? I been living there all my life in Nashua, They were all republicans over there. You think this year they will change to democrats? What do you think of Bernard Budden there?

- Kennedy: I think He may very well win as governor. I came to Nashua during the primary campaign. I think it look very good up there.
- Paar: Anyone else? That gentleman there?
- Walter: Yes, a man on his way out here.
- Q: Bert Raines Daytona beach Florida. I'd like to ask the senator Do you think you can get some of that southern vote during the democratic convention, and if you make it, do you think you could carry the south?
- Kennedy: My judgment is that most of the southern vote will be for Senator Johnson, nearly all of it. I also think a democrat can carry the south. I hope he can. My feeling is that he can. But in the convention, senator Johnson has all those votes of yours. corralled. I'm afraid.
- Laugh
- Q: Frank Long, Westfield New Jersey. The Senator says he was a working newspaper man I wonder what he feels of his treatment from the press this year?
- Kennedy: I think it's been fine. I think it's been--
- Paar: I have a few words to say on that. [Paar stands up. Laughter ]  
You think you've been fairly treated, John?
- Kennedy: I think sometime you don't like it, but on the whole,  
It's alright. You'd like to read good things about you, would you?
- Paar: Well, I wouldn't mind. Generally speaking the press is responsible. There are some great national exceptions to responsibility.
- Q: Bob Buston from New York City, Formerly from North Dakota. A big Republican state. I'm a Nixon man. My wife's a Kennedy.
- Paar: You're wife's a Kennedy man. Kabuki there?
- Q: My wife is quite concerned over the fact that the name of Stevenson and FDR, Jr. have been bandied about as possible people in your cabinet. I just wondering if you have any ideas on that?
- Kennedy: Well, I think Both Franklin Roosevelt Jr. and Adlai Stevenson are able people. I don't think anybody ought to make a decision about their cabinet before they're even nominated let alone elected.

Laughter.

I would say, that Governor Stevenson and Frank Roosevelt that I'd have to tell your wife I think they're alright, very good. Any administration would be successful in using their talents. We just have to take me with that possibility in mind.

Applause

Walter: [joking] Mr. Stevenson hasn't applied for a job in your cabinet, at the moment, you mean, senator.

Q: I'm ---- from Jersey city New Jersey. Who's your potential running mate if you're nominated for the ----?

Kennedy: I think once again before you get nominated it would be unwise to make a judgment. Mr. Nixon even though he's sure of nomination hasn't indicated his choice.

Paar: What is your feeling of cessation of bomb testing?

Kennedy: I think we ought to keep working on it. It's the one area of communication between the soviet union and United states. [unexplained murmuring in audience, may be related to Paar's next comment re: "the other side." ] If we could ever get a cessation of testing, I would say that if we don't get a cessation of tests, that Cuba red china will have this capacity in the next few years. I would hope we would with an inspection system.

Paar: We'll switch to the other side in just a moment.

[Paar reads copy to camera: As you know water sports are very big these days... that give complete protection from sun burn. This outfit is the popular bulky look. Watch!

Cut to: Walter is on stage next to a table with a Sea 'n Ski display, If you don't care for the bulky look, [man in deep sea diver outfit jumps off boat.] Sea and Ski suntan lotion. It's the only protect guaranteed to (he smooths the lotion on his hand) It's a long lotion it lets your tan it's no surface phony tan. You tan beautifully, safely. The most trusted name in sun tan lotion. ]

[the crowd is murmuring]

Paar: At ease. There you are.

Your brother Robert and myself are being sued by Mr. James Hoffa. That's the new suit I've got going for me there. How do you feel about



Mr. Hoffa? Do you have any opinions about Mr Hoffa?

Kennedy: Yes, I have strong opinions. When I ran in Wisconsin he came out against us. And also in W. Va. I don't think he likes my brother -- which I think is a compliment. I'm hopeful that we're going to get rid of Jimmy Hoffa. We don't want him in a powerful union like the Teamsters. I think the sooner he's out of the Teamsters, the sooner he's retired to private life the better off we'll all be. If he's not out by the end of this campaign, I hope that it will be possible by a strict application of the laws, to make it difficult for him to continue as head of the Teamsters. So I may join you in your suit.

applause

I agree with what my brother says. How much are you being sued for?

Paar: How much am I being sued for? I'd like to say how much are WE being sued for? I'm hoping Bobby can come up with more than his half. Something like 2 million dollars which I don't happen to have at the moment, foolish, I spend it on licorice sticks and stuff. Walter?

Q: My name is Bob Baron of Wichita Kansas. The senator made some comments about the previous government of Cuba before Castro. I wonder if he we were elected president, what his policy would be. Would he change policy towards Tujillo in Dominican Republic?

Kennedy: I would say that the security of the western hemisphere is more secure when there is democratic government and therefore we should use our influence, consistent with nonintervention directly but through the association of American states to use our influence to make it possible for the people themselves to choose their government. We're far stronger in the long run, you wouldn't have castro, if you hadn't had a Batista. We should encourage democracy all over Latin America.

Q (woman): I'm Mrs. Burlingame from South Bend Indiana. Senator Kennedy what are your views on foreign aid?

Kennedy: I think we're going to carry a burden of foreign aid in the coming years, I know everybody regrets it but I think there's a real struggle going on I'm chairman of the subcommittee on Africa. IN Latin America, Africa and Asia, These people facing staggering problems trying to determine whether they should follow the communist example or our role. My own feeling is that we should concentrate our foreign aid in loans which can be repaid back over a period of time, if we strengthen the development loan fund, hold out hope, persuade the western European countries to join with us that we can help these countries make an economic breakthrough. By

the year 1970, 1975 they'll be on the free road, Rather than succumbing because they're all starving to the communist road. I would make it in loans over a long period of time to be paid back.

Paar: Senator we only have 3 minutes here and I wanted you to say, however you wish, because I know you will be asked it, why, and I'm ever so grateful, why did you choose to come on the show? you'll have to answer it tomorrow.

Kennedy: I must say for 2 or 3 reasons. First because my brother has had a pleasant experience each time he's been with you. Secondly, in campaigning in Wisconsin and west virginia, I ran into a lot of people who sat up nights watching you. And I think any time it's possible for those of us in public life to have a chance to communicate, I think we ought to take it. Therefore I regard it as a privilege to appear on this program.

Applause

Paar: Personally I am in an impartial position here, but senator, may I ask you how do you stand on crab grass? [laughter] Come out strongly against it and you'll have the suburbs behind you. It was a great pleasure to have you here, We all just feel wonderful about it. Goodnight, sir. I hope you'll come again.

[Kennedy leaves set; applause]

Paar: You wouldn't shave dry with a blades, Prop ad.

Watch.... Cuts to an ad.

[to Walter] Have you any comment now, we have a minute.

Walter: My comment would be that many times Americans are suspected of not taking a real great interest in what goes on in the world, and I was impressed with the questions that were asked in the audience.

Paar : I was too. Let's applaud them because there were no clowns.

Jack Paar (bumper) End of Show.

Transcript – Richard Nixon on *The Jack Paar Show*, August 25, 1960

Transcript acquired from the Richard Nixon Presidential Library

Paar: Good evening, I'm speaking to you from Washington. I'm neither Huntley nor Brinkley, but I was telling this audience a moment ago that it is a great honor for me to be here in Washington. It was rumored that I would be here on many other occasions, but not under such friendly circumstances (Laughter and applause)

My office called me an hour ago and this is absolutely true – “I kid you not” – as our glorious leader says. I have a telegram in my office in New York that will be framed. This is what it says: “TO RICHARD NIXON, THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, IN CARE OF JACK PAAR.” (Laughter) The stock market may fall tomorrow, but nevertheless it is quite a thrill to me.

It is a thrill to have the vice president on this show as it was to have Senator Kennedy on the show some months ago....an added pleasure for me now because I have just learned that he belongs on the *Tonight Show*, his father was born in Ohio.

Ladies and gentlemen, the vice president of the United States, Mr. Richard Nixon (Applause).

This is a great pleasure, Mr. Nixon, for you to appear on this show, on this very informal “catch-as-catch-can” show. We are really honored. Now, there'll be no commercials, incidentally – that might get you the popular vote alone! (Laughter) You've cut the commercials on the *Tonight Show* way down and I will say nothing commercial unless it comes up in normal conversation.

Let me ask you a question that I think....I wasn't going to ask it really because I thought it was kind of a rough question and someone said, “No, ask it,” so all right. Yesterday in a press conference the President, Mr. Eisenhower, said that you had not actually made decisions, that he made the decisions and there could be an inference that the advantage you have in experience would not be so. Forgive me for asking that, but they want to make me real powerful – and I don't really want to be (Laughter).

Nixon: Well, Jack actually the president stated the case exactly and correctly from the standpoint of both his administration and I would hope any administration, Democratic or Republican, because only the president of the United States can make the great decisions affecting the country. He consults with the vice president, with the Cabinet, and with others of his official family as well as others whose views he respects. But when it comes actually to deciding something, he must do it. And, as far as my experience is concerned, it has been in sitting in the councils of the Administration, in the Cabinet and Security Council, being asked – and that, incidentally, is a very great privilege – being asked my opinion on

matters where I had experience, and then participating in the discussions which lead to a decision by the president.

Paar: I think you, sir, with great wisdom have said that there would be no discussion of religion in this campaign by you or the people who work under you and with you. Does that mean you would not refer to your opponent's age – (Laughter) – you would not bring that issue up, I assume.

Nixon: Well, as a matter of fact, I don't think age is an issue, Jack. As a matter of fact, your name is "Jack" – That's a little embarrassing to me at the moment...(Laughter) that wasn't in the script, was it?

Paar: No...(Laughter) Oh, that'll be good – that'd be fine. This is – I want you to know this is an informal as the *Tonight Show* is, which is, quite informal.

Nixon: No, as far as age is concerned, both Senator Kennedy and I are in our forties.

Paar: So am I. (Laughter)

Nixon: Yes, that's right (More Laughter)

Paar: Look how well I've done! (Laughter)

Nixon: And I think the question before the people is not the difference in our ages, three or four years, but the difference in our attitude toward the issues and in our experience, for that matter.

Paar: Can I say what people say that I... you know, in the nutty circles that I move. Well, those who are not committed, Mr. Vice President, who are not Republicans or who are not Democrats, and in the theater I'm under the influence, if I may say, it's a Democratic influence in that particular field, I would say it's a stronger one...but then there are the Independents, which are the important ones I believe, and they say: "Well, what's the difference between Richard Nixon and Jack Kennedy?" And many say: "Both able and fine man..." as I believe. You are the authority now. How are you different than Jack Kennedy? Where are you different than Jack Kennedy? (Laughter) Is that a good one? I don't know. I'm not Larry Spivak, you know, I'm just –

Nixon: How much time do I have? (Laughter)

Paar: You must never top a civilian – now you know that you don't do that. I know it's over-simplified. How would you say that? I mean, what am I to say to these friends of mine when they say – what's the difference? How do you feel you're different than Senator Kennedy?

Nixon: Well, that, of course, will be developed during the course of the campaign. I think those who saw the two conventions and listened to the acceptance speeches could see we had some very definite differences on the issues.

There is, first, the difference in our experience. Senator Kennedy has had some very valuable experience and I have had some experience, which others can appraise other than myself. In addition to that, there is the difference on the attitude toward the great issues confronting the nation. He supports his platform, the platform of his Party, a platform, incidentally, which I think many members of his Party will not support, because they think it departs from their basic principles.

Paar: Is that the Southern issue of the segregation?

Nixon: It's not so much segregation as it is the tendency in the platform to promise everything to everybody and, in effect, using the people's money to pay the bill. Because actually in this whole business of promising, as we must constantly remember, when a public official gets up or somebody running for election and says: I promise that I'm going to do this and that the other thing for you...remember, it isn't his money that's going to pay the bill; it's yours.

Now, that's an over-simplification of a lot of complex issues, but basically I think what the American people must decide in this campaign in which of the two men running for president is best qualified by temperament, by experience, and by background to lead the United States and the Free World in these critical years of the Sixties. And to lead this country and the Free World in a way that we can win victory in the great struggle in which we're engaged and win that victory without war.

Now, Senator Kennedy's adherents will believe that HE can best do that. Some of my supporters, I would hope, would think that I would best. This program, I don't think, is an adequate place to discuss it in detail, and I would urge that all of your millions of listeners would listen to what we have to say during the campaign – whether they're Democrats OR Republicans. I would just urge this: that in this election, first, that everybody listening vote; but second, that he not vote Part labels and not vote personality and not vote age and not vote religion, but that he should vote on the issues; he should vote on the basis of leadership. If we do that the decision that's made will be best for America and best for the world (Applause).

Paar: Mr. Vice President, I watched both conventions, every moment. I'm very interested in that kind of carryin' on – (Laughter) – no, it gives me a big laugh, you know, it's great, I loved it because – oh, it's just wonderful. But I saw you...Oh, I saw the night of the nomination, I saw you in the car. Incidentally, when you got in the car and drove away at the hotel, I was watching on television and a friend of mine, Joey Bishop, called and he said: "I watched Senator

Kennedy, he came out of his hotel, jumped into the car, big black car, and they drove off...Nixon just came out – jumped into the car.” He said: “We’re voting for two men who can’t drive!” (Laughter) But – you can drive now – right? Let’s clear that up for Joey Bishop; it’s a very important issue with Joey.

Nixon: I drive a ’55 Oldsmobile and quite well, to incidentally.

Paar: Well, now, Joey – you heard – you heard the vice president tell you. That’s democracy in action. Now, next: I heard you that night and then the next morning particularly...oh, I felt so sorry for you. You know what? You sent to that sill, that luncheon, breakfast.

Nixon: That’s all right –

Paar: ...you know, and you went in there and they were singin’ something, a nice song for you wife, Pat, it was a lovely song, but they were all women. It was like – you know – group...and they all had corsages on. Right away you’re in trouble! Never go to a group where they have corsages on – right away you’re in trouble. And, it looked like “Queen For a Day” for a moment (Laughter)... I said, “Oh, that poor fellow.”

But you said and inferred that you were starting this campaign from behind, it was not going to be easy, it would be an uphill fight for you to attain the Presidency. Now, we use the word “level” with me – haven’t you got information that tells you that situation has changed?

Nixon: Well, let me say that I have a little different view of public opinion polls than some of the people from the city from which you come, New York, where they place a great reliance upon such polls. As a matter of fact, in Washington the same is true of many political figures. This is one place where I agree with Mr. Truman: I think the only poll that counts is the one on Election Day.

Now, it’s true that the public opinion polls do show that we are running better now than we did before the convention. I do sense that our convention (and I’m a little prejudiced in this respect) may have left a better impression on the people than did the Democratic convention. I do sense from the receptions that we’ve had and the states I have visited that we’re running pretty well.

But, I would say this: this is a very close contest. That’s the way we consider it. We think we’re going to win, but we’re only going to win by never believing that it’s in the bag.

Paar: Mmm. Polls have shown a bit of a change, have they not?

Nixon: There’s been a definite shift since before the convention to the time after the convention.

Paar: Even information that surprisingly enough that you did very well in the South.

Nixon: Yes, we've had some polls.

Paar: (Interrupting) You count on taking the South, a part of it?

Nixon: Let me say this. We certainly can't concede any part of the country at all and we can't take any part of it for granted. I think this election is a healthy one in that respect – that the whole nation will be a battleground. I don't believe that we ought to divide this country into North and South and to have one party assume that it has it in the bag in the North – and for us, for example, to assume that we've got the Mid-West or the Northeast. I think that all the people of the country ought to make the decision and ought to have a chance to hear the candidates. That's why I'm going to ALL of the 50 states. As far as the South is concerned, we think we have a chance in some Southern states. At least, we're going to give the people down there a choice, something that they sometimes have not had in previous times.

Paar: Do you look forward to this series called "The Great Debate" on television? Do you look forward to this new, whole new concept of campaigning? Two men in the same room at the same time?

Nixon: Well, Jack, I have in previous campaigns participated in some debates, or shall we say, joint appearance, with my opponents. I can say when you ask: Do you look forward to it? I can say that it's a very rugged experience. It will be for Senator Kennedy; it will be for me. And, I would only hope that the two of us will be able to present our differences of views, in fact, answer the questions that you asked a moment ago at the beginning of this show, in a way that the people can make up their minds on issues above everything else, rather than on personalities. So, I can say I look forward to these debates as a great challenge, and I'm sure Senator Kennedy does, and I trust that we can make them interesting. I might say the most important thing about our business, if I may call it that – other people call it something worse.

Paar: Our business - yours and mine?

Nixon: Both (Laughter) I should say the most important thing about the business of government and politics is not to bore the people. And I would trust that these debates may create a lot of interest, get more people to the polls than otherwise would be the case, get more of them listening and thinking about issues and not just voting a Party line. If they do that, it'll be good.

Paar: The registration this year is dreadfully lacking, isn't it? The information is very bad.

Nixon: It is, and I trust that we can steam that up. I notice that Senator Kennedy's aides are conducting a registration drive and I've instructed all of our people to do likewise. We want everybody to vote.

Paar: You're well aware, sir, that you're running against little beavers, aren't you? They are really around – they're everywhere – I'm telling you. (Laughter) Boy, they're...little Bobby Kennedy is in New York and he was in Puerto Rican section yesterday eating tamales, you know. Yow are you on Mexican food – or Spanish food? (Laughter) It may be an issue of how many foreign foods you can eat, you know, because this thing is getting down. I think Rockefeller beat Harriman on a couple of blintzes...(Laughter).

Nixon: All that I can say is that I can eat anything (Applause).

Paar: Well, you'd better watch out Jack! (More Applause). Are you in good shape?

Nixon: I'm in fair shape – not as good a shape as you are. But I was going to say as far as good is concerned, I actually happen to like Mexican food.

Paar: Texas'll be Okay. How about Puerto Rican?

Nixon: The Spanish food generally ... Puerto Rican, of course, doesn't have the highly seasoned food that we have in Mexican food. But you see, I have a sentimental reason. My wife and I took our honeymoon in Mexico City, so...and this was our twentieth anniversary, so we like Mexican food.

Paar: I wanted to ask you...it's hard, 'cause I don't want to use notes. I just want to talk to you – like people would like to if they had this opportunity. Are you friendly with Jack Kennedy? (Laughter)

Nixon: Yes, I would say so. (More laughter)

Paar: That's the best I could do.

Nixon: Well, let me tell you something.

Paar: You two have offices near each other?

Nixon: Well, we certainly do.

Paar: Do you get around – you know, like fellows do?

Nixon: Oh, yes.

Paar: Not so much any more (Laughter)



Nixon: We're members of what we call "The Club." Anybody who has ever been a member of the Senate is a member of a club, and while we have very definite differences on great issues and we have very different views on how this election should come out (Laughter), I would say that our relations on a personal basis are friendly. That means that we couldn't disagree more on some great issues, but I don't believe that this campaign will be a personal campaign from the standpoint of personal animosity. I would hope not.

Paar: Have you met him recently?

Nixon: Well, I saw him on the floor yesterday, of course.

Paar: You don't meet at the water cooler or anything – I guess it's a problem (Laughter)

Nixon: Yes

Paar: Do your children mind? The one...well, they're both old enough because my daughter understands, and the Lord knows I am attacked frequently, you know, and I'm not running for anything – I'm trying to retire! (Laughter) But, SHE's hurt by things written about her father. What is the reaction of you children? When they hear someone zing it into you?

Nixon: Well, it's a little difficult. I'm sure this is true of all people in public life. Our two girls are both sensitive, perhaps our older girl is a little more sensitive than the younger one, but I would say that they take it pretty well. We, of course, do not discuss the political situation at home. We try to have them grow up in a normal way and, believe, politics is not a very normal way to live (Laughter).

Paar: No, it isn't.

Nixon: They react differently.

Paar: I have the feeling the Kennedys may discuss it at home (Laughter).

Nixon: There's a difference. I think their child is a little young for discussion of politics.

Paar: No, I meant the whole clan, you know –

Nixon: Oh, we discuss it that way. Yes. For example, I was going to say...well, the other day Julie, our younger daughter, came rushing in and said, "Come quick Daddy, they're saying terrible things about you on television." And I said, "You've got to get used to that."

Paar: Oh, that's hard to do for a child. You know, you hinted in your acceptance speech, which was I think the best speech you ever made, Mr. Nixon...can I say that? I guess so – it's a democracy – who's going to stop me, you know.

(Laughter). I think it was a splendid speech and you said – well, you correct me if I'm wrong – but you intimated that in the survival issue, national survival, defense and all, that the people were going to have to make sacrifices. You said that. Is that more or less what you said?

Nixon: Yes.

Paar: All right. It was kind of frightening to hear. This is not the program for it – all right – but is there something you're not telling us? I mean... (Laughter) are things... just leave it – I won't prod you – are things pretty serious in that area?

Nixon: Things are going to be serious for a long time in the world in which we live. And what I meant by sacrifices is that the American people, enjoying the best life that people have ever enjoyed in the history of civilization, must be prepared to sacrifice if necessary to make sure that we retain our way of life, and also extend the whole concept of freedom to the whole world.

May I say in the connection that as far as sacrifices are concerned this means that rather than getting increased, shall we say, return from our own efforts (as we increase the productivity of our economy) we may find – I don't anticipate anything specifically that I can suggest now – we may find in the years ahead that we're going to have to put more in the defense, more into the non-military struggle that is going on throughout the world in Asia and Africa and Latin America.

And, if I could just say finally this thing. We must never forget that no longer is it possible for us – even if we wanted to – to draw within ourselves and say: Well, let the rest of the world go hang. What happens any place in the world affects our freedom, and it might affect the peace of the world. I think that we can have peace. I think that we can keep our own freedom and I think that we can win the struggle against slavery and for freedom throughout the world, but it's going to mean leadership on the part of America, and if that leadership requires sacrifices we'd better be prepared to sacrifice.

Paar: You don't in the foreseeable future see taxes reduced? (Laughter)

Nixon: I don't (laughter) We're still going to get the main part of your income, I can assure you (laughter).

Paar: Well, I'm pretty sneaky, I'm telling you that.

Nixon: They'll have you down in Washington if you –

Paar: No, sir, they're never going to get me down here unless I want to come (Laughter), 'cause I've got my own little group going too sir.

Do you think our children – your two little daughters and my daughter and their kids – do you think that they'll ever be able to pick up a newspaper some day and not find threats and wars and impending disasters and threats from our friends, former friends? Do you think in our time we'll see that? Or, at least, you and I probably will not see it. But our children, will they see it?

Nixon: I think that it is possible that our children could see it – or even that we could see it. But I don't think that we can assume that it is going to be easy, and I don't think we can ever underestimate the great challenge that is presented to us. We mustn't try to seek any easy way out because there is none. If we do seek an easy way out that means surrender, and this we cannot do.

But I can only say it is the function of those of us in government and all the people of this country to make this dream come true. Now you – may I say this – the way you cast this worries me a bit because it says our children hear of wars and rumors of wars, the problems in Iran and the Congo and Cuba and the like – are we every going to have a better time? Let me say that I believe this is the best time we could ever live in, and I want to tell you why. The challenge is great, but for the first time in the history of the world, the history of civilization, the opportunities are higher than they've ever been. For the first time in the history of the world, if we can avoid war, we can wage a winning struggle against poverty, misery and disease. People have dreamed of this for centuries. The people who engaged in the American Revolution talked about this ideal for the whole world, but it wouldn't have been possible then. But because of the tremendous advances of science, because of the productivity of our factories, of our farms and the like, men today all over the world, men and women, can have enough to eat, enough to wear, and lead a good life if the political leaders and the statesmen can solve the problems that we have.

So, I wouldn't underrate the difficulty of the problem. I say the challenge is great, but it's an exciting time and your children and mine can live to see the realization of the best times that civilization has ever seen on this earth.

Paar: Sir, we said there'd be no commercials, but they have to break for one. Would you stay – like a sport? (Laughter) We must cut away – it's a federal law, incidentally (Laughter) and we'll be back.

(Note: pause for commercial)

Paar: I never like to through curves to anyone and I wouldn't do anything that would embarrass anyone, but would you get a shot of my daughter, please, it means a great deal to her, would you, please. And there's a very lovely lady sitting next to her, and this will mean a great deal to her mother watching at home, and it will mean a great deal to MY mother – to let my mother know the kind of people I'm movin' around with now! (Laughter and applause) Mrs. Nixon, Mrs. Pat Nixon, will you come up? (Applause).

It is rumored that at one time you were introduced – you dear person – as.. and someone, the announcer said: “And, I’d like you to meet the next wife of the vice president.” Is that right?

Mrs. Nixon: That’s right. In Utah, where it counts!

Paar: Won’t you sit down a moment?

Mrs. Nixon: Thank you.

Paar: (to his daughter) They’ll think you’re pushy, honey – (Laughter) My wife said to me.. you know, the vice president and this campaign coming up and you’ll be gone for weeks at a time, and she asked, my wife is a very lovely woman, but she doesn’t get herself involved with big things but simple things that make the world go, you know, like - she says: “How do they do their laundry?” (Laughter) So, how does he get his shirts – if you’re in Utah one day and Oklahoma the next. How do you do that?

Mrs. Nixon: Well, we take enough along or else we come home for a new supply. We do real well.

Paar: (Interrupting) Well, don’t say you take enough along because that’s very bad for the Republicans; it looks like you have too many, you know. (Laughter) You say you take enough –

Mrs. Nixon: That’s right.

Paar: And where were you when he had the tuxedo in England?

Mrs. Nixon: Oh, I was behind the blush (Laughter).

Paar: What happened with that – you did not have a tuxedo? You did not have it?

Nixon: I certainly did not. I never had such a moment. Here was the Queen...we were giving the dinner for the Queen at the Embassy and, you know, entertaining anybody is always a problem, but the Queen is really something! And so, I...everything was all set, we’d been down to look over the flowers and all that sort of thing, we came up, and I began to look for my black tie and it wasn’t there. So we looked all over the place and we couldn’t believe it but it wasn’t there. What finally happened, we started to borrow. They found a man in Scotland Yard – (Laughter) - his was a little small, and finally we had a Los Angeles newspaper man, Jim Bassett at the Mirror News, he happened to be close to my size, so I wore his and he borrowed the Scotland Yard man and he wore his, so that there was a Scotland Yard fellow that did not have a tuxedo that night. (Laughter)

Paar: I trust the fairness of Jack Kennedy and that it will not become a major issue in the campaign (Laughter) I'm sure he wouldn't do a thing like that. Would you like to answer two questions from the audience in New York and two questions from here? And then, I'm sure you'd like to go. I can't tell you how much this means to our show. It gives us "class." (Laughter). The announcer here in Washington, Stuart Finley, whom I only met a moment ago...Mr. Finley, a question, please, and then Mr. Nixon will answer it.

Q: I would like to ask Mr. Vice President whether he thinks Washington Senators will stay in the first division? (Laughter).

Nixon: Well, I would say they will if I can go to enough games (Laughter) Because generally, it's a funny thing...I see to – you know, there's always little jinxes, and in this case whenever I go to see the Washington Senators play, they win. I've been there – the last seven times I've been there, they've won. They beat the Yankees, incidentally, Friday. You know I learned later - it was on television in New York and all those New York fans saw me standing up and cheering for the home runs (we won 4 to 2), and nobody votes in Washington and everybody votes in New York! (Laughter) That shows you my baseball's non political.

Paar: Do you like sports? You read the sports page every morning? I read?

Nixon: Oh, I like sports.

Paar: Why do you look at that knee? Something wrong with you leg?

Nixon: No, nothing wrong.

Paar: I mean, I'm not trying to make an issue out of it – (Laughter)

Nixon: Well, let's not have a health issue in the campaign.

Paar: Oh, no. You have a sore know or something, I know.

Nixon: What I did, I banged it on the car door. Not the Oldsmobile, but another one that I was getting into.

Paar: You have two cars, Mr Nixon? (Laughter) Well, Hoover promised it, did not he? Or was it the chicken in the pot? He promised us something.

Nixon: My second one is a big black, government Cadillac, you know.

Paar: Oh, that's the best kind!

Nixon: And whoever's elected vice president gets it, too.

Paar: Do they?

Nixon: That's right.

Paar: Oh – let's see – that may be either Lyndon or Mr. Lodge, Henry Cabot Lodge. Well, that's nice to look forward to. One more question from here and then we'll go to New York.

Q: Well, Mr. Vice President, I was wondering if the Congolese Premier sends his troops in Katanga – and the United Nations has to defend the border between these two independent states – would the United States back up the United Nations in this by sending troops, or would we just keep with our support that we've been giving so far? Or would we go more than this?

Nixon: The United States does support the United Nations and must support the United Nations in the Congo and in other areas of the world where the U.N. decision is made. As far as the contingency, which you have suggested, we of course are very hopeful that negotiations, which are going forward at the present time will avoid that possibility. But if the United Nations is to be an instrument for peace, the United States must back it – as we backed it in Korea and as we are in the Cong. And I think the very fact that the United States IS backing the U.N. has meant that up to this time the Congo situation has been handled as well as we have. It's a complex situation. We hope that it can be worked out without this terrible contingency, which you have suggested.

Paar: Hugh, take it in New York now for two questions and then we'll return it to you.

Q: Mr. Vice President, you were probably the most active vice president in our history. The question I would like to ask is: Do you feel in your experience – both good and sometimes dangerous – do you feel if you are elected president the responsibilities of the vice president should be increased even more than you have had?

Nixon: Yes, I believe so. I believe that one of the major contributions – among many contributions the president has made – has been in upgrading the office of the vice presidency. So that instead of just being a gavel-pounder over the Senate, he actually is used in foreign policy, in domestic policy and in a lot of other important matters. I believe that it is simply a waste to have the second elected official, the only other person other than the president elected by all the people, not to be used to the utmost of his capabilities. And speaking, for example, of my own running mate, I happen to believe that Henry Cabot Lodge is a man who has as much experience and as much ability in handling the negotiations with the Communists, with the Russians, as any man in the world. And I expect – if I have the opportunity as president – I expect to upgrade his responsibility, because he should be used in this field, used in this field in the interests of the country.

Q: Mr. Vice President, I'm sure that Mrs. Nixon will be very much in the limelight in the next few months. Have you briefed her on what to say and do – and not to say and do? (Laughter)

Paar: Holy COW! What a.. get that Democrat out of there, will you! (Laughter).

Nixon: No, I think it's a very fair question, Jack. And I will say this: that I have found in our travels around the world, that, while at times – and also my travels in this country – while at times I may be a subject of controversy because I'm representing the country's views as vigorously as possible, that Pat, my wife, has been an ambassadress of good will without any controversy whatever. And one of the reasons she's been able to do as good a job as she is, is that she doesn't need any backseat driving from her husband. She knows what to say and I trust her completely – in press conferences or anyplace else – and that means in all the 55 countries we visited and in all the 50 states of the United States. (Applause).

Paar: Mrs. Nixon, I read an article on the plane coming up tonight, an excellent article, saying that you were a tremendous asset – not only as a wife and mother and to your husband, the vice president – but to the Republican Party. And I brought it and I wanted to give it to you – I hope you'll be very proud of it.

I cannot tell you – I don't want to sound ... Okay, this meant a great deal to our show and you were very brave and courageous and a good sport to come on in this kind of madness. What do I say now?

Mrs. Nixon: I certainly appreciated being here with you. You know, I'll be a popular person when I get home. My youngsters, of course, know all the stars of the shows and we hear a great deal about you. Of course, you know bedtime is a certain hour at our house, but when they have slumber parties – that's when they get you on the show (Laughter).

Nixon: Could I ask you one favor, Jack?

Paar: Yes, sir, you can ask me any favor you'd like.

Nixon: Could we have your autograph for our girls? (Laughter)

Paar: Well, you give my regards to the president and tell him he's doing a fine job (Laughter)

Good night, good night, good night – good night, Hugh (Applause).

Transcripts: Richard Nixon on *The Jack Paar Show* March 8, 1963

Author transcribed from *The Jack Paar Collection* DVD

JP: The first show of this series of programs I spent the summer, last summer in New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, filing a story about the president when he was Lieutenant Kennedy. I wanted to go back there because I served there in the war and it was an opportunity for me to go. I couldn't have gone any other way. It's a very expensive trip and I filmed it and you saw an hour of PT 109 story. Never been filmed before but anyone that had ever been there had ever been there had filmed it and I rounded up the crew. Well, great protests from unreasonable Republicans who would say, you know, "How much did Joe Kennedy pay you for that?" That's the kind of mail I got.

And then a few months later when Ted Kennedy won the Senatorial contest in Massachusetts I asked him here. He's the newest Kennedy, so we had him here and the same mail from the same Republicans. I'm sure you reasonable people know, I, they're interesting people just as a friend of mine, Richard Nixon is an interesting man. And, ah, when they were writing these letters, you nutty Republicans and accusing me of all kinds of things. When you were writing those letters accusing me of this I was sitting in the Bahamas with Richard Nixon watching the show with – about Ted Kennedy – so watch yourself at all times.

Ladies and Gentlemen it's a great privilege and pleasure for me to present the form United States Vice President Richard Nixon.

*Nixon walks out and shakes hands with Jack Paar. A long applause even after they sit down.*

JP: Hey, they like us. (Both host and guest laugh along with audience)

You know I slipped. I've called you Dick and I've called you Mr. Vice President and Mr. Nixon and I'm sorry I shouldn't be so informal on the air. I, what should I, what would be proper for me to call you?

RN: Well Jack, I really wouldn't worry about that. Ah, I've been called everything...  
Laughter

JP: Yeah, I guess they've given it to you pretty good in your day. May I, ah, may I was told I could ask what I wanted too and I'd like to ask things that interest me. I have no curves. Um – what do you plan on doing in the future? What is your future as you see it now?

RN: Well Jack, immediately after the election, ah, I got a lot of good advice from people all over the country. Ah, some of my friends felt very strongly that I ought to, at that particular time in my life, concentrate entirely on frankly making some money. And I received some very attractive offers in that respect, which would



entail my concentrating entirely in business and discontinuing any activity in public affairs. But I made a decision with regard to that and I thought this might be an appropriate time to announce it on your program. I intend to continue the practice of law but I'm going to turn down any suggestions that ha, would make it necessary for me not to continue to speak out from time to time on public issues. Ah, I shall practice my profession to the extent that I find it necessary to support my family, which is a primary responsibility but I also feel that after 16 years in public life that I should reserve as much time as possible for the purpose of discussing public affairs. Now there is one difference, however, now than in the past. I have a new roll. You know, for 16 years I've always spoken either as a candidate or as the representative of my party or as the representative of an administration of which I was a part. Now I am no longer in any of those rolls and from now on beginning with this program I speak only as an individual citizen, free to express my views on my party, my country, as I see fit. I'm going to call the shots as I see them and we can begin now.

JP: All right. (Applause) All right, did you have, were your privy to any secrets that could be revealed now in regards to Cuba? Were there any plans under the Eisenhower administration to invade Cuba or anything about air cover and would you comment on that and what has happened?

RN: Well Jack, that's a big question. Ah, I can only say that as President Eisenhower himself has revealed and as others know the plans to support ah, the training of Cuban refugees. Ah, so that they could eventually return to their homeland, free that country a bit from dictatorial rule began under President Eisenhower's administration. I was a strong supporter of those plans. I believe that it was essential that we do everything possible to rid Cuba of a Communist dictatorship and to drive Communism from the Western Hemisphere. Now as far as air cover is concerned, I know the debate about it. Everybody is getting into the act and I notice that suggestion to affect that President Kennedy did or did not promise air cover. All that I can say on that is simply this; if as far as the invasion of Cuba is concerned, if no air cover was provided it should never have been planned in the first place. And, when the suggestion is made that President Eisenhower ma or may not have planned air cover I would only suggest this; I can't imagine the General, who planned the greatest invasion in history – the invasion of Normandy, allowing those 1500 brave Cubans to go into the Bay of Pigs there without having first destroyed the enemy air power or providing air cover. I would also suggest that with regard to the president's decision on the Bay of Pigs (Nixon looking directly into the camera) that I think that he has been criticized and one respect for the wrong reason. I think he was right and I think he was courageous at the time of making the decision in going into Cuba and supporting an invasion force. However, I think he was wrong in another respect. I think he was wrong, once we committed our power, in not seeing it through. Not finishing the job because we got all the blame for intervention and none of the credit for winning it. Now I know there are lots of people who raise the question about that and say well after all had we gone in and provided air cover or assured the success

of the invasion we'd made the neutrals mad or we would have made people in Latin America mad. Well, my answer is this; we got to run American foreign policy from the standpoint of the United States of America and the defense of freedom throughout this world. And, we shouldn't take a vote, a popularity of the neutrals and other nations of the world and let our policy be what only the weak and timid will approve. As far as Cuba is concerned then it seems to me that looking to the future, it's essential now, that we adopt a policy that will drive Communism from this hemisphere and keep it out of the Americas

(Applause)

JP: Could you give us any steps you would have taken or would take in regards to Cuba?

RN: I believe there are several things that could be done. The administration must determine what, because it knows what our power is and what we can commit. But among the things that I think can be done are these: First, we have to have a complete quarantine; I first used that word in 1960 and again on your program a year ago. A political, diplomatic, economic and military quarantine of Cuba, of Communist in Cuba. Second, we got to see to it that all Soviet personnel leaves Cuba. Third, we ought to have and we must insist on on-site inspection to see that the missiles are taken from Cuba. Certainly, at the present time, if we are and we are insisting very promptly that before we discontinue atom tests we got to have on-site inspection of Soviet Union 5,000 miles away. The least we can do is also to insist on on-site inspections in Cuba, 90 miles away for missiles, which only have a five-minute warning time before they would reach the United States of America. In addition to that, on the economic side, I believe that we should take the steps to cut off all trade with Cuba on strategic materials. For example, we have a policy of not trading with Cuba today. I think we should deny foreign aide to any of those receiving it, who do not follow the same policy that we follow. They should discontinue their trade with Cuba as we have. And, in another connection, I believe that we could well take the step to stop the flow of all oil into Cuba. That would require a partial blockade but I think that would have the affect, probably of bringing the Communist government down. Now these are all alternatives. What is the best one? President Kennedy will have to determine. But I will have to only say this: I am sure that Senator Keating, who has been a critic, John Sherman Cooper, who has been a critic and I who have indicated criticism tonight will join in the bipartisan support of any strong action that President Kennedy will take to remove the Communist cancer. Let me just say one thing in conclusion in that respect. There are risks involved in these policies that I have suggested. You know that, I know it. But I used the word cancer a moment ago. There are risks when you have an operation for cancer but there are greater risks if you don't operate. And the greater risk if you don't operate on the patient you may die. Cuba and Communism is a cancer in the Western Hemisphere and we, eventually, will die under Communism. So in order to avoid that we got to take the steps now. To cut it out and if we're strong now, we can avoid what would be much worse eventualities later.

(Applause)

JP: Can ah, (more applause) Can Kennedy be defeated in '64?

RN: Well, which one? (Laughter and applause)

JP: Boy, I hate a smart-aleck vice president. I can tell you that! (Laughter)

RN: Jack, I was listening to your patter before and ah, I ah, heard you mention each one of the Kennedys and I did not know which one was running for president. But ah, just to be very serious, I know you of course, referring to president Kennedy and I under no circumstances would speak disrespectfully of him or his office.

JP: Aren't you kind of friends? Weren't you kind of friends at one time?

RN: Oh certainly. We came into the Congress together. And we were low men on the totem pole on the labor committee together. And ah, we remained low men until he ran for president. Now he's up and I'm down – ah, but in '64 in my opinion yes, President Kennedy can be defeated in '64. When we look at the record I think I could characterize it this way. It has been brilliant from the standpoint of salesmanship, from the standpoint of public relations but the product doesn't live up to the word. It doesn't live up to the ads (Applause). When you, when you, consider for example the situation in Cuba today and the situation when he took over its much worse today. When you consider for example the economy, there were 5 million unemployed today. There are a number of strong issues. I don't mean by that, you know, you are not going to lose because he hasn't solved all the problems of the country. The Republicans got their problems too. I can't forget to mention them. If the Republicans are going to win in 1964, they've got to learn to enjoy fighting the Kennedy administration as much as they seem to enjoy fighting each other.

(Slight laughter from audience)

JP: My daughter said today, "Is Mr. Nixon going to be on?" I said yes. She goes, "I do hope that man finds work."

(Laughter)

May I tell, well you know the story, the ah, I don't color it but I tell it as it happened. Your youngsters, what happened in Nassau, do you mind?

RN: I certainly don't.

JP: Here's the situation, Mr. Nixon when he lost the governorship of California, he was in Nassau. I happened to be on this little island. We were both guests of Mr. Hartford. And, we were the only ones on the island about 10 of us. And, Mr. Nixon felt badly that, about that defeat in California, but not nearly as bad as his

children. His kids really took it hard. He has two girls, darling kids. Julie is has a great sense of humor, great personality, very outgoing very funny and the older one Trish, is very serious. Doesn't smile much and she was really hurt by this defeat and I felt so sorry for them. I wanted them to have some fun and in order to have some fun you had to leave this little island we were on, take a boat and go into Nassau where its wild and jumping. He (point to Nixon) did not want to go because the press would be there and photographers and he did not want to get involved in the press. So, I said, "May I take the kids?" Let me take the children in to the wild nightclub and see if they're old enough. So, he said ok. So I took them Trish, Randy and Julie. Now we go into Nassau clubs to what is called "Over the Hill." It's the native quarter and it's wild. Oh it's fun, jumping and the limbo and the twist, it's crazy. So I walk in and its an outdoor night club and its' about 1,000 people there that would be American tourists, British and the local Bahamians. And, ah, they recognized me when they were doing the floor show and these blue drums are going and wild girls (sarcastically) dancing oh, it was good kids never saw it – never hurt them, so finally, the guy recognizes me. The Negro drummer, he's pounding on the drums and so he walks over and grabs the little blond girl next to me and suddenly he gets this little girl out there and its Trish. He thinks it's Randy and she's a very prim and proper little girl but let me tell you she went into the wildest twist I'd ever seen! But, I mean wild and crazy and a limbo – oh, this quiet little girl and so suddenly they run out and the manager with great big kind of heathen statue and crown her the Twist/Limbo Queen of the Bahamas! They think it's Randy so they said "your name?" and she says Trish Nixon and the MC looks at me and I (shrug his shoulders). He says where are you from? She says "Los Angeles." Are you the daughter and he just went to pieces – well any how we go back at 12 o'clock on a little boat and the kids go to their bedroom and Mr. Nixon and his wife were sleeping and the next morning Mr. Nixon sees this heathen statue and he said "What happened last night?" So Mr. Pyle explained so I felt like some silly kid with pimples that had just taken his daughter out. So, I said well, Mr. Nixon (Laughter) we went to "Over the Hill" see and there was this big night club and there was about 1,000 people there and they thought it was Randy and it was Trish and she's been crowned the Limbo and Twist Queen of the Bahamas and holly cow and I'm sorry. And, he was acting very stern and said "AND" and I said to tell you the truth Mr. Nixon if she had done that in Mississippi in '60 you'd be the president by now!! (Loud laughter and applause)

RN: You know Jack, I just can't imagine you with pimples.

JP: Yeah, I had that too. Stars don't really have pimples. They get their lumps, that's what they get. What about Mr. Khrushchev? You know Mr. Khrushchev pretty well, better than most of our diplomats. You've dealt with him. Is he likely to do anything, ah, irrational or ah, on the spur of the moment? I don't believe you think so do you?

RN: No, I certainly don't Jack. As a matter of fact, ah, when we look at Mr. Khrushchev one bit of comfort we can take in one way and incidentally it's bad in another way is this: He isn't a little Hitler. Hitler was a mad man at times ah, he is a man while he has, appears to have a temper, he always controls his temper. He uses it he doesn't lose it. He is a man who appears to ah, drink a great deal and be under the influence of liquor when he makes great decisions. But I found and I had long conversations with him, that whenever things counted he was the coldest man in the room. Always watched his eyes and they are cold calculating eyes. Now, why is this good in one way? It's good because he's a man who where the great decisions between war and peace are concerned is not going to start a conflict that would destroy his own country. He is a man in other words that will always be impressed by power, how much power we have. And as long as the United States keeps its power and uses it in an effective way, Mr. Khrushchev is not going to start a war and he won't push us around. By the same token however, I don't go along with this suggestion that if we're just moderate with Mr. Khrushchev he will be moderate with us. Ah, Mr. Khrushchev isn't affected by that kind of action. He would be moderate in his actions only where he respects our power. Not because he's going to be nice to use because we're nice to him. Also, I don't go along with those people who say as far as Khrushchev is concerned we ought to push him on Cuba to get the Soviet soldiers out of Cuba and to get rid of these missiles with on-site inspection because if we do, it may make him lose face. Let me just tell you this. I think we ought to quit worrying about Mr. Khrushchev losing his face and worry more about us losing our necks as far as he is concerned. (Applause)

JP: Time is kind of running out but I want to ask you this quick question. Ah, de Gaulle there is a great mixed reaction about Mr. de Gaulle changing somewhat and I saw in Newsweek wrote something about it. What is your opinion about de Gaulle?

RN: If it hadn't been for de Gaulle there would be no France today. If it hadn't been for de Gaulle, France would still be losing billions of francs and thousands of its best men in Algeria. If it hadn't been for de Gaulle we wouldn't have had a good strong ally by our side in the Cuban crisis. In his favor we have got to say he is anti-Communist. He's a French Patriot; he's a brilliant man. Difficult, yes, but difficult because he's always fighting for his country and all that I can say is that as far as President Kennedy is concerned and our policy that rather than attempting to work around him, rather than trying to say well, we're going to ignore him. That when President Kennedy goes to Europe, certainly he should attempt to do everything possible to talk to him and to convince him to our point of view. Ah, I know that what I suggest is not easy because de Gaulle is a strong individual with very strong convictions on great issues. But on the other hand I think the free world needs a number of strong leaders. I'm glad de Gaulle is strong, that Eisenhower is, that McMullen is and others and I think the more men like that who are expressing even an independent views on what we ought to do in

- the world the better policy we will eventually end up with in fighting our common enemy, which is international Communism.
- JP: Now let's talk here just for a second, cuz I have something that is interesting for you, a surprise kind of thing. Ah, oh about the press, ah, I understand that Arthur Crock has written a very severe article about the Manich News and blaming the president and so forth and ah, the President's reply according to what I read said his reply was unprintable as if he were quite upset about the press or at least about Mr. Crock's article. What do you say about Manich News or about the press?
- RN: All I can say about the president's reaction is, I guess, that just proves everybody gets peeved at the press sometimes.
- JP: Thank you. I never did I just was able to take it and move...
- RN: No, you haven't had any newspapers from New York for three months.  
(Laughter)
- JP: That may have something to do with it.
- RN: And wait until you read Hedda Hopper's column.
- JP: Oh, I'm not... (Laughter)  
Oh yes, poor dear, poor darling...
- RN: After what you said tonight...
- JP: I did not say anything bad about her. Listen Mr. Nixon plays the piano. See, anyhow, I heard sometime ago, from a friend of his, he wrote a selection, wrote a composition. And we had, can you bring the piano out here. We had, hum, Mrs. Nixon, Pat, had a tape recorder going one afternoon and she said politely to Mr. Nixon, "why don't you play a piece," and she recorded it, that's ok Mr. Nixon is aware of that. This isn't what you call one of those trick surprises but the funny thing is we have hired about 15 Democratic violinists (laughter) to fill out – we are spending more money for this orchestra than we ever spent in our life. And Jose has made a concerto arrangement of this hinky dinky song that you wrote (laughter). Would you play it for us?
- RN: Now Jack, let me say this. You asked me a moment ago whether I had any future political plans to run for anything and if last November did not finish it, this will! Believe me, the Republicans don't want another piano player in the White House (laughter).

*Nixon walks over to the piano and plays....Nixon finishes playing, waves to the crowd and says goodnight.*

JP: He has a wild left hand doesn't he boys? (Paar addressing the orchestra) Ricky ticky do boys. You see when the Kennedys were playing touch football he was home practicing.

We'll be back, but first a word from Spiedel.

Transcripts: Barry Goldwater on *The Jack Paar Show*, March 22, 1963

Paar: There are a few little lines here that Barry has said about himself. He kids himself a lot.

“He said that the White House is now ready for me, Jacqueline has redecorated it in 18<sup>th</sup> Century décor.”

“He said, my brother Bob doesn’t want to be in government, he promised dad he’d go straight.”

“I’ve never hesitated with an answer. When anyone ever asks me how I stand on integration I ask them where are you from?”

“I am in the American tradition. I was born in a log cabin, which I had moved to Phoenix, and except for air conditioning, a bar, a shooting range and golf course it remains the same simple log cabin.”

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a privilege to have on this show the Senator from Arizona, Barry Goldwater. It’s good to have you here, sir, and I am just thinking what the newspapers will say, that I am sitting to the right of Barry Goldwater.

Goldwater: Well, that’s a good place for you to be, Jack.

Paar: Well, maybe, maybe, maybe. Listen, tell me about you were the first disc jockey or one of the first?

Goldwater: Well, when I first had my ham ticket in the early twenties we were just beginning to work with what we now call radio and I remember this other amateur had 6BBH, and we used to wrap a coil of wire around the antenna in a moderator coil, put a carbon mike on the other end of it and on a good cold night with the wind out of the right direction could get about twenty miles. I would play records and say 6 BBH testing.

Paar: Barry Goldwater as a disc jockey, now what about Barry Goldwater being arrested in Mexico?

Goldwater: Well, that actually happened. We were down there, this is way back thirty years or more ago, and we were across in Nogales, Sonora having breakfast eating tacos in an old place we knew down there and we used to drink our beer out of coffee cans, and this one friend of mine three the can at me and got me, and I threw a pot of mustard at him and hit a policeman. I had my left leg in a cast then or I would have gotten away too, but both my friends ran for the border and crawled through one of the sewers and were safe, where they put me in the jail; and all day long friends of mine from the 25<sup>th</sup>



Infantry – I was stationed with them on the American side – would come down and say, “no, never saw him before.” Finally, about dinnertime they let me go.

Paar: You met your wife, she was then going with another Senator, I believe. Did you propose to her in a phone booth?

Goldwater: I proposed to her more than any woman ever had been proposed to. Finally we were both together in a phone booth in Muncie, Indiana on New Year’s Eve talking to her mother and I said, “honey, once again this time I’m running out of money and patience all at the same time. Will You?” And, of course I had her at the disadvantage in a phone booth. We Republicans are used to holding meetings in phone booths, you see. She said yes.

Paar: May I ask you some, well, political questions?

Goldwater: Sure.

Paar: You know what I sense about you and what little I know – I acted like I know a lot, I don’t – but that you would rather be right than president, and by that I mean there are certain things – here’s what people say: With the charm of Goldwater, with that family, with his Army record, he’s got everything if he only were more middle-of-the-road no question he’d be the nominee. Would you be a candidate in 1964?

Goldwater: Well, I have said hundreds of times that I am not; I am running for the United States Senate. I would hate to think that the Republican Party had gotten so hard up for candidates that they could only talk about two. I have others in mind that I think would make good Presidents.

Paar: Would you under any conditions be a vice president with Nelson Rockefeller, as they say?

Goldwater: Well, I do not want the answer to make it sound like I do not like Nelson, we are good friends.

Paar: Would you run on a ticket with Nelson Rockefeller?

Goldwater: I would not run on a ticket with anybody, I would not want to be vice president. I watched what happened to one of the strongest men in the country in the short space of two years. I would rather be a live Senator than sort of a backwoods, background man in the vice president’s chair. (Applause).

Paar: I met many friends of Lyndon Johnson's down in Florida just a few days ago, close friends of his, and they say too he once was one of the most powerful men in this country.

Goldwater: I would say.

Paar: Is that true?

Goldwater: Yes, I would say he was at least the second most powerful man in the United States, and a very, very effective Senator, a very effective leader of the Senate who now has found that his talents are pretty much lost and wasted. He should have stayed in the Senate, in my opinion.

Paar: You would not accept any vice president.

Goldwater: No.

Paar: You would not?

Goldwater: No, I am running for the Senate.

Paar: You know, Barry, and I call you Barry not to be so familiar, because I know you wish it that way, that's a western custom, you believe in calling by the first name. It is hard for me to understand it because when we like somebody, actors do, they're your friends, you know, and it lasts for some time. But you were friendly with the president when he was a senator.

Goldwater: Oh, yes.

Paar: And yet, you are forced now, out of conviction, I am sure, to criticize him.

Goldwater: I have always liked him. He is a very fine man. I sat next to him on the Labor Committee for nine years, and I have a great respect for him. But I reserve the right to criticize him when I think he should be criticized.

Paar: Where would you say he should be criticized, or the Democratic Administration?

Goldwater: How much time do we have? (Laughter)

Paar: No, no.

Goldwater: Well....

Paar: Because I know you will say many good things too.

Goldwater: I think in a general way, Jack, it is the Administration's inability to make up their minds. I do not think they are seeking advice in the proper places. I think they have abandoned some of the historic groups that have always advised the Administration. Take, for example, what they did, the decision on Skybolt, which was one of the...

Paar: I don't understand that. I'd like to hear this. What is the Skybolt?

Goldwater: Skybolt was an air-to-ground missile to be carried by the B-52 or any of our large manned bombers. It could be fired at a target a thousand miles away and carry a nuclear warhead at supersonic speed to the target. Now this has a strategic advantage. If the enemy has a fine anti-aircraft system, defense system, you do not dare risk going in. But you can stand off a thousand miles and lob one in, turn around and come back, or overfly and see if you have to do more damage to the targets or if you have done enough damage to the targets.

Now without any consultation with anybody that I know of the Skybolt was dropped. It shook our allies, the British, very soundly, because they had actually remodeled their aircraft to handle the Skybolt. And today, we have no program like this. And, I notice on the ticker in the backroom a story to the effect that the Russians have announced that they have an air-to-ground missile that can be launched at any target any place in the world.

We know they have these weapons. I do not think they were developed to the extent that our Skybolt was, but they have them. And, I think we have to get into this field of long-range launching instead of depending on the vertical gravity drop from the bomber when that time comes.

It gives you a mix. You can come at your enemy from 360 degrees. I you rely entirely on the missile, the Russians as well as we know almost to the degree that this missile has to come to hit a certain target. It is like looking up a rifle barrel. Of course, we can shoot up the rifle barrel and hope to hit it. But the Skybolt concept gives you such diversification of attack that I think we should have kept it or a carryover. I am not married particularly to the Skybolt but to the idea.

Paar: Are you content with our military capabilities in the air?

Goldwater: In the air today. But you must remember that we don't have a manned bomber in the production line today. We have the RS70, one model about ready to fly, and there will be two others built merely as experimental vehicles. We do have some fighter aircraft coming off that will increase the tactical forces, and we have the famous TFX, which is a carryon into the seventies, but we have no manned bombers coming on, and by 1972 or '3 this country will be without a Strategic Air Command. And 90% of the

world's nuclear force today is carried by the men of our Strategic Air Command. I believe this is an absolute must, and I was glad the other day to see Secretary McNamara give in to the point he is talking now about a long-range reconnaissance type of vehicle for the 1970s; I think it is absolutely imperative.

Paar: What was the story in the paper I read about the burning of bombers? Was that some disarmament or peace?

Goldwater: Well, I heard of this from friends of mine in Europe.

Paar: What is the story?

Goldwater: The story is this, and I asked the question a Saturday night or two ago in Aurora, Illinois. I said is it true that our disarmament agency, Disarmament and Arms Control Agencies have been discussing the idea of us giving thirty of our B-47s and the Russians thirty of their Badger Bombers, which are comparable, and then we would hold either a public bonfire and burn them all, or destroy them? I think this is ridiculous, I think it is stupid. I cannot think of any stronger words to use, or I would. Because when you reduce ourselves to the level of the Russians, that is militarily, and we have to depend entirely upon conventional weapons against their overwhelming strength on the ground I think they will have us just where they want us.

I believe we are engage today in unilateral disarmament. I can come to no other conclusion as a result of all the things that are coming out today. But on this thirty-bomber thing.

Paar: you are in favor of disarmament?

Goldwater: Oh, everybody is in favor of disarmament, but we do not want to be the only ones disarming.

Paar: No, no.

Goldwater: You know what I mean. Disarmament is a wonderful goal. But the State Department and this agency denied that they had ever considered this proposal that I questioned about. Yet on the same day they denied it, Secretary Rusk in a public hearing admitted that we had been discussing the possibility of this. So, this points up a little more of the difficulties we find with the Administration. They are not leveling with the American people. They are not leveling even with Congress. In fact, I hate to use this expression, but they have this feeling that the people are too damned dumb, that Americans cannot reason things out for themselves, that Americans cannot make the economy work. That we should rely instead upon the thinking of academic people. And, I have no disrespect for academic

people, but we should rely on computers and academic decisions to control our economy, to control our lives. And, I would like to see the president abandon this and take the Congress and the people more into his confidence. If there is one thing we can do in this country, we can trust the American people. They are far superior to any group of people anyplace else in the world, and you give them the chance, you don't hang the Federal government around their necks, you don't take property away from them they have worked hard for, if you don't deny them possibilities and opportunities the Americans will work their problems out.  
(Applause)

Paar: Senator Goldwater, I have enjoyed having you here tonight and is there anything else you want to say?

Goldwater: Gosh, no. It's just wonderful to be here with you, Jack. I think your new show, your new format, is great. We are enjoying it immensely, and I want to thank you for having me.

Paar: You don't play the piano or anything do you?

Goldwater: No. I have a trombone...

Paar: You got to get with that, Barry; you've got to get a little thing.

Goldwater: I have a trombone that I am trying to learn to play, and I taught myself to play the saxophone and clarinet and mandolin a long, long time ago, but the trombone isn't going over too well with my neighbors.

I do play the thumper, that's the only thing I play, and the neighbors are not happy about that.

Paar: Gee, I wanted one night to have Dick Nixon at the piano, John Glenn on the trumpet, and we could fit you in there, and have a new swinging group called the Patriots. You're a great Jazz buff, aren't you?

Goldwater: Yes, I like Dixieland.

Paar: The whole thing about you, I know you know a lot of nightclub acts, you and Peggy, your wife, go in, know a lot of people in show business. It's so unlike the image of you. They think of you as very prim and proper, and you really swing, you know.

Goldwater: You will find, Jack, we conservatives will be the first to admit our weakness in not having articulated our philosophy over the last thirty years. We actually allowed that Liberals or radicals to point us out as pot-bellied, baldheaded people smoking cigars, burying their money out in the year in a

can, but I think if you look today at the new group of conservatives coming out of the colleges, these people with wide, diversified interests, conservatives are not stuffy. The stuffy element in politics today, frankly, are the Liberals. And again, not that they are mostly academic people, but an academic man almost has to be stuffy if he is going to study all the time and try to get his points across. We are trying to get, we conservatives, are trying to get this New Frontier just to come into 1960. They are back playing around with the 1930s and we want to get them up into 1960, and if we can do that we will done something.

Paar: Thanks, Barry, its' been wonderful to have you here. Good night.  
(Applause)

Transcripts: Barry Goldwater on *The Jack Paar Show*, January 30, 1964

Paar: On this program we try to bring you the most talked about personalities on every sphere, entertainment, politics, religion. One of the most talked about people in politics today is the Senator from Arizona, Barry Goldwater. Whether you are conservative or liberal there are certain qualities about Senator Goldwater you're bound to admire and probably the foremost of these is his uncompromising honesty. Barry doesn't hedge. When you ask him what he thinks about something, he tells you and in forthright rather in political phraseology. He is also an enormously personable man, friendly, courteous and witty. Frankly, I want to know a few things about what's going on and I'm sure you do too. So it's a great privilege to welcome on of the least pretentious politicians I've ever known, Senator Barry Goldwater.

The Senator walks on stage – audience offers an enthusiastic welcome

Well, this is the best audience we've had here in a long time Barry.

Goldwater: It's the best show you've had in a long time. (Laughter)

Paar: How do you like that – listen – I'm just going to fire away and ask you questions okay?

Goldwater: Okay.

Paar: Now, I have no point of view here, just asking questions. You know what confuses me is the political writers and political pros that I've heard talk and that I've read say or infer that Lyndon Johnson, President Johnson, is a more formidable foe than perhaps President Kennedy was. I doubt that and can't believe it. What's your opinion?

Goldwater: Well, I think the pundits now are judging President Johnson's strength as of now and I would say any president coming as he did, in the unfortunate occurrence, has the best wishes of all the people from both the parties. After all both Republicans and Democrats want the best president we can have and all of us are going to do all we can do to make him the best president. I would say though in the months to come when the hurdles are always facing a politician in office are presented to him that we are going to see a little different Johnson here and there and my own judgment is that when the time comes to run against him that he will be less formidable than President Kennedy.

Paar: This question that Bobby Baker thing. Could that grow into a bigger thing than it is now?

- Goldwater: Well, it could but we don't know too much about it yet.
- Paar: Yeah, I was wondering about that. Tell me this; do you go to the White House much? Have you been invited lately?
- Goldwater: Yes.
- Paar: Have you?! No?! REALLY?
- Goldwater: Yes, Peggy and I were up there the other evening when the president had the chairmen of the committees of the Senate and the ranking minority members, and I am the ranking minority member of the Labor and Public Welfare Committee, in fact.
- Paar: Some of them call you the rankingest one they can get. They do that.
- Goldwater: I'm the best minority report writer in the whole Congress.
- Paar: hmm, hmm, Are you and Mr. Johnson – you were friends for years.
- Goldwater: Oh yes, we served in the Senate for 10 years together. In fact, he danced with my wife the other night in the White House.
- Paar: I heard.
- Goldwater: And, he turned to me and said, "you know I have to be nice to Peggy because I might not be here next year and I want to get invited back."  
(Laughter)
- Paar: See you never know. Hum, let me think of another question I want to ask you. What about this think you were talking about the other day, last week you were on television, I saw you about this missile. How did you put it – missile?
- Goldwater: Reliability.
- Paar: Reliability – would you like to say more? Do you have something more to add?
- Goldwater: I wish I could say more.
- Paar: Do you know things you can't say?
- Goldwater: Oh, yes, but ah, I'm confident that these things will work out and I'm also hopeful that we can workout the, ah, the ah deficiencies where they exist.



- Paar: Your point is that they're not as reliable as we are lead to believe. Am I right?
- Goldwater: That's the point I made two weeks ago and I stand by it even though the Secretary questioned my patriotism. In making that remark I would just remind him about a year ago in the posture hearings before the Senate Armed Service Committee. He too doubted the reliability, doubted hardness of the missile sites to be able to with-stand a first strike. Now all components go into this. The guidance system, the silo, the site, the missile itself. I don't think that we're unique in this. I had the idea that the Russians are having the same trouble because it's pretty much the same bird. And, ah, General Powers of SAC, Senator Russell, Senator Dennis, Senator Long have all express themselves as having some doubt about the reliability during the test band treaty voting on the floor.
- Paar: Did you see Art Buckwald? Do you mind if I tell you, incidentally he has a great sense of humor and I've never seen him angry and I've known ya – what four, five times we've asked you and you've always been very nice to me when you could have clobbered me. I remember, one time you had me and you backed off because you did not want to go any further. I never forget that kindness you did for me once. That's a personal thing, that's why I brought it up. (Laughter) No, I'm in his debt for something. Hum, Art Buchwald said, "that the way to settle this, is if Barry says, that the missiles aren't accurate put Barry in a row-boat in the middle of the ocean and fire a missile at him. Now – if the missile hits the rowboat – no if the missile misses the McNamara has to apologize. If the missile hits the boat then you have to withdraw from New Hampshire primaries (laughter) Now look he doesn't get mad.
- Goldwater: They have to find me. (Laughter) I wrote Art. My wife Peggy, showed me that article flying up to New Hampshire, this last week. By the way, we don't question the accuracy, we question the reliability.
- Paar: Reliability....
- Goldwater: That is two different things. But I wrote Art and said if he'd get me a rowboat large enough to put Senator, not Senator but Secretary McNamara in it and Generals Estco and Power and Senator Russell and Dennis and a few others and myself and if I could have the selection of the site to five the missile and the time and only, and only I knew it. I'd be very glad to do it.
- Paar: You're pretty tricky there. If there is a deadlock, I only ask you these questions because I know you'll answer it, between the Rockefeller forces and the Goldwater forces, and if there is a deadlock and a third man will

emerge in the Republican Party for this nomination, quickly who will be the third man? Who will benefit most?

Goldwater: Well, I would think Richard Nixon

Paar: Is he a candidate? I mean, would he be a candidate in your opinion?

Goldwater: I don't think so, frankly, but let's put it this way, he might be available (laughter).

Paar: He said the other day, what'd he say? He doesn't wear a hat because it's always in the ring. That he would accept a draft. Sometime people who don't wear hats, feel the draft, sometimes soon than others. But what about Mr. ah..Governor of Pennsylvania?

Goldwater: Scranton?

Paar: Scranton. Mr. Scranton. My good friend Mr. Scranton. No, I went blank on it because I had a Strasm in my mind too.

Goldwater: Oh, I remember him (laughter)

Paar: He's running again and Lar Daly is in there.

Goldwater: Now, you shouldn't have mentioned that cuz you'll have him here.

Paar: Oh, I know....

Goldwater: Ah, I don't believe as of now that Governor Scranton is seeking this. And, I say that because of a rather long and firm friendship and we've discussed these things rather thoroughly and he's a good member of my reserve air squadron in Washington and we toured NATO together a few years ago in Washington. In fact, I did a lot of begging for him to run for the Governorship of Pennsylvania. But I, a man never knows what he's going to do. If you asked me six years ago if I'd be in the spot I'm in now, I'd given you 5,000 to one and you could have named the money. I don't make that be tonight.

Paar: Are you happy about the spot you're in now?

Goldwater: Yes, I'm happy. Any chance that a man gets to serve his country he's happy in. I don't care if he's successful in the service that he seeks or not. Sometimes people forget that the idea of a two party system is only to keep our philosophy alive. We don't go to extremes, we take different stances. The Democratic Party today in control wants to concentrate government in Washington. The Republican Party is working for the

freedom of the individual. These have historically been the two concepts. Now that the Republican Party being a minority party acts the way it should, if it acts as an opposition party when it has reasons to oppose, it can, by the force of its opposition force the majority party more into align and keeping with the historic values of our government and country. And, so I say, win, lose or draw, you say – I'm happy. I'm happy that I have the opportunity to try and contribute something to the country that's been so good to generations of Goldwaters, that sneaked into this country from England and via Poland, and I just want to help pay for our rent, so to speak, on this land. (Applause)

Paar: Here's a good question. If you were the president at anytime, at any party, just you, would you debate a senator or governor who is running against you? Would you go on television and debate? What do you say to that? That's a good question.

Goldwater: If I were president?

Paar: What would you do? And what should he do?

Goldwater: I wouldn't debate him.

Paar: You wouldn't?

Goldwater: Why buy his audience? Let him get his own.

Paar: Really?

Goldwater: Well, that wouldn't be the motivating thought behind the refusal. I think it's kind of dangerous to subject the president of the United States to questioning or to debate. After all, he has the most responsible job in the world and he might just slop and say something inadvertently that might, ah, could even change the course of history. I think frankly, that President Johnson is being very wise in his handling of the press.

Paar: What little I know about politics, from being on this show and meeting nearly all the leading politicians. I am always naïve enough and child enough that these men dislike each other and it's really the real thing, and I'm surprised when I talk to how fond you are of Senator Humphrey. He recommended that Senator Humphrey be on this show. He's a wonderful man, a witty man. Isn't it Humphrey who pinned that line on you, that you laugh at all the time?

Goldwater: Well, it's the sharpest line I ever heard. I wish I'd thought of it. We were to talk before the women's press club dinner in Washington and my subject was the advice to the liberals and his was advice to the

conservatives and he made a few complimentary remarks about me and, ah, so forth and so on. He said, that I was attractive, the 18<sup>th</sup> century Fox was going to try and give me a contract. I said, "Where the hell did you think of that one?" He said it just came out of the back of his head. That's the kind of fellow he is. No, it's a very strange thing. Most people think that, ah, politicians because they disagree become enemies or that they...

Paar: It looks that way sometimes to us.

Goldwater: Well, ah, you watch a debate or you come to the floor of the Gallery and there are days you wonder how they stay away from each other's throats.

Paar: Do you get angry at this 18<sup>th</sup> Century...I've never seen you angry?

Goldwater: No, ah, I tell ya. I can't find anything wrong with the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. It produced some of the greatest men we ever had in our history. It produced some of our greatest periods of government. Ah, it was during those days that we made great advances socially and technologically and economically. Ah, the trouble with the, ah, 20<sup>th</sup> Century, if we compare the two is that actually the liberals want to go back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and we conservatives want to get them up kicking and screaming up to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. They talk about government controls, that's what our forefathers left Europe and England to get away from. They came here searching freedom, ah, our forefathers founded. Now the so-called liberal is trying every way they know how through legislative action to nibble away at that freedom. I want to go ahead in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century under the goodness of our Constitution and our free enterprise system and the initiative of the American people. I don't like to see us become a nation of molly-coddled people depending upon the central government for every day, most of which by far, we can do better ourselves. (Applause).

Paar: Does the primary in New Hampshire, is it a decisive thing? Any series of primaries?

Goldwater: Well, it can be.

Paar: Are you counting on them to help you?

Goldwater: Oh, I'm counting on everything (laughter). New Hampshire could become muddled because we now have Nelson Rockefeller and myself and I understand that...

Paar: Are you friendly with him?

Goldwater: Oh yes. I've known Nelson for many years.

- Paar: No kidding? You really like him and you're friendly and everything?
- Goldwater: We get along fine.
- Paar: Well it doesn't look like it. I'll tell you that! (laughter)
- Goldwater: I use his gasoline and he uses my taxes. (laughter) We have Market Chase Smith in the race, Lodge is a write in, Nixon's a write in. The former Governor Powell of New Hampshire gets in it. It's going to become a very chopped up affair. I don't think if that's true, there will be any decisiveness to it. The advantage of a primary like that to a Westerner like me is to disprove that we Westerners have horns and long tails and we won't get along with the Yankees.
- Paar: You don't have a rubber flute like Johnny Winters?
- Goldwater: Yes, I've played the flute.
- Paar: Have you had a good time tonight? Is there anything else you'd like to say?
- Goldwater: Ah, no. This is a wonderful show and I think it's really a shame that you ruined it by bringing a politician on last. I've never seen Jonathan Winters better!
- Paar: He's a genius, Barry. He's an absolute genius.
- Goldwater: He can go on forever and ever. I wish you would let him develop that rubber flute because I think we could have made some tomorrow and sold them.
- Paar: Listen, we may all be in the rubber flute business before too long.
- Goldwater: I have a, I play an instrument that I was going to suggest I bring down.
- Paar: What? What?
- Goldwater: Well, I call it a "thumper" and I got it from Bill's Gay 90s many years ago.
- Paar: Yeah? Yeah?
- Goldwater: I haven't played it lately because the neighbor below doesn't appreciate that level of artistry but maybe sometime I can bore you with it?

Paar: Well, I'd like very much to see you and the wife again. The child's going to be married, when in June?

Goldwater: June 27

Paar: How old? She's a beautiful woman. She's one of the most beautiful women I've ever seen.

Goldwater: Well, she has a beautiful mother.

Paar: She certainly does.

Goldwater: You should have seen her grandmother.

Paar: Really?

Goldwater: June 27<sup>th</sup>

Paar: The marriage?

Goldwater: Yep.

Paar: Good luck to you and good health.

Goldwater: Thank you Jack, it's fun to be here.

Paar: Good.  
Both stand and shake hands and Goldwater walks off stage waving to the audience.

Richard Nixon on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*. November 23, 1967  
Partial – clip from *The Johnny Carson Collection DVD*

Nixon sitting in guest chair on the Johnny Carson Show.

RN: I heard you talking about Bobby Kennedy. You sound more like Bobby Kennedy than he does and I think you ought to run for president.  
(Laughter and applause)

Not Let me tell you a few things, that, that, I'm an expert on how to run for president.  
how to win but how to run.

JC: Yes, you are that!

RN: I'd do a few things to you. Well, first let me tell you your assets. You're young,  
42 right?

JC: Right.

RN: Ah, you come over on television like gangbusters and boy I'm the expert on how important that is.

JC: You're not going to lend me your make-up man are you?  
(Laughter)

RN: No, I'm going to lend him to Lyndon Johnson. (Everyone breaks out in a big laugh)

Ronald Reagan on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* – October 2, 1972  
The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show

Ronald Reagan was the first guest on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary show. He also was the only guest that was not, by profession, a comedian. All other guests celebrating on the show were celebrity comedians.

JC: We have a lot of people on the show tonight but first of all I want to thank the Governor because I know his busy schedule, he I believe, ah he took a helicopter in tonight just to be with on, our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. He's had enormous success, as you know, both in the theatrical world and political world. Would you welcome please, the Governor of the State of California, the Honorable Ronald Reagan, ladies and gentlemen.

*Ronald Reagan walks out on stage and shakes hands with Johnny Carson and Ed McMahon.*

RR: John, I remember when we were trying to talk you into moving to California. I told you it'd be like this.

JC: You said we'd have trees growing in and a skyline and everything (referring to the background of the show's set).

RR: Back east they'll never believe this is the Burbank Municipal parking lot (laughter).

JC: I thank you very much for dropping in. I know how many requests you must get to be at various functions and openings and closings and rallies and ah, I thank you for dropping by tonight to just to say hello and be with us. It's always a pleasure to see you.

RR: Listen John, it's a pleasure for (turning to Ed McMahan) by the way, John Wayne said to give you his regards. (Laughter)

EM: Thank you, thank you Governor. (laughter)

JC: You're going to start with me tonight. On our Anniversary you're gonna do that to me?

RR: No, no, Nancy said to say hello to you. She said also to tell you that Thursday night on your show the little girl from Florida when you were jumping up and down. She was all by herself over here at our home and she was watching the show in bed and she was lying there by herself laughing out loud! Said it was the funniest thing she ever saw. And, I was up in Sacramento in bed watching and laugh out loud!



JC: You two got to get together! (Laughter)

RR: Well, they told me, they warned me that politics made strange bedfellows, they did not say anything about the way it would break up a pair of bedfellows.

JC: Can I ask you a question? I know that I've asked you this question the show. Since you've been in political life, you're probably more now in the public eye, that exposure politically. Do you ever miss the entertainment business, per se, performing as an actor?

RR: Oh, every once and a while when I miss it a little bit, I go up and look at the legislature and have a few laughs (Laughter).

No, I thought I would and I love it, the life I had in show business, I thought it was the most exciting and wonderful life in the world but I must say this has been so exciting, so challenging and to instead of just talking about it to be able to get a hold of something and do something about it. To help write the script, and to succeed in something like for example, our welfare reform, has been so successful that you know that you're saving the people some money. You're doing some good at the same time, it's wonderful. Well listen, Happy 10<sup>th</sup>.

JC: Thank you very much.

RR: I was a little disappointed, this is your 10<sup>th</sup> year?

JC: Yes, just finished our 10<sup>th</sup> year, we are starting our 11<sup>th</sup> tonight officially.

RR: When I got dress up, of course, I thought was getting dressed up this way for your 10<sup>th</sup> week in California. Let's, before go any further and before I forget, someone that couldn't be here tonight asked me if I'd read you a little note:

Dear Johnny,

As one of the many who had been guests on your program. I'm pleased to join in saluting you on your 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as host of the Tonight Show. It is a milestone that is enthusiastically greeted by scores of loyal fans for whom you'll become a part of their daily living. My congratulations to you for tonight and best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

*Handing the note Johnny Carson.*

JC: Well, that's very nice.

EM: Very nice!

Applause

JC: That's very nice of to read that and I thank the president very much for that. It's something you don't get too often any more in your life and I know he's probably got better things to do than write letters late at night (laughter). I wonder if he was laughing in bed the other night when the girl was ...

(laughter)

Look, I thank you so much for coming in and ah, we've enjoyed moving to California. We have not deserted New York entirely because New York is a tremendously exciting city and we'll go back there two or three times a year but we've enjoyed our move out here to California. We like the people. The audiences have been tremendously cordial and enthusiastic here. The facilities here at NBC in Burbank are just great. So it looks like we are going to be citizens here for a while.

RR: Well John, we're delighted and proud to have you and I know that – about New York. We have a treaty with New York and it works out just fine between us and ah, your deserve all the warmth and approval and friendship that you get from these wonderful people in California because you've entertained them greatly and ah, all of us look forward to that hour of the night.

JC: Thank you. I want to thank you again for being with us and give our best to your lovely wife.

*Reagan gets up shakes hands with Johnny Carson and Ed McMahan and waves as he walks off stage.*

Transcripts – Bill Clinton on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*, July 28, 1988

(Partial)

Carson: My first guest tonight became a media celebrity last week when he delivered the nominating speech for Michael Dukakis at the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta. Bill Clinton is a four time Governor of Arkansas. He is the nation's youngest governor when he was first elected in 1978 at the age of 32. In a recent Newsweek poll he was voted one of five most effective governors in the country. He also oversaw Arkansas once depressed economy rebound to prosperity through his programs of welfare reform, public health plans and consumer protection including a tight reign on utility rates. From his Capitol office in Little Rock, Governor Clinton has helped remold his state into a competitive economic player in business and industry while maintaining his states traditional homestead heritage and rugged natural beauty. It's marvelous to have him on the show but that's only part of the Bill Clinton story. His family and friends remember Bill as an idealistic and determined young man who earned his bachelor's degree from Georgetown University, later graduating from Yale Law School. Like fellow Democrat, New Jersey Senator Bradley, who shares the same first name, Bill, Governor Clinton expanded his horizon as a Rhoades Scholar studying at England's renowned Oxford University. Her returned to America with a renewed fervor and while still a law student ran George McGovern's 1972 Presidential campaign in Texas. Two years later he lost a tough Congressional race but won wide public admiration and was easily elected Attorney General at 29 two years after that. And, it's great to have him here. He is also the past chairman of the education committee of the state and the author of a comprehensive report on the importance of leadership form. It give me great pleasure to welcome a man who currently serves as the vice Chairman of the Democratic Governor's Association and who has shown America that Arkansas is much more. There's Blanchard Springs National Park, there's the country's only active diamond mine. Arkansas is the birthplace of cosmopolitan publisher Helen Gurly Brown and singer Glen Campbell and Johnny Cash and the late actor Alan Ladd, perhaps better known for his performance in the academy winning film Shane. Bill Clinton, a man who Hernando DeSoto might have well had in mind when he discovered this territory called Arkansas back in 1541. Of course, back then it was owned by France, then Spain, then France again. Then it was sold as what is now known as part of the Louisiana Purchase, which brings us full circle to my first guest. Bill Clinton, a man who loves his state from its eastern delta to its southern lowlands, all the way up t its N. Western highlands, which includes of course, the Ozark Plateau. And in conclusion (applause). Here's a man who needs no introduction. The Honorable Bill Clinton Governor of Arkansas.

Bill Clinton enters stage and sits down.

Carson: Well Governor, I thank you for coming here tonight and my first question is "How are you?" (Carson turns over an hour-glass timer).

Clinton: My sole goal was achieved. I wanted so badly to make Dukakis look great, and I succeeded beyond my wildest dreams.

Dukakis called me a few days ago and said he thought the speech was great, everything was forgiven and would I please nominate George Bush in New Orleans.

Everyone in the state knew I could make a speech. Now everybody knows I can blow one

Carson: So do you have any additional political aspirations in the future?

Clinton: Depends on how I do on the show tonight.

Carson: Well, I hear you have something planned for us tonight, is it with your saxophone?

Clinton: I've already proved I can mess up with my voice, let me see if I mess up with a song.

Bill Clinton on *The Arsenio Hall Show*, June 3, 1992

Bill Clinton opens the Arsenio Hall show playing the saxophone with the show's band. After the number is over Arsenio Hall comes out and comments during his opening monologue "It's good to see a democrat blowing something other than another election." The majority of jokes in Arsenio's monologue makes fun at Ross Perot. He does stop and addresses Bill Clinton "I haven't told you yet that I'm glad you're here, welcome." After a few more jokes referencing Ross Perot, Arsenio again addresses Clinton who is still standing with the band and asks, "Are you enjoying this?"

Arsenio finishes his monologue and tells his audience that they will be spending time discussing the issues with Governor Clinton and then actress Teri Garr will be appearing on the show.

After a commercial break, Clinton is sitting down at a chair next to Arsenio on stage.

Applause

Arsenio: Did you ever think of playing professionally?

Clinton: Yeah, and I liked it tonight being on the other side of the "posse" you know what your drummer said?

Arsenio: What, what?

Clinton: If this music thing doesn't work you can always run for president.  
(laughter)

Arsenio: You carry a lot of people with you. You have more people than Hammer (referring to MC Hammer). There are a lot of guys in your posse today! (Changing to a more serious tone) I'm glad you're here today. Let's get down to things. Hum, what do you like ...the old Elvis or (laughter), I know you are an Elvis fan.

Clinton: I lead national crusade for the young Elvis.

Arsenio: Really?

Clinton: Yeah, you know, when you get old, I mean, he got fat like me, (laughter) I think it has to be the young Elvis. It's when he had all his energy and real raw fresh power, I mean, it would have been a shame to do the old sound. Had to be the new one.

Arsenio: You were here recently, I did not get to meet you but you went to my church

Clinton: I sure did. I met your pastor; he's a wonder man.

Arsenio He is, he is, he has guided me well. Hum, when I talk to kids at church, when I talk to kids in their classrooms, there are a lot of your people who don't think they should vote at all anymore. They feel you are all the same. Why are you not the same?

Clinton: I'm not the same because I'm talking about things in this election that I've been working on for years that I really care about. I was in S. Central L.A. 3 years before the riots occurred. I came out here and all the politicians always go to Hollywood to meet the movie stars and entertainers you know, to raise money and I gave a speech here 3 years ago and asked to go to S. Central L.A. and meet with the people at UNO and SCLC and those community organizations cuz I could see how terrible it was and how things could get out of hand. I met with about a dozen 6<sup>th</sup> graders about my daughter's age who told me their biggest fear in life was being shot going to and from school and the reason those kids should vote is this country's been around for more than 200 years and cuz more than half the time the people have been right and if elected the kind of leadership we needed to move our country through crisis periods, and we're in trouble now. We got a lot of problems and the only way people can have a say is when they are in the driver's seat. You're in the driver's seat at election time, if you don't get in the car you can't drive.

Arsenio yeah, (applause) In S. Central L.A. we had our riots everybody knows about it, I've always said that, that was just the spark. This Rodney King situation, the spark that lit the flame but there's a problem there. Do you understand what's going on there? Do you understand why that happened?

Clinton: I think I understand some of why it happened. A teacher told me after it occurred, when I was here with your Congress Woman Maxine Waters, in her home, this teacher said to me that 'after we cleaned up this mess that the riots caused, now lets clean up the mess that caused the riots.'

Arsenio yeah.

Clinton: I thought that was the best one liner to describe where we should be going. You got millions of people in this country today who just don't feel connected to the life the rest of us want 'em to live. I mean, you tell them to register and vote, get an education, go to work. They say I may not have a job but if I deal drugs I can make some money. You tell them to register and vote and they say "why, I'll still be unsafe on my streets."

You tell them to register and vote and they look at most people in S. Central L.A. : they obey the law, they did not lute, they did not burn, they did not steal but a lot of them are still livin' below the poverty line even though they're workin 40 hrs a week. So there are real problems there that have divorced a whole lot of Americans from the rest of us. So what I think this election is about in a way is reconnecting more folks to the American dream, making them feel like they are a part of our community, making them feel that tomorrow can be better than today. There are too many people that don't feel a part of the community and are convinced that tomorrow won't be better than today and I hardly ever meet an American that isn't worried about something in the future.

Arsenio: Yeah, you know, when I think about racism, as a black man, I always think of the racism that I experience. During the riots I realized that they're a lot of kinds of racisms we're suffering from. Racisms against a lot of different people. We all hate each other for something you know, we noticed the Korean situation, we notice the anger at just white faces no matter who there were, we always seeing the hostility towards black faces no matter who they are. How do we deal with racism in America because it's getting out of hand?

Clinton: I think we gotta do two things. First of all we gotta find ways for people to talk to each other again on a regular, consistent basis. Not just across racial lines but across any income lines. That is, you and I can live in an integrated society but it would be a fairly narrow stratum. But if you go to S. Central L.A. or most places in America most workin people and low: income people they don't have the interracial contacts that people who are in a stronger income group have. So you gotta have basic contacts. The second thing we gotta realize is that a lot of the racism that was raging in Los Angeles dealt with what people don't do rather than what they do. People, they feel like they don't' even exist to people of other races till they walk into a department store and people follow them around to make sure they don't steal anything.

Arsenio hmm hmmm

Clinton: But day in and day out they get up, they trudge through their lives, they live in substandard housing, unsafe streets, they work their guts out, they fall further behind, nobody even knows they're there until there's a riot. I think that in the 90s this whole business of economic empowerment has gotta be at the center of the civil rights movement you've gotta have a lot of the problems just relate like the tensions between African American and the Korean community. I talk to a lot of black folks who are convince the Koreans get preferential treatment at banks.

Arsenio: ...for loans.

Clinton: For loans, but what they don't know is those folks have an entrepreneurial culture. They work together, they loan each other money, they, they come out of a culture that favors small business. Most of the black families that move to Los Angeles when they did came out of the South and came here for manufacturing jobs. When the manufacturing jobs went away there was only small business and nobody stepped in and said 'here's how you get a loan, we'll make sure the loans are made in this community, we're gonna make sure you learn how to manage these businesses and create markets. None of this was ever done so I think a lot of the problem is these folks are just invisible to each other until they raise hell and you can't run a country that way. We gotta know they're around all the time.

Arsenio: Yeah, let's take a quick commercial and come right back with Governor Bill Clinton.

Applause : return from break.

Arsenio: So do you have any shortcomings and what would you say they are?

Clinton: I have a lot of shortcomings. I think umm, one of them is even at my, at this age, I was first elected governor when I was your age.

Arsenio: See that's embarrassing. He was governor and I'm like "Let's get busy" laughter

Clinton: Hey 'Let's get busy outta be the motto of this country right now! But even now, even after all these years I sometimes work hard instead of smart. That is, I'm a workaholic. I'm real, I'm always churnin, and doing things and sometimes I lose the forest through the trees. Sometimes you can do so many things that you don't do enough. I think in the end of this campaign a lot of people may not know exactly what I want to do as governor, I mean as president, cuz I got so many ideas, my mind is always churnin, you know. And I think I need to learn to focus my comments better so I can communicate with people who don't know me very well. And I need to always learn that you have s little time, that there is so precious little time, that you have to really be like a laser beam with your words and actions you got to really focus. You gotta have that kind of mental discipline that sometimes still my workaholic tendencies don't prevent me to have. I think that's one problem.

Arsenio: Yeah

Clinton: And I think that sometimes I always think that everything can be worked out too. Sometimes you can't work things out. You just gotta cut it. And you gotta know when to cut it and when to work things out and that's ah,



something I've done a lot of work on. Trying to make sure I over come that weakness.

Arsenio: Speaking of focusing and communicating, I know you've been through this a billion times but can we get into the smoking the joint thing again?  
Laughter

Clinton: That's why saxophone you see; you have to blow into it so you have to inhale with how the saxophone or you'll die. Laughter : That's how I learned to inhale playing my saxophone, you blow out and then you have to inhale : laughter (Arsenio laughing shaking his head)

Arsenio: One for Bill : laughter & applause

Clinton: I tried to do it I just couldn't I want trying to get off the hook you know I was just making general remarks.

Arsenio: Ok, let's go : I've heard different people discuss it and I've done my jokes : ok you got the joint in you hand : laughter : whoo hooing from the crowd : OK somebody says EEEAAARR (sound like someone saying here holding their breath & more woo hooing & clapping from audience) Now : somebody says EEEAAARR and then what do you do at that point?

Clinton: I took it and tried to smoke it just like a cigarette but I'd never smoked a cigarette before either.

Arsenio: hmmhmm: You're not a drinker either right?

Clinton: Well, I never had a drink until I was 22. I do drink now a little bit but not much. But so anyway I did my best, I tried, but I just couldn't inhale it. I mean, I wasn't tryin to get a good conduct metal for saying I did not inhale. I was jus nervously pointing out that it was another one of those things I tried to d and failed at in life ... laughter.  
I gave it , I was huh 22, 23 years old, I gave it my best shot.

Arsenio: Yeah,

Clinton: I mean, I really tried.

Arsenio: I know how it is dealing with the press. If you could explain it over again the first time would you do it any differently?

Clinton: Yeah, I'd just said yes!

Arsenio: laughing

Clinton: But you know, here's the deal when a politician says something : when you're in politics, the cynicism about politicians is so great people thought well this guy calculated this whole answer and he calculated it so that he thought you wouldn't burn me so bad if I said I did not inhale. That's the dumbest thing I ever heard of. They asked me a question I did not know they were going to ask and I gave an honest answer and that I did not inhale was a nervous afterthought. That I was sort of laughing about it after 22 years. I mean, that was all that was goin on I was just laughing about it in my mind about it but I got beat up about it cuz everybody thought I calculated this answer, you know, maybe I should, maybe I should be more calculating than I am but you know if , you folks are never going to get good politicians, really good public officials if all you want is someone that calculates every word they say, every deed they do and their whole life becomes like a robot and an automaton. I did something when I was younger, I told the truth about it and I made a mess telling them about it cuz I guess I'm still kind of embarrassed about it after all these years. But it is not a big deal and it sure if it was made into a federal case, I got more publicity on that than I did about my idea how to send every kid in America to college who wants to go, which I think is more important to the election and to the future of this country : applause  
Aresenio claps along

Commercial break

Arsenio: I read um, I read that you are contemplating raising taxes for people who make \$200,000 or more

Clinton: You're gonna have to pay more

Arsenio: Yeah, I'm mad about that : laughter and applause  
Why don't you expound on that and talk about a little what you'll do for the economy that's part of the LA riots and other frustrations all over the country.

Clinton: Absolutely, it is. Part of California's problem you lost a half million jobs in California in 2 years. Your state government is broke. You're a billion dollars in dept, you're cutting back in education when you outta be increasing your investment in education to prepare all these kids for the future. They need to live so what my theory is, we've got to increase our investment in this country after WWII we rebuilt Europe & Japan, after the cold war we got this marvelous window of opportunity when we can rebuild America and we better get after it and we gotta do it, the only way you ever rebuild a country is to invest in your people, in their jobs, in their education, in their healthcare. So my idea is that first we outta take every dollar we are cutting the defense budget by –every dollar and invest it in

building an economy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In California, what does that mean? Build high: speed rail networks. Don't buy trains from Europe or Japan and build them here. Build short haul aircraft, build modern waste recycling systems, build modern fiber optics networks, put millions of people to work building a rich country for tomorrow. Do it with the defense cuts. (Applause) Second thing we need some more money to invest in education. Every poor child in S. Central LA should be in a head start program. The poor school districts they outta have elementary councilors in schools to do with those kids that bring problems through their front door and small classes in the early grades. There outta be a computer in every classroom in America. The kids that don't go to college outta have 2 years at apprenticeship training so they can get good jobs not dead end jobs. That's what our competitors do and we outta loan everybody the money that wants to go to college the money and let them pay it back : (applause) now all of this, believe it or not in the context of this trillion dollar budget of ours is not a great deal but since we have a deficit that's enormous and it needs to be brought down I think we have to raise some more money. You can't raise money on the middle class cuz their taxes went up and their income went down in the 80s. People in upper income groups their incomes went up and their taxes went down : Relax (talking directly to Arsenio) your taxes will still be lower than 1980 when I get done. But you'll have to pay a little more so we can send all these kids to college. It would be the best money we ever spent and have a stronger economy. All those people your Pastor tried to help. If you could tell them when they are 11 or 12, if you stay straight, you may not make as much money as you would dealing drugs, but you're gonna make enough money, you're gonna have a good, decent life. You're gonna feel good about yourself and your country is gonna make sure you get the education and training you need. It would be great and if you could say to them if you go to college you can pay the loan back : We'll pay your way to college but you'll pay it back either as a %age of your income when you go to work or even better, let's make a Peace Corp here at home. Come back to LA and pay your college loan off by giving 2 years of your life as a counselor to kids in trouble, as a nurse in a public health clinic, as a police officer on the block (applause) as a teacher : you think about it. A lot of these kids in trouble, they're never the most important person in the world to anybody except the people they're in the gangs with. So we gotta give them a good gang to be a part of and you gotta have some personal connection. So anyway you have to pay a little more but not a lot more and enough to invest in our people again. That's what we gotta do.

Arsenio: If it helps our youth I'm down with it. I'll be right back with Bill Clinton -  
- break to music.

Hillary joins Bill and Arsenio on stage

- Arsenio: Well, you all know this lady.. (Introducing Hillary)  
Yes, (applause) yes. The sprint beside the man, not behind him anymore but beside. Through all this controversy have you ever find yourself at home fighting : honestly?
- Hillary: No, no
- Clinton: No
- Hillary: Not about anything important. We fight about what movie we want to see.
- Clinton: This is the only movie we're going to see for a month and you're gonna make me see this crazy cheap thrills movie. You want to go see Lethal Weapon III, when we got all these other movies out there : that's the kind of thing we fight about.
- Arsenio: You know it's hard, I mean, it's hard to think that you don't ever at some point say 'Who is Jennifer?' You know who the hell is she? And, it's like, I mean...
- Hillary: I know who she is, I mean, I've known : I know who she is
- Arsenio: And you know what her problem is?
- Hillary: I, she's got lots of problems.
- Arsenio: Yeah, (laughter) Through all the pressure and things you've been through have you ever thought about quitting?
- Clinton: No
- Arsenio: Really?
- Clinton: No, you know, I would have quit if I just wanted to live in the White House and go to Camp David on the weekends. But if that were the choice I'd gladly stay home where I am with the job I've got and the life I've got. It's a lot better life in many ways on a much more human scale. I got into this race, cuz I thought this country was going down the tubes and we outta change it and I've stayed in it because I thought I could be a force for change and I wanted the voters to make up their mind. If the voters say hey we think some other person will be a better president I will go home a happy man to the live I've got. It's a wonderful life but I would have been a gutless wonder to quit over things I thought were unfair and unsubstantial in the face of the convictions that I think we outta have : so no, I never thought about quitt'n. This country doesn't need a

quitter and the licks that I've taken are nothing compared to the licks most Americans take. Look at those people in South Central LA are going through. That's a lot tougher than a few days of bad publicity. I mean, if you can't take a few licks, you got no business being president. It's a tough job. You gotta be a tough guy.

Arsenio: Yeah, (applause) hum, well have you kind of, and this is something I heard a political analyst talk about recently, hum (looking at Hillary), He said, you kind of were, I use the words "chilling out". He said, you were pulling back a little bit, you've been instructed not to say as much or be as out spoken.

Bill shaking his head no

Arsenio: looking at Bill : No?

Hillary: I've heard that but I never know who says it. I thinks it's wishful thinking on the part of some people.

(Chuckle from Bill)

Hillary : I want to tell you something (putting her hand on Aresenio). I thought what you did the night after the LA riots was the way television ought to be. I was so impressed.

Arsenio: Thank you. (Applause)

Hillary : It was not only a great show, it was honest and it gave people a chance to connect with each other: what you and Bill were talking about earlier and it used television in a positive way. Not just reporting from a distance, not just pointing fingers but involving people and letting those of us who are at home watching feel that you know we had some role, we had some say too. I was real pleased.

Arsenio: You know hum, see we gotta stay involved every day. After the fires burn out, we can't allow our involvement to burn out. Hum, a few weeks before the riots I had been on the hill, hum, invited by Lewis Stokes to talk about gangs and violence. I'm happily involved in a lot of those issues. Hum : what do we do about the gangs and what do we do about the violence in the inter: cities, the black on black crime? Hum, how do we stop it?

Clinton: Well, if there were a simple answer it would be done already. I think you gotta start with safe streets strategy. The cities that are safer are those that have neighborhood policing. Where the people that live in those neighborhoods look at the police as their friends. They see them

everyday. The police know the kids that are in trouble or about to be. They work together to keep harmony and peace. We need to help those policeman by giving those kids something else to do. More one on one relations with successful adults. And, when they do get them in trouble, instead of sending them off to jail the first time, they outta be kept in the community boot camps where they can do community service work, have discipline and drug treatment and education. And, I think we outta pass the Brady bill and do some other things to get some of these guns off the street too and out of the hands of the kids.

(Applause)

So, you need safe street strategy. Then you gotta have something for the kids to say yes to. Everybody wants to be in a gang. I mean, everybody here is in, if you go to your church, it's a gang. It's a good gang. Makes you feel good to be there on Sundays. We are social animals. We have to be part of something bigger than ourselves. So you gotta take those gangs and give them some ways to be winners as gangs or give people good gangs to be part of. We've got to give these kids something to say yes to. The LA Conservation Core outta be dramatically expanded for your people to work in ways to get them out of their lives and problems and get the to working with other people and doing good things. Those are the kinds of things we gotta do. We got to change lives from the outside in and from the inside out and there is no simple strategy. The government can do some things but people on the streets have to help others.

Arsenio: The reason I ask you questions like this, huh, these aren't just black questions. Mr. Crime, Mr. Frustration own cars now and they'll be coming to the suburbs real soon now. That's why we have to solve the inter: city problems.

Clinton: I was in McCone County, Michigan, which is virtually all white, outside of Detroit. All the white folks went out there, that's the home of the Reagan democrats, you know, the Democratic Party left me; I'm tough and conservative now. I was there a couple of days after a 15, year old white boy had shot another one in the school. This is not just about race. It's about ethics and education and economics and it's about kids being divorced from the life we want them to live. There are all these disconnections, it's like peoples circuits have shorted out and people like (pointing to Arsenio) at least you're reaching out and try and touch them again. And, what you gotta do is to empower people like all the rest of us (pointing to the audience) people that aren't famous or rich but still have incredible power to touch other people's lives.

Arsenio: Yeah, hum, it's all of our problems. I don't have a lot of time left, Marlin just give me a couple of seconds. I'm going to let the lady close the

segment. (Looking at Hillary) Tell young America and anyone in America that's watching why they should vote for this man.

Hillary: Because he's got the right combination of a great heart and a great mind and he understands what's at stake in this country. And, if he were not convinced that we could do better and that he could inspire people, particularly young people, to feel good about themselves and to be committed again to this country he wouldn't be in this race. But, he is and he can and that's what we need more than anything to get America back on the right track.

Arsenio: (looking at the camera) I'm not here to tell you who to vote for : vote for somebody!  
This is Hillary and this is Bill, the Clinton family. Good night.

Cut in music -- end show.

Transcripts -- Bob Dole on *The Late Show with David Letterman* -February 5, 1995

David Letterman does a short introduction of Senator Dole telling his audience how pleased he is to have a man of his stature as a guest. Please welcome the Senator from Kansas, Sen. Bob Dole.

Sen. Dole comes out and shakes hands with Letterman and sits down in the usual chair. The audience gives him a strong welcoming applause, with hoots and hollers.

Letterman: Welcome Senator, it's great to have you here.

Bob: Thank you. Hey, I know Al Gore was here about a year and a half ago and he broke your ashtray. So I brought you a replacement.  
(Handing Letterman a new ashtray.)

Letterman: Well, God Bless you Senator. Thank you very much. (applause)  
Look at that (Letterman showing ashtray with US Senate crest on it)

Bob: It's not breakable, it's...

Letterman: Stolen from the United States Senate.

Bob: Right.

Letterman: You know Senator, I have the perfect companion piece for that (going behind his desk and brings out an Oscar like statue – referencing the current news of stolen Oscar statue.)

You know we could help CBS out a little bit here tonight with our own Home Shopping Network. These lovely items going up for bid. Let me call it Hollywood memorabilia for sale tonight on CBS.

Speaking of the – ah – the vice president and ah, of course President Clinton himself. What is the nature of your relationship with the president these days? Has it changed any since the big Republican landslide in November?

Bob: Ah, yeah...(laughter). Yes, it's changed. (both host and Dole chuckle)  
No, we actually have a very good relationship. President Clinton is a very articulate, very smart, very nice guy to sit down and visit with and ah, you know I, when he first came I gave him a check for \$250 for his jogging track.

Letterman: I remember reading about that.



- Bob: I did not want him running out in the street scaring people and things like that so we....  
Laughter
- Letterman: Laughing
- Bob: Well ah, I gave him this check drawn out of my own bank account. Something many congressman don't due.
- Letterman: WOW! You're loaded up tonight aren't ya? You're ready to go!  
Laughter
- Bob: But he decided to stay on the streets. I think he likes the streets.
- Letterman: He's running out doors still?
- Bob: He's still running – and I think that's still one of the problems. But, ah, in any event, ah
- Letterman: When you gave him the check did he send it back?
- Bob: Well, when I went down to see him he did not cash it. But he has it framed. It's hanging in his little office, there and when he leaves, it's not in the Oval Office, he goes in this little square office and it's back in there. In a nice little frame and I said just keep it, it's fine with me. So he kept it. Well, we have a good relationship and Vice President Gore is a nice person. Not know as one of the comedians in Washington but you know.
- Letterman: Well, you know when he was here he was very nice. He tried, he did what he could and we were very appreciative to have him.
- Bob: He had his goggles on and he --- he does a lot of that in Washington but  
Laughter
- Letterman: Really? Got his goggles on?
- Bob: He's always beating up Republicans.
- Letterman: Now here, I have, I have an amateur political observation. You help me out with this. Since the November election – ah – and the power has shifted things, you, you can feel things are different already in this country. And, ah, I think change is always healthy but it seems to me that also slowly but surely in little increments the Republicans, and some notable figures, have kind of been, you know, Newt Gingrich, stuff about man should be out hunting giraffes...

Bob: I don't understand all that.

Letterman: Dick Army and the Barney Frank situation and then...

Bob: Gingrich dead giraffes, piglets...  
(seemingly awkward conversation)

Letterman: Yeah.

Bob: I don't know, I skipped all that during our, my generation but, ah, I think things are changing of course. Newt is doing a great job.

Letterman: Do you have a good relationship with him?

Bob: Oh yeah. We've had a good relationship for the last several years. I think it was a little rocky there several years ago, but ah, Newt is the Speaker of the House, he is the only Speaker we've ever had named Newt and ah...

Letterman: Laughing...That would be good on a bumper sticker wouldn't it?

Bob: Yeah but, we've never had a president named Bob either, so you know...

Letterman: OH!  
Audience applause with hoots and hollers....

Now all day today I was under the impression that you, in fact, had committed to running for election in '96. now you have or have not?

Bob: I have not.

Letterman: You have not.

Bob: But, I'm going to run.

Letterman: You are going to run for president in '96?

Bob: In '96, yes.

Letterman: Have you selected the ticket yet? Have you a running-mate in mind?

Bob: Ah...well ---

Letterman: We already had some of these printed out....

(Bringing out and showing a button with a picture of Dole and Letterman-with a cigar in his mouth- Saying Dole & Dumber.)

Bob: I might say you weren't my first choice.

Letterman: Oh – well, now that we got the buttons that changes everything doesn't it?

Bob: Yeah, we had a very low budget campaign – so how many do you have – two?

Letterman: We have another. We had another one just in case you did not go for that idea. We had another one. (Letterman bringing out another button with his picture again with Dan Quayle saying Dumb & Dumber).

Bob: Oh, so you had Dan Quayle  
laughter, hoots and hollers from audience

Letterman: Oh, come on --- Stop!  
So not this is official you are running. We all know that it's common knowledge.

Bob: I will make a formal announcement in early April of this year.

Letterman: Well, wasn't this a formal announcement?

Bob: This is, ah, an informal announcement.

Letterman: Well, I'm considering this a formal announcement.

Bob: I think we ought to have two mid-westerners on the ticket. I think you and I would do a great job. And, you could keep people happy and I could give them the hard stuff so ---

Letterman: There you go. (audience applause)  
You know, I wouldn't mind helping you out giving them the hard stuff either.

We have to do a commercial Senator if you don't mind. Stay right there and we'll continue chatting with this gentleman right after you take a look at this folks.

*Returning from commercial break*

Letterman: Can you tell me a little bit about, ah, are people going to be better off? I know nothing about the contract with America. I don't really know what that means. It sounds like a great idea but is it really going to help folks?

Are folks in Russell, Kansas going to be better? Folks in Loganfort, Indiana going to be better? Am I going to be better? Are you going to be better?

Bob: Well, I really think so. And, I don't want to be partisan of course. (Laughter) It's not my nature. But, ah, we are. We're talking about balancing the budget. We're talking about another thing. Making all the laws that apply to people watching this, apply to members of Congress and that's a big step forward. So we've done that.

Letterman: So do a lot of guys, do a lot of guys when they get into Congress do they think "Oh Boy" I'm going to goof off. Is that it or do they all take it seriously.

Bob: I think they all take it very seriously. I know a lot of members of Congress the time I've been there, Republicans and Democrats, men and women and for the most part, there is always a few that come to the wrong meeting. But you know most (Letterman laughing) but most are very serious about it.

Letterman: What about Sonny Bono? Is he taking it seriously?

Bob: Sonny Bono, well fairly seriously. I think you (laughter) he found the House Chamber last week so...

Letterman: But you know, the truth of it is and people I guess think that it's amusing that Sonny Bono who spent his entire life in show business and music is now a Representative of his district in California.

Bob: Yeah, he went from show business to politics and Mary Cumo went from politics to show business. She's down there...

Letterman: She's selling those kids.

Bob: Yeah, selling those kids.

Letterman: But that's the way the country works. That's what I'm trying to say. Men and women from all walks of life all over the country representing this land in Washington.

Bob: Well, I think it has worked very well over the years. I think you look back on America and you ask yourself why does everyone want to come to America? Well, we're not perfect but you can see why people yearn to come here.

Letterman: Absolutely.

Bob: Liberty, freedom, opportunity and it seems to me that Congress pretty well reflects the cross-section. We're talking about term limits. You know, you can only serve...

Letterman: See now I think it's built in. If you get voted out it's the end of your term, right? That's...

Bob: That's true. But, ah, but I think 80 % of the people support term limits, 12 years for senators, six or eight years for House members. Sen. Thurman from S. Carolina...

Letterman: How old is this man?

Bob: He'll be 93 in December.

Letterman: 93.

Bob: Ah, he came into the Senate in 1948, Congress. He's considering term limits. He told me the other day.

Letterman laughing

Bob: He only wanted to run one or two more times. Then he'd be 105. He thought that it was time to get on with a real opportunity.

Letterman: And, you're going to get those speed limits up to where they ought to be right? (Hoots and hollers from the audience!)

Bob: Right. (More yells from the audience) It'll be, I think 65 will be the city limits.

Letterman: Now Senator, I know that you, like our vice president, came tonight with a Top 10 list of your own.

Bob: He had a Top 10 list but we cut everything 30 % so I have a Top 7 list.

Letterman: Top 7 – Oh Good. Here we go....Tonight's Top 7 list – music begins – What is the category?

Bob: #7 – Stop paying Clinton's speech writers by the word.

Letterman: Yep. Oh, ways to balance the budget – there we go. (referring to the category)

Bob: Yeah, ways to balance the budget. We're trying to balance the budget. #6 get Letterman to pay his speeding tickets.

Letterman: Yep, there you go.

Bob: #5 – serve canned hams at all White House State dinners.

Letterman: Yea! (Yells from the audience)

Bob: #4 – Save government ink by replacing long William Jefferson Clinton signature with a 70 % shorter Bob Dole signature.

Letterman: Yep!

Bob: #3 – Make Gore and Gingrich pay for those good seats at the State of the Union Address.

You know they are back there.

Letterman: Yeah, how do they get back there?

Bob: #2 – Fire the White House gardeners. Let Al Gore do something to earn his keep mowing the lawn.

The # 1 way – loud drum roll...

Letterman: Not easy (referring to the drum interruption)

Bob: No, it's not. The #1 way to balance the budget. Arkansas – sell it!

Letterman: Bob Dole everybody.

Bob Dole gets up, waves to the crowd and walks off stage.

Transcripts – George Bush on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* – March 6, 2000 (partial)  
Partial transcripts acquired from *Associated Press* via Lexus Nexus

*Associated Press*

March 6, 2000; Monday

*Bush Tries To Rebound on 'Tonight'*

Byline: Glen Johnsons

Section: National political

The late-night talk show opened with a skit making fun of Mr. Bush's performance on a pop quiz earlier in the campaign. Mr. Leno was filmed searching the studio before finding Mr. Bush in his dressing room.

Bush: Who's Tony Blair? Who's Boris Yeltsin?

Leno: Governor, listen, I'm not going to tell anybody you don't know who Boris Yeltsin is.

Bush: What are you talking about? This is my daily brief from one of my top foreign policy advisers.

Trebek: All right, governor. Once again, the category is world leaders. This man was prime minister of Israel from 1996 to 1999.

Bush: Who is Benjamin Netanyahu?

Trebek: You're right again.

Leno: Yes.

Leno: You've talked about this in the past, and you would get kind of wild, and you used to drink a bit when you were a young man. See, like to me, like Al Gore looks like he's been running for president since he was in the eighth grade.

Bush: Yes.

Leno: But when you were out at a frat party, and whoo, having a good time at Yale, and partying with the boys, did you ever think, 'You know, I don't want to have that beer. I might be running for president.' I mean, did that ever cross your mind? Did it ever...

Bush: No.

Ralph Nader on *The Tonight Show with Leno* (Transcripts) September 12, 2000

Jay Leno introducing Ralph Nader: And now, the man who is running for president on the Green Party ticket...Critics say he has no chance in winning but he believes he can make a difference. We'll find out why please welcome Ralph Nader.

Ralph Nader is the second guest following D.L. Hughley

Leno: How are you, sir? Welcome, sir, it's nice to finally meet you.

Nader: Thank you.

Leno: Now here's something that has always fascinated me...since I'd been in college and I thought I'd just follow since I was a car guy and a.. you always seem so..and I was wondering.. what do you do for fun?

Nader: Strawberries

Leno: Strawberries? Is this your weakness? oh, strawberries.

Nader: Yes.

Leno: Really? So that's your thing...what you do...Your idea of a good time. Chocolate covered?

Nader: Once in a while.

Leno: Oh, oooh.

Nader: It's vitamin C.

Leno: So you like chocolate? Oh really. So what do you do with it? You're Ralph Nader, okay, hard time at consumer advocating, wanna kick back, what do you do? Where do you go?

Nader: I go to a ball game. I'm a Lou Gerrig, Yankee fan. But I like or Orioles.

Leno: Oh is that right? Do you cheer or do you make..."Please everyone sit down, it's very dangerous to stand." I mean do you cheer?

Nader: Yeah.

Leno: I don't...don't see...how you cheer? A home run has been hit...

Nader: By Bernie Wind.



Leno: Okay, Bernie Wind has a hit a home run? What do you do?

Nader: You jump like this:  
*JUMPS UP – Leno Repeats*

Leno: Oh that's very good. Kind of a 'black power' then.

DL Hugley: It's official now. I just...

Leno: And, I always read about your, ah, when you travel you are a thrifty guy or cheap, some people say. You always fly coach?

Nader: Yes, I fly coach. As a matter of fact, the dismal nature of the two political parties is such that people come up to me in the plan and say "You fly coach? You're campaigning for the presidency in the Green Party." I say yeah, they say we're going to vote for you.

Leno: Cuz you fly coach?

Nader: Because I'm flying coach.

Leno: Let's suppose, ah, let's say this... your candidacy picks up speed and they say look Ralph, we need a private jet to get from place to place. We can't get to these place fast enough. Would you do that? Would you...

Nader: No.

Leno: No.

Nader: No. I've been fighting for the regular people all these years. You fly with them.

Leno: Would you accept an upgrade?

Nader: Yeah, yeah, if you need the legroom.

Leno: Yeah.

Nader: If elected president, I'll make sure the airlines give everyone leg room and hip room!

Leno: You got my vote right there! There you go right there! (applause) So what do you offer that Gore and Bush don't offer?

Nader: Since you asked, Jay, for over 35 years I have been fighting for the regular people in this country in all kinds of ways and unlike Bush or Gore, I'm not for sale.

Leno: You're not for sale?

Nader: Not for sale (applause).

Leno: So okay, let me ask you this. Okay, suppose a corporation, a good, hearted corporation say "Oh boy, we like what Ralph Nader's saying. We wanna give you some money for your party." Would you take it?

Nader: No, never. Because corporations are artificial entities. Just human beings should participate. Corporations can't vote. All though Bush is really a corporation running for president, disguised as a person. But that's okay.

Leno: Ahu (applause) but..

Hugley: Now I'm going to vote for you, Ralph.

Leno: But it takes a certain..ah, it seems like, ah, it seems like it takes a tremendous amount of money. .. I mean tremendous amounts of money. That almost, ah, you can't get it from these single donations. That almost seems like you have to have that sort of..

Nader: That's the kind of dirty money politics might get for elections. I mean, a public election should be publicly funded and we're practicing what we're preaching. We're not taking any corporate money, no pack money, no soft money, just contributions from individuals.

Leno: So, if you'd have to vote for Bush or Gore who would go for?

Nader: I can't vote for none of the above.

Leno: No? Let's say it's just, ah, comes along it's just Bush or Gore. What would you do?

Nader: I would invoke the cruel and unusual punishment provision of the U.S. Constitution and punt!

Leno: Really? That's, that's it?

Nader: Yeah!

Leno: Okay, now tell us about these presidential debates. It all...it seems like years ago when I was a kid and I can remember a smoke-filled room and my father watching TV and a convention would start and you wouldn't know who would get the nomination till after 3, 4, 5 – 10 ballots. Now it's all decided a year

ahead of time like these debates. Now, it's Bush and it's Gore, that's it. Why aren't you in these debates?

Nader: Well, two thirds of the American people polled 2 to 1 want four-way debates. They want more excitement, they don't want to fall asleep in front of the TV set watching a dry debate. They want all kinds of subject matters discussed that the two big ones don't discuss. You ask me the question and the only explanation I can give you as to why Bush and Gore are afraid to have me to debate in the Presidential debates...

*Nader takes out a rubber chicken – some of the audience laugh at his attempt of a joke.*

Leno: There you go. What...this comedy's not easy, is it, Ralph?

Nader: This is it. This is what it's all about. What have they got to hide? What are they afraid of?

Leno: Let me ask you something. Do Bush and Gore decide who they debate?

Nader: Yes. Because the Presidential debate commission is a private company created and funded by the Republican and Democratic parties. S it's their little plaything and they can decide who else is going to get on. They let Ross Perot in 1992 and they don't wanna...

Leno: Why did he get in?

Nader: Why he got on?

Leno: Yeah.

Nader: I think because of the huge public pressure and he's a billionaire and he was all over the TV.

Leno: All these people wrote and said they wanted you or somebody or Pat Buchanan on this debate that would happen?

Nader: It would happen if they wrote to the networks because the networks decide, NBC, CBS, ABC, CNN... they are all thinking of sponsoring their own debates.

Leno: They all seem to think you don't have the experience to (looking over at the other guest)

Hughley: No, I would just... This chicken made me hungry. That's what I was saying... I was actually thinking about two-piece and a biscuit but that's just something else. Hey, look here if you want to ride cold with these people that's respectful.

I love that, you know. I don't know I want a president ride next to me..Hey, hand me the peanuts, prez..That's scary.

Nader: Hey, wait a minute. You remember you used that crack some days ago... a couple of minutes ago about two people voting.

Hughley: Yes.

Nader: Listen. A couple of weeks ago we jammed the Coliseum in Portland, Oregon. 10,500 came, no band, no food, just to hear the politics of joy and justice. You think Bush or Gore could ever attract that kind of running?

Hughley: In Portland, Oregon? They don't have nothing else to do. Everybody who lives in Portland, Oregon are in the witness protection program.

Nader: What are you going to say when we do the same thing in Boston, Minneapolis and Seattle?

Hughley: I think you are epitomizing the American dream and I am ignorant of politics. I know that I respect you a great deal and I know Firestone should be scared to death of you right now!

Leno: I wanna show you a commercial. If I had one criticism of you it would be that you're a little staid, a little dull. Okay, but I saw a commercial and thought were there more commercials like these it would get you sued. This is the commercial that got him sued by MasterCard.

Shows Nader ad that mimics the current MasterCard advertisement.

Leno: There you go. And you got sued over that, right?

Nader: Yeah.

Leno: Now why? Who?

Nader: MasterCard sued me saying that they had a trademark in word priceless. When you put a price on priceless, they say I fringed their trademark. So here we go. it's not enough corporations of everything now they are taking over dictionaries...

Leno: Well, it's been good to see you mix it up a bit. And I hope maybe folks will give you a chance and you get a shot in those debates (shakes hands with RN as he gets up to leave) Mr. Ralph Nader. We'll be right back.

Transcripts - Al Gore on *The Late Show with David Letterman*, September 14, 2000

Acquired from *CBS News* transcripts via Lexus Nexus

CBS News

*Gore Does Dave*

September 15, 2000

Byline: Susan Walsh

When Gore entered the Ed Sullivan Theater, where the show is recorded, he was met with a standing ovation. He proceeded to walk over and shake the hand of an audience member who earlier in the show identified as a Texan who liked his governor and struck up a conversation with him. When Gore then sits down

Letterman: You never miss an opportunity for a vote, do you  
 Music playing and turns to Prince's song *Kiss*, "*Ain't no particular sign I'm more compatible with I just want your extra time and your ...Kiss*" prepping Letterman for his first comment. So sweet lips, is that what they call you now? That was some kiss you gave Tipper the other night!

Gore: One of the political analysts said, 'Were you trying to send a message?' And I said, 'I was trying to send a message to Tipper,' and she said she got it.

Letterman: Yeah, I would guess...  
 You realize people were watching, right?

Gore: I have been surprised at the amount of commentary and reaction to it. I really have, because to me, that was just a little peck.

Letterman: Al, how long have you been on the road? (Laughter)  
 Say, I – I know you don't necessarily like to trash talk the competition but you just gotta, I mean, there must be a moment when you think, this is gonna be good. You know with the mike thing and all.

Gore: That kind of thing could happen to anybody. The mike is open. I mean, you know...

Letterman: It's constantly on.

Gore: Yes. And if you're with your running mate on stage and the crowd is cheering, you know, you just say whatever's on your mind.

Letterman: Has anything like that ever happened to you?

Gore: Well, I hope not.(LAUGHTER)

Letterman: You know what I'm talking about?

Gore: I'm not sure what you mean, Dave. What are you getting at?  
(LAUGHTER)

Letterman: Just go ahead. I don't know where this was. But we have videotape now of...

Gore: Oh, no. What? What? (LAUGHTER)

Letterman: The vice president and Joe Lieberman. Roll the videotape.

Gore: Uh-oh.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP of skit)

Gore: Hey, you know what? I have to go on the Letterman show. That show is so lame.

Lieberman: Oh, yes, big time.

Gore: I hold here in my hand, Dave...

Letterman: Yes.

GORE: ... the top-10 rejected Gore-Lieberman campaign slogan:  
Number 10: Vote for me or I'll come to your home and explain my 191-page economic plan to you in excruciating detail.

Letterman: Yes.

Gore: Number 9: Remember, America, I gave you the Internet and I can take it away. Think about it.

Number 8: Your vote automatically enters you in drawing for the \$123 billion budget surplus.

Letterman: Wow!

Gore: Number 7: With Lieberman on the ticket, you get all kinds of fun new days off.

Number 6: We know when the microphone is on.

Letterman: Yes.

Gore: Number 5: Vote for me and I will take whatever steps necessary to outlaw the term, "Wassup!"

Number 4: Gore-Lieberman: You don't have to worry about pork barrel politics.

Number 3: You'll thank us in four years when the escalator to the moon is finished.

Number 2: If I can handle Letterman, I can handle Saddam Hussein.

And the number-one rejected Gore-Lieberman campaign slogan: I'll be twice as cool as that president guy on "The West Wing."

Transcripts – Al Gore on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* September 19, 2000  
Author transcribed from video from Library of Congress- No. 1477 -VBQ 3901

During Jay Leno's monologue Gore participates in a planned skit with Jay Leno. Jay Leno is doing his monologue when he reads from the cue cards saying.

Leno: Now according to the latest polls. Al Gore is the handsomest, smartest, most-most quali – what? This doesn't sound like the joke I wrote. But who's the cue card guy – oh, it's – look who the cue card guy is.

Gore: Keep going Jay. Keep going!

Leno: Al Gore

Gore: How are you?

Leno: It's the man who invented the cue card...

Gore: That's right.

Leno: Al Gore! Wow! "Nice to see you sir."

Gore steps to the front of the stage and shakes hands with the audience and then Jay Leno.

Gore: 'I like this shorter monologue because you had to cut short the jokes about me!

Leno: Oh, yeah, right. Ladies and gentlemen, Vice President Al Gore.



Transcripts: George Bush on *Late Show with David Letterman*, October 19, 2000  
Transcribed from video from the Library of Congress No. 1497 VBQ 4423

David Letterman introduction of George W. Bush: And now tonight ladies and gentlemen we're pleased to introduce our next guest from the great state of Texas, Governor George Bush.

Letterman: Welcome Governor. Glad to have you here.

Bush: Glad to be here.

Letterman: So let me ask you this first, right off the bat. What is the deal with you and the reporter? What, what is, so as I understand it the mic was still on and they over-heard you calling a reporter a name? So in essence they were listening to you...

Bush: I'm glad somebody was (Laughter)

Letterman: And oh, oh, I do that kind of crap every night!  
(Bush & audience laugh)

I mean, I'm apologizing to somebody for something but when that happened I said to myself, this is, this is the only honest moment of the campaign, when you called that guy an as\*\*le (bleep). So, and, and, why not!? (Laughter).

Now did, did you ever feel the need to apologize to him for saying that?

Bush: Not really.  
(Dave laughs at that answer)

Letterman: Really? I'm always writing letters of apology.

Bush: Yeah, well.

Letterman: Honest to God, that's what I do half my day.

Bush: It was inappropriate that people heard me say that.

Letterman: I suppose. Ah, as, as, did, did everybody just descend on you and say "Oh my God guess what you've done? You've just called this guy a horrible name!" Or, was it like so what, let's keep moving?

Bush: Well, some people were a little concerned about it.

Letterman: Yeah?

- Bush: It's like that lady, when I was workin the rope line said, "Young man, I'm goin to wash your mouth out with soap." I said, "Just don't use Lava."
- Letterman: But, you know, just find me the person that hasn't said that word and I'll give 'em 1,000 bucks! You know, that's how I feel about it.
- Bush: (Scanning the audience) I was lookin
- Letterman: Yeah...But you know, the same like with John McCain when after his concession speech, there was a reporter there and they – he said, we told you to just get the hell out and I said great! How about a little of that, why can't we have a little honest emotion?
- Bush: We did...
- Letterman: Now, did, did the polls move at all on that? Was that any kind of pivotal moment in the campaign?
- Bush: I hope not. I don't think so.
- Letterman: But it would be great if it shot sky high, wouldn't it?
- Bush: Then we'd have everybody with an open mic. You know but ah, I really don't pay attention to the polls that much.
- Letterman: And, what had this guy done that irritated you? This is...
- Bush: Well, he picked on my friend Dick Cheney, I don't know anyone else that picks on him, but ah... (looking at Dave for response)
- Letterman: Oh, you talking about...oh yeah, I stepped out for a minute...
- Bush: He said something about my friend I did not like. Obviously I did not know the mike was open and I just turned to Dick, ah, expressed myself. I like his comment, he just kind of went – Big Time!
- Letterman: Yeah, oh yeah, Big Time! And then the next day we called Adam Klimmer to see if he'd come on the show. He said, "Let me get this straight, you're asking me if I'd like to be a guest on the show to talk about the Governor calling me that name?" And, we said yes. And he said, "Absolutely not" and hung up.
- Bush: I don't blame him. (Uncomfortably laughs).
- Letterman: All right, stay right there we gotta do some commercial here and we'll be right back with the Governor of the great state of Texas, George W. Bush.

*returning from commercial*

Letterman: Thank you James Brown and the Otis Madden band. Back to the program ladies and gentlemen. Let's talk about the ah, the ah debates have just concluded. We had three of them. The first one was everyone was at the podium. How did you feel about workin at the podium? Did you like that?

Bush: It's okay.

Letterman: Yeah, seemed to me, I – I did not see all of them

Bush: Wait a minute....

Letterman: (Laughing) I saw most of the first two and very little of the third but it seemed to me the most effective debate as far as actually, information was the second one. Did you feel comfortable with the second one?

Bush: I felt very comfortable. I though Jim Leher did a fine job and we were kind of...

Letterman: Yeah.

Bush: We weren't hiding behind our podiums...

Letterman: Right.

Bush: ...lobbying political grenades at each other.

Letterman: And, then and the most recent one, earlier this week, I saw that you guys, it looked like elementary ballroom dancing. I'm coming this way, then I'm going that way, you're coming this way. Was that alarming or disturbing or anything? (Bush laughing at Letterman's description)

Bush: Ah, no, it was just the way it was. It was ah, it was, I'd never done one of those before like that of course and ah...

Letterman: It just seemed odd to me, the whole thing seemed odd. Ah, and how do you feel you did? I guess they said you did well, they said you did win, people said, the polls said you won one, won two, won three, what did...

Bush: I don't know, I think its' all, I guess the answer to that question is what will happen on November the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Letterman: Right.

- Bush: Ah, cuz I don't think people are gonna make up there mind as a result of one debate or another debate I think.
- Letterman: What, what was the feeling based on the evidence your campaign had? Did you feel you'd done all right did you win?
- Bush: Well, a lot of folks don't think I can string a sentence together and so when I was able to do so, the expectations were so low...
- Letterman: Right.
- Bush: All I had t do is say "Hi I'm George W. Bush." (Laughing).
- Letterman: Are the debates the most important part of the campaign?
- Bush: I think they're AN important part. I think the convention was an important part. The whole...for me kickin off the campaign was an important part because a lot of people, you know, weren't sure what I am made out of and I wanted to have pretty good start.
- Letterman: Now, now more than ever people are voting on impression versus substance. Is that still true?
- Bush: I don't know if that's true or not.
- Letterman: Really?
- Bush: I hope they're voting on substance.
- Letterman: Yeah.
- Bush: After all, I'm for the people.
- Letterman: AAAAHHH, we make, we make a lot of jokes about you. Ah...electrocuting people in Texas and I know you don't electrocute them, but is there a circumstance that you can imagine, have you ever thought about this that might change your view on capitol punishment?
- Bush: Well, obviously if the system were unfair I'd think about it. But, ah, it's a serious business. It's, I hope you're not laughing at the expense of victims or people that are put to death, of course.
- Letterman: Absolutely not, absolutely not.

- Bush: It's a serious business and I... a man asked me a question the other night. This is part of the debate where you were asleep... But a man named Leo asked me a very serious question. He felt that I was gleeful over the fact that we were executing people in Texas. And I told him I wasn't. I said this is serious. But my job is to uphold the laws of my state and I do. And, ah, yeah, it's a tough business. I happen to be one of those people that believes that if the system is fair that it's going to save lives.
- Letterman: But, but, well probably so, but nothing you can imagine would cause you to change of heart here? I mean the, the...
- Bush: Well, if I was convinced lives weren't being saved. If the death penalty did not save other people's lives.
- Letterman: Perhaps if someone was wrongly executed.
- Bush: Well, definitely on that, of course. I'd be pretty worried about that. And we, in my state of Texas, we got lawyers looking at every single case. People got full access to the courts and ah, I believe that every person that's been put to death have been guilty of the crimes charged and have had full access to the courts of law, both at the state and federal level.
- Letterman: Do we have that, like the scene in the movies, that they are sitting by the phone waiting for the call from the Governor?
- Bush: Not in Texas. In Texas the Governor can't grant clemency. I can grant a 30-day reprieve that's what I can do. And, I did so, by the way, on a case in which there was some doubt as to whether or not the person committed a part of the crimes in which they were charged. In Texas, you can't be put to death unless you committed two capitol offenses and there was a man who committed a murder and a rape and there was a question about rape and DNA and evidence that could have exonerated him. And, we, I put the 30-day stay on him so we could analyze the evidence. It turned out he was guilty of both.
- Letterman: Are the number of executions in Texas so far greater than any other stat using the death penalty now?
- Bush: aahh, I think that's probably true.
- Letterman: Yeah. And, is there a reason for that?
- Bush: Yes, because we are a death penalty state. Some states are death penalty states.
- Letterman: How many are there?

- Bush: I can't answer that.
- Letterman: Is it like in the 20s – 27 or so?
- Bush: I don't know, sounds about right. Secondly, our prosecutors seek the death penalty and ah, they're, they seek the death penalty.
- Letterman: Now you do know more about this than I do. Because people are certainly opposed to this and are but the notion of this whole topic just makes me very uncomfortable, very squeamish and I think people oppose the death penalty would absolutely agree with that.
- Bush: I think so too. I'm sure people who are for the death penalty look at their consciences. I do. This is a very serious subject matter and people who are against the death penalty, you're against the death penalty?
- Letterman: You know, I – I – I see in certain circumstances that yeah, it might suite it here and in other circumstances I think geeze, I don't know if I would be comfortable with that. I just don't know.
- Bush: That's fair. That's normal and ah, our society is a society that is a society of law. Our state passed this law and my job is to uphold the law. And I do.
- Letterman: Do they ever determine whether it has deterred crime? Is it a deterrent of crime?
- Bush: Well, I think yeah, that it's a hard statistic to prove, but if I could be convinced it did not deter crime ah, I may change my opinion of the death penalty. One thing we shouldn't do is have the death penalty to seek revenge. We shouldn't be seeking revenge.
- Letterman: Let's go on to another situation.
- Bush: Not a pleasant subject perhaps.
- Letterman: Yeah, the situation in Yemen. Do we know any more about that? Ah, are we actively pursuing that? If you were in the White House would you be doing something more aggressive? Are you comfortable how this, was it an act of war? To me, it was an act of war. Is it an act of war?
- Bush: I tell ya, I don't know what the intelligence briefing the president is getting today.
- Letterman: Do you get the same briefings as he does?

Bush: No, I don't. But here's what I'd do. If I found out who it was, they'd pay a serious price. I mean serious price!

Letterman: What does that mean?

Bush: That means they're not going to like what happens to 'em.

Letterman: Is this – is this the kind of thing that starts wars? And am I naive about this? Am I ignorant about this? Is this the kind of thing in the old days would have caused a war? Will it cause a war? Should it? Should it not?

Bush: It should not cause a war but there should be repercussions. We need to send a message to terrorists that there's going to be a price to pay.

Letterman: Right.

Bush: If you mess the United States and kill our citizens, there will be a serious price to pay.

Letterman: Now are you talking about retaliation or due process of the law?  
(Laughter)

Bush: I'm talking about getting the facts and letting them know we don't appreciate it and there's a serious, serious consequence. People need to know that our United States is a peaceful nation but if somebody blows up our ship and kills our soldiers, there's going to be a serious consequence. And, I'll decide what that consequence is when I'm president.

Letterman: We'll be right back here with George W. Bush.

*back from commercial*

Letterman: We are here with George W. Bush ladies and gentlemen. Thank you James Brown.

Bush: Still has it.

Letterman: I guess so, I guess he does! Here's another topic that makes me dizzy because partially ignorance and well – all of it's ignorance. Ah, the Middle East, what should we be doing now? Is there ever a solution? What is the problem? Why won't negotiations stick? Why won't there be a summit that means anything? What would you do now? What – you know...

Bush: First, I, hum, I think it's important our nation speak with one voice right now and I'm not going to criticize the president. (Audience applauds) I

appreciate the president's efforts to bring peace in the Middle East. But there's a lot of history and a lot of tradition.

Letterman: Do you – Do you understand, do you understand why it doesn't work there? Do you understand why places all over – it's the year 2000 – why are people behaving the way they behave? It seems so unusual and alien, foreign to us in the United States. Ah, a supposedly, relatively sophisticated peaceful society.

Bush: I do understand. There's a lot of religious tensions, a lot of history, a lot of pent up frustration. Hum, the best thing the United States can do is help provide an opportunity for people to speak to each other. And, ah, but we can't have a timetable that suits our needs. We got to be patient and strong.

Letterman: I – I know but patience to what extent, honestly!

Bush: Well, you're impose, you're trying to do a U.S. solution in the Middle East and that's not going to happen. It's got to be a solution that the Palestinians and Israelis agree to.

Letterman: But they must be equally frustrated with it.

Bush: I would hope so. I would hope so. But the frustration is now boiled up over into violence and ah, our nation needs to have a steady hand in that part of the region. There's some practical things we can do. We can develop an anti-ballistic missile system to help keep the peace in the Middle East for example.

Letterman: Is that – would that work?

Bush: Yeah, I think it will work, otherwise I'm not going to deploy it.

Letterman: Hum, what about places like Bosnia, Rwanda, what's going on there? Why are people behaving that way? How can people be capable of such evil? Honest to God!

Bush: Because of hate. There is hate in the world. There is still hate. People hate each other.

Letterman: But here in the United States, I mean, take a look at the Mets fans and the Yankee fans (Laughter). But we're not – you know, what I'm saying?

Bush: Yes.

Letterman: How are people capable of this!?



- Bush: Because we got the greatest nation in the world. We have fantastic values of respect and tolerance. All men are created equal. I mean, this is a great nation. We are a fortunate nation. Others aren't as fortunate as we are. But that doesn't mean we should retreat within our borders. We got to help make the world more peaceful.
- Letterman: I heard something a couple of weeks ago coming out of your campaign. And, I just thought, this isn't true, he's not really going to do that. Talking about wilderness lands up in Alaska or the Artic Circle. You're gonna take trucks up there and drill for oil. Well, I said, "Oh, that's a joke!" He's not gonna do that.
- Bush: Yeah well, then you're not going to have any natural gas if we don't do it and ah..
- Letterman: So you're gonna...
- Bush: Absolutely, and guess what? The irony about all this is – to tell you how politics is out of Washington. The Administration has opened up what is called the National Petroleum Reserve, which is in that part of the world. They're already exploring up there. And, it's necessary, I believe we can do so in an environmentally friendly way. We need to. Either that or we're going to be dependent on foreign sources of crude oil.
- Letterman: When Al Gore was here, ah, and I started whining to him about the polar ice caps melt thing and turning to slush and you can go up there and water ski year-round now. And, he says, "You don't have to worry about that thing. I will step forward, I will be the one that will lead us to solutions that will save the planet." Now, one, do you believe him when he says that?
- Bush: Not really (Laughter).
- Letterman: Do you believe the planet needs saving?
- Bush: I do. I think we can do a much better job with the environment and I think we are making great progress with the environment. On the other hand, I don't want people who work for a livin – every day people – have their energy bills out of sight when I know we can get more natural gas, which by the way, burns cleanly.
- Letterman: Yeah.
- Bush: From Alaska, through pipeline that can be constructed with the environment in mind. We got gas up there.

- Letterman: What are you burning down in Texas? Don't you have bad air pollution down in Texas?
- Bush: Actually, it's getting better.
- Letterman: Getting better by how much?
- Bush: We got a lot of cars. We're a big city.
- Letterman: ooooooohhhh.
- Bush: We got a lot of automobiles.
- Letterman: Yeah, but you know what I'm sayin'? If in fact, this is true. Is it the worst country, worst state in the country for air pollution? Is that true?
- Bush: Well, we're the best in reducing toxic pollutions. We've reduced our industrial pollution.
- Letterman: But if you're the worst and you've reduced it by this much, aren't you're still the worst. It's a problem, isn't it a problem?
- Bush: Well, it's a big city.
- Letterman: It's not as big as New York. It's not as big as Los Angeles.
- Bush: Well, Los Angeles, well I wouldn't necessarily be comparing Los Angeles to Houston but needless we are making progress.
- Letterman: But listen to me Governor – here's my point.
- Bush: I am listening to you, I don't have any choice but listen to ya.
- Letterman: Instead of sending these guys out looking for natural gas in Alaska or wherever the hell you're gonna do it. Why can't we take some of that – that funds, that money and look for alternative means of energy.
- Bush: You mean you want to plug in your electricity.
- Letterman: Well, we gotta start somewhere.
- Bush: I think we outta be looking at it but I'm a practical guy. I think we can develop alternative uses of energy. Matter of fact, in Texas under the De-Reg Bill I signed we're gonna have more alternative uses of energy than any other state. But, Dave it's going to be hard t get your electric car to drive you from where you live to New York. They don't have the

technology necessary. I'm a person who deals with the problem at hand. The problem at hand is the Arabs have got us over the barrel – so to speak. We're importing 57 % of our crude oil. We don't have enough refining capacity. People are going to start paying high electrical bills and I'm worried about it. I'm worried about what it will do for the economy.

Letterman: I'm not smart enough to counter any of these things but sooner – sooner or later we're gonna have to make a change – a significant change.

Bush: I think we can do that.

Letterman: Not just lip service. Not just an item on a campaign.

Bush: There's no question we can do that. But the technology is not available now.

Letterman: Polar icecaps – melting...that's all I know...eleven degrees warmer than it was 50 years ago. All right we'll be right back with the Governor

*returning from commercial*

Letterman: Thank you James, the hardest working man in show business. Do you like me better than Oprah?

Bush: Not enough to kiss ya.

Letterman: Yeah, thank you. Thank God for that! Hum, I understand you have a little something for us. You've prepared as it seems to be traditional – the Top 10 list?

Bush: I do.

Letterman: Oh great! What's the category?

Bush: First of all, it's from the "Home Office" in Crawford Texas.

Letterman: Oh, Crawford Texas.

Bush: Yeah, come out of Crawford – Hi everybody. The top 10 changes I'll make in the White House.

Letterman: Oh, here you go.

Bush: Are you ready?

Letterman: This is right up your alley.

- Bush: Yep. Number 10...
- Letterman: Number 10.
- Bush: To save taxpayer dollars, calls to winning sports teams will be collect. Number 9. New rule at cabinet meetings, you can't talk until you ride the mechanical bull.
- Letterman: Have you ever been on a mechanical bull?
- Bush: No.
- Letterman: Yes. Do they still have those down in Texas?
- Bush: Yes.
- Letterman: Yes.
- Bush: Number 8.
- Letterman: It's another form of capital punishment, I believe, isn't it?
- Bush: Good-bye boring presidential radio address -- hello, Dick Cheney spins the hits of the '80s, '90s and today.
- Letterman: There you go -- pretty good.
- Bush: Number 7 -- Make sure the White House library has lots of books with big print and pictures.
- Number 6 -- Just for fun, issue executive order commanding my brother Jeb to wash my car.
- Number 5 -- First day in office, my mother's face goes up on Mount Rushmore. (Showing an imposed face of Barbara Bush on Mt. Rushmore).
- Letterman: Wow. Well, look there.
- Bush: Number 4 -- Look into hiring a security guard for our nuclear secrets.
- Number 3 -- Will not get sick on Japanese leaders like other president Bushes I know.
- Number 2 -- Give Oval Office one heck of a scrubbing.
- Letterman: That'd be a job for Cheney -- That would be Cheney's job right?

Number 1 -- Tax relief for all Americans, except smart-aleck talk-show hosts.

Letterman: Hey, wait a minute. Well, listen I hope you've enjoyed your time here.

Bush: I have.

Letterman: I've enjoyed chatting with you. It's been a lot of fun. It's been interesting.

Bush: Thank you sir.

Letterman: And the election is, is it just three weeks away?

Bush: A little less.

Letterman: Well good luck to ya and we'll see what happens.

Bush: (Looking at Letterman directly) I'm askin for your vote.

Letterman: All right. Win or lose comeback and see us again.

Bush: Thank you sir.

Letterman: Governor George W. Bush ladies and gentlemen – We'll be right back.

Transcripts – George Bush on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* October 30, 2000  
 Author transcribed from video at Library of Congress – No. 1931 – VBQ 5366

Before Bush's introduction as a guest on the show, Bush performs a skit with Jay Leno making fun of himself.

**Skit:**

Leno: Hi. How many in your party?

Unidentified man: Three, two...

Leno: Hey, Hi, Governor Bush.

Bush: Jay – Jay, you can't light that in here. The stuff in the closet's highly flammablable.

Leno: Thanks for the warning, Governor, but I think the word you're looking for is 'flammable.'

Bush: Flammablable.

Leno: No, I hate to correct you, it's flammable.

Bush: Jay, Jay, look at the sign (pointing to a sign saying flammablable).

After the skit Jay is at his desk and introduces Governor Bush.

Leno: My first guest, you know, running as the Republican candidate for president of the United States. From the great state of Texas, please welcome Governor George Bush.

Bush: I have a little headline of my own here (he has come on after Leno's headlines section). It's kind of an advanced preview.

Gives a cardboard to Leno and Leno holds it up

Leno: Oh, November 8. Wednesday, November 8, the Los Angeles Times, this is the headline.

HEADLINE READS: **BUSH WINS**

Leno: There you go.

Bush: There you go, that's right.

Leno: How's mom and dad doing? Okay?

Bush: They're nervous.

Leno: Yeah?

Bush: Yeah.

Leno: Do you think mom's more nervous for you than she was for your dad?

Bush: I don't know. Might be a tie. But I know she's darn nervous. And a...she's still telling me what to do, though, after all these years.

Leno: Who's more competitive, mom or dad? I probably know the answer to this but...

Bush: I'd have to stay mom.

Leno: Yeah.

Bush: Yeah.

Leno: You know, she was on this show once and when she shook my hand, I thought it was Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Bush: She's shaking mine too like that too.

Leno: (pretends Barbara Bush is squeezing his hand) "I guess you're not doing any jokes about my husband tonight are you" and I said No! She's very strong.

Bush: She's a strong-willed woman.

Leno: She's a strong-willed woman. And your wife, Laura, is here. She's a big part of the campaign.

Bush: She's right over there. (pointing to his wife)

Leno: Has she ever given you campaign advice?

Bush: Yeah, quite frequently. She gave me a little advice tonight. She said, whatever you do, do not try to be charming, witty or debonair. Just be yourself.

Leno: Just be yourself. That's good advice. Shows that the woman knows you. I know the campaign trail, this must be a nightmare, because everywhere you go, in fact, I'm sure you've had this happen to you...when Al Gore was here on time, we were talking... just out on the parking lot...He went "shh" and I looked over and there was a guy with on of those shotgun mikes aiming at us. He was like a quarter mile away. He's picking yup every little thing that you say.

Bush: Yes, I know what you're talking about.

Leno: Big time. You know what I'm talking about big time!

Bush: Big time.

Leno: Now what happened in South Carolina? What happened there? There was something.

Bush: Well we had...It's interesting you know that.

Leno: That's my job.

Bush: Well on the day of the primary we're having a .. a breakfast at the Ham House. And a fellow dressed as a pig pulled up in a dump truck full of pig manure. And dropped it, the manure, so we couldn't leave. The bus was stuck, the motorway was stuck. So there we were stuck at the Ham House hammed in with a pig manure pile. The policeman was upset so he reaches in, and grabs the driver of the pick-up truck and pulls off the pig head. So I'm seeing a policeman with a pig head and with pig manure and I'm going, only in America.

Leno: So what happened? Was this a secret service job?

Bush: I guess they were shoveling for months. We managed to get a cab or something like that to get out of there but... It was an interesting experience.

Leno: I have a Halloween mask I think you might get a kick out of. (puts on a Bush mask)

Bush: Scary. This is more scary. (putting on a Gore mask).

Leno: I don't know if you even have heard about this today. The Esquire magazine, which comes out on Thursday, Clinton says he wants an apology from the Republicans. He feels he apologized to the country and he feels he ... I can see your answer already on this one. He thinks the Republicans should apologize to him for the impeachment.

Bush: I think we ought to move on. I think it's time to forget that chapter.

Leno: Just let it go.

Bush: Just move on.



Leno: Just move on. Yeah. Your younger brother Jed, Governor of Florida, he has promised you, he has promised you Florida, he's your brother, I hear that's kind of on the line.

Bush: That's not what he says. But ah, I think we're going to find down there. Little brother's .. he recognizes that Thanksgiving might be a bit chilly if things don't go right.

Leno: That's right.

Bush: No pressure brother.

Leno: Now it looks like Clinton is going to be out there campaigning for Gore. What do you think, that helps? That hurts?

Bush: You know, the vice president was fighting to get out from behind his shadow. Now the shadow returns. I don't think it can make any difference.

Leno: You think it'll hurt?

Bush: I think people are going to say why does he need the president to come out and try to help him, what's going wrong? But people can make up their minds on that.

Leno: This campaign, this last week, it seems to be getting nastier. I see this on both sides, no we don't know, no it's not our ad, now we don't know this. Now the Gore campaign hinting you might not be up to the job. I think Lieberman was saying this.

Bush: I don't think that was a hint.

Leno: All right.

Bush: My attitude is...First of all, there are some folks that believe that you have to spend all your life in Washington in order to be qualified to become the president. I honestly don't agree with it. I think the less time you spend in Washington, the more qualified you are. Secondly, you know, in all seriousness though, that's what they said about Ronald Reagan, if you remember, a good man who was running for president. But those kind of folks forget that when you're governing, you learn to lead. You set an agenda, and in order to get the agenda done you got to bring people together from both parties to do what's right. And, that's what I've done in Texas. And, that's one of the reasons why I think that when it's all said and done, the voters are going to say this man has been in a leadership role, he's performed and we're going to be for him.

Leno: Lieberman, is also running for the Senate at the same time.

Bush: Yes.

Leno: I was doing jokes about it, he has a job he can fall back on. I was wondering why the Republicans haven't .. sort of.. gone hey, why are you still running for this office? Don't you believe in your own guy or are they backing away from Lieberman because he's "orthodox Jewish and it might look like maybe we're picking on the guy?"

Bush: First of all, let me say I appreciate the question. First of all, he's not the issue. The issue is Vice President Gore. That's the person who could be president. I certainly hope not. We have a huge difference in opinion but the vice president is, ah, is really somebody to be respected, but he is not going to be the president.

Leno: You think if you get elected Gore's will try to take the credit for it?

Bush: I hope so. (laughter)

Leno: Your going to use that now. That's going to wind up in the bus. These are... we asked people to fill out questions... What embarrassing childhood story could Barbara Bush tell us about you?

Bush: Well, she probably could tell one about my brother Marvin.

Leno: No, not Marvin, forget Marvin!

Bush: He actually urinated in the steam iron one time.

Leno: Urinated in the steam iron? You know, an ordinary man can be president n apparently.

Bush: Marvin's not running. Sorry Marvin, about that.

Leno: I hope they weren't your pants they were pressing.

Bush: That's right!

Leno: Here is an interesting one. This is from Terence Bates. "Who is your favorite president? Besides your dad, obviously.

Bush: Well, I've got a couple. I'd say Ronald Reagan. The reason why, I loved his optimism. An optimistic man who picked a really good administration. He had a set agenda and he knew how to delegate. I like Abraham Lincoln, of course. A really fantastic president who dealt with incredibly serious situations. And, did it well.

Leno: A high school teacher: “What would you tell students who want nothing to do with voting? They have no faith in politics or politicians? What would you do?”

Bush: I would say, first, I can understand their cynicism. People have been let down. That in order to encourage the young, politicians need to tell the truth. That she needs to tell her students this country is founded upon the participation of our citizens. We’re only as good as willingness of our youth to participate. And their votes do matter.

Leno: Then you get the government you deserve.

Bush: Yeah.

Leno: Here’s a hard-hitting question from Karen. “How do you keep you figure during the campaign?”

Bush: Thank you, Karen. I run, actually.

Leno: You do? What do you do a mile in?

Bush: Well about seven, eight minute miles.

Leno: Have you challenged Al Gore to a footrace?

Bush: I would be willing to put it all on a footrace.

Leno: Really?

Bush: Yeah!

Leno: Uuh! Can you come back tomorrow? Wow! That’s pretty good! I would like to see that. That would be good.

Bush: That would be an interesting development.

Leno: An all-round president. You get in these debates, then you get in the arena, in the steel cage.. oh, here you go. My Spanish is not good.

Bush: Yes he is. The question is, is my nephew single? That’s George P.

Leno: Yeah?

Bush: Very single!

Leno: Very single!

Bush: Very single, there you go.

Leno: Well, Governor, god luck to you. I know you have to run. Thank you for stopping by. Say hi to your mom for us. George W. Bush!

Transcripts – Al Gore on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* October 31, 2000  
Author transcribed from video at Library of Congress – No. 1932 – VBQ 5367

Leno's introduction of Gore as a guest.

Leno: My first guest, running as the Democratic candidate for president of the United States – you know it's amazing to me that I get to talk to these people, we do jokes about them and God bless them. I thank them for coming here. They get us to the party and it's always amazing. These people change history. Ladies and gentlemen, Al Gore!

Leno: And a happy Halloween sir!

Gore: And to you – you've got a lively crowd tonight. And the band is a ...

Leno: This must be rough for you cuz you.. I know you're a big fan of Halloween. I went to one of your Halloween parties once.

Gore: Yes, we've always enjoyed Halloween. We've got four children and we now have a grandson we're looking forward to introducing to Halloween. We've always had a good time and... some of the parties... you saw one of them.

Leno: The thing that amazed me... the kids have a little mask whereas you and Tipper... you're like four-year-olds. You have these elaborate.. I never saw such elaborate costumes. We have pictures here. This one...

Gore: Oh – oh.

Leno: This one here.. Look at this, look at this, this is the year you went as what? The Republican healthcare plan? What is that? (Shows picture of Al and Tipper Gore as mummies)

Gore: That's why we did the patient's Bill of Rights.

Leno: Just look at this, there's n zipper at the back that's bandages!

Gore: That took some time to get on.

Leno: That's amazing to me. Now how long.. how long.. What are we talking about here? How long does that take?

Gore: That took some time.

Leno: I'm thinking that.. as a tax payer, how much time did this take? This was taken during the working day, during working hours. Now what's the other, we have

- another one here... Now look at this here. Is this you without make-up? (Show a picture of Al and Tipper Gore as Werewolves)
- Gore: That was the werewolf year. I had actually... I'll never forget that Halloween... I had just run with my daughters Kristen and Corinna. We run a marathon, I came back and I had to get this werewolf make-up on. The kids love it. We have fun every year. You know, sometimes you're in the middle of a party like this and something comes up, some official business, some emergency....
- Leno: No, for normal people it would be a little emergency. You're vice president of the United States. No n, this is what I love, you have to rush back to what you're doing, you put the make-up on, let's say suddenly...is there a red phone?
- Gore: Yes, in as a matter of fact, one year we were in the midst of the party and there was a foreign policy crisis that came up. I had to go talk on the secure phone and Tipper... Tipper got a big kick out of it because I was completely engrossed in the conference call with the national security staff.
- Leno: We have that picture. This is the picture you're talking about. Who is it now, the national security, is that the Pentagon?
- Gore: Yes, it included them.
- Leno: So the Pentagon on the phone, various agencies standing by, planes in the air, and this is you sir (Shows a picture of Gore as Frankenstein).
- Leno: ...talking. Amazing. Apparently, when I... when I saw this picture I thought you were reaching out for the Green Party. That's what I thought this was.
- Gore: Well I am.. You know now look... I just want to be clear – if that happens, if I am in a situation as president, where that happens, and I have to suddenly address the nation, I would explain it's really me, the president, I'm not really... And it might help if it would like a warning to Saddam Hussein...Might really resolve that.
- Leno: It is like bad science fiction. The president is on the phone now. The press corps dressed up for Halloween in costume.
- Gore: When I gave a speech in Portland, Oregon this morning, I looked out and the guys on the TV cameras, one of them was dressed as Elvis Presley, the other one had like a vampire get-up on, one of them had a...
- Leno: Then you get "Dracula, can I help you?" "Dracula, The New York Times... Now lets talk about the campaign.
- Gore: Yeah.

Leno: It's like everything is open season. There was a huge article about this Rolling Stone... (Shows the Rolling Stone's Gore cover, and collapses in laughter)

Gore: What are you getting at Jay?

Leno: Well, thank you for a million laughs. When it got slow...there was this whole talk about, oh this has been air brushed because it was too sexy or something...

Gore: Jay, I think people buy that magazine for the articles.

Leno: Really?

Gore: Yeah.

Leno: All right. Well, I guess, as far as guy's problems go, this isn't far up there.

Gore: Can we move right along?

Leno: We'll move along. Now this week, President Clinton gave an interview and it came in this Esquire magazine that was supposed to be out next week – if you could see that look. Now where he says – he always seems to say something controversial right before everybody else is getting ready to do something. I don't know why that is. I have friends like that.

Gore: You're like that

Leno: I'm like that, I'm like that? But he says he wants the Republicans to apologize for the impeachment, which of course that was just one line in the interview but you know how they pull that out. You have any reaction to that?

Gore: Well, I am still waiting for the Republican Congress to apologize for electing Newt Gingrich as the speaker. I don't want Newt to take that personally. I think that contracted the agenda pretty bad.

Leno: Now is the president out campaigning with you? I can't quite figure this out.

Gore: No ah, well Martin Sheen is going to go out with me t this rally after this show. But seriously, no I made a decision that I'm going to campaign on my own. I'm campaigning as my own person and my own voice with my own agenda for the future and you know, that's just what feels right to me. And I appreciate his help getting, out to vote, to be doing, you know, a few things but we're not going to campaign together because I'm running on my own.

Leno: Now how about Ralph Nader? Is he just a pain in the neck this guy?

Gore: I really respect the people who get motivated by the issues like the environment. I'll put my record on the environment up against that, up to anybody. He says that, he says it doesn't make any difference who appoints the next three justices of the Supreme Court. I don't agree with that and there's no difference between Governor Bush and me. Look, I support women's right to choose, Governor Bush does not. I support, I support middle class tax cuts, he has tax cuts for the very wealthy. I support the environment, he really doesn't, it kind of reminds me of the old joke about the veterinarian and taxidermist who went into business together and they put a sign out front that read "Either way, you get your dog back." There really is a difference. There's a difference.

Leno: You know what's going to happen tomorrow? Peter, pick on Al Gore for telling a dog joke. You can't win.

Gore: You already told a dog joke.

Leno: Oh yes, I did. Now we have, we have audience questions. These are real Americans.

Gore: Did you guys fill these out? (Audience cheers)

Leno: Yes they did. These are not the Jim Leery plant guys. Let's see.. Here you go, here's a hard-hitting question from Cathy. "If you win, what is the first meal you will order as president?" Oh, please, what is the first meal you will order as president?

Gore: Well, if it's as close as they are saying it is, breakfast. If the returns come in early on election night, probably a Happy Meal from McDonalds.

Leno: Here's one from Phil Cassill from San Diego. This is interesting. Oh, this is interesting! I did not know this. "Do you think making voting compulsory like they do in Australia" -- guess they have to vote in Australia. "Would it be a good move for this country? Making it compulsory?"

Gore: That depends. That depends on how many electoral votes Australia has.

Leno: Really?

Gore: No, I mean, more seriously, I want to, I want our country to be that kind of country where people want to vote. Where they think it makes a difference because we're in charge of our destiny. And, that means that campaign finance reform is important, that we are shooting straight and telling people exactly what the tough choices are. And, I think that when we have that, people are going to vote in much larger percentages.



Leno: Here's one. Oh, here's one about me. "If you're elected president, how do you prepare yourself for the next four years of Jay's monologue? And, you'll be great for me, by the way. I've got, I just want to say, personal things aside..oh!

Gore: Right now I have my technical adviser of the staff working on a J-chip.

Leno: J-chip? Really? What is that? And how is that?

Gore: In this case, J stands for you, Jay.

Leno: Really?

Gore: Any offensive political humor is automatically...

Leno: Just wiped off? And, you're not kidding, just look at that grin! That is actually a very sneaky grin.

Gore: Actually, I have also given some thought to other major changes. Instead of these boring Saturday radio addresses I've been thinking about a Presidential monologue every night.

Leno: Oh that would be good! If I can help you out there, sir, you let me know! Well, this is probably the last time I will see you until the big day and a.

Gore: Just a week away.

Leno: It has been a pleasure. I've appreciated you coming by and seeing us, you've been a good sport putting up with all the jokes over the years. Good luck. Vice President Al Gore!

APPENDIX C

NOTES FROM TED ROGERS, NIXON'S RADIO

AND TV TECHNICAL ADVISER

August 24, 1960

TO: RN

FROM: TR

This is the programing for the Jack Paar show night when you appear on the program from Washington.

1. The taping time in Washington is 7:45 to 8:15 P. M. This is the 12:00 to 12:30 broadcast half hour.
2. Paar will meet you on arrival at WRC-TV.
3. In the half hour immediately preceeding your appearance, Hugh Downs will be in New York talking with Elsa Lanchester and Robert Preston. At midnight there will be the normal opening with Hugh Downs from New York. This will be followed by a network commercial. Hugh Downs will then cue the cut to Washington and Jack Paar. Jack will then introduce you. All normal network commercials have been eliminated which means you may talk without interruption for about 26 minutes.
4. If the entire interview is contained within a half hour then the program will go back to New York with Hugh Downs interviewing Elsa Lanchester and Robert Preston.

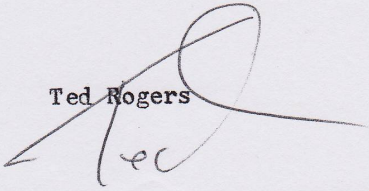
The press will be housed in facilities next to the studio with several line monitors so that they will be able to see everything going on in the studio. The reason for this is that if the press were allowed in the studio they would fill over half of the audience.

Because of possible stacking of the audience by persons unfriendly to us NBC has set up the following plan:

Page 2

The tickets for the telecast will be offered to NBC Washington employees and Paar's sponsors and their friends with a maximum of two per request, with twenty-five per cent of the total tickets being offered to the public with a maximum of two per request.

Ted Rogers



---

August 29, 1960

TO: RN

FROM: TR

RE: Television Appearances

PAAR SHOW

The nation-wide reaction to the Paar Show seems to be overwhelmingly on the positive side. The report of the New York Press is excellent. Chicago and the West Coast confirmed what New York is saying.

The Paar Show, itself, and NBC were tremendously pleased. Personal reaction that has been received from Republican viewers was that as staunch Republicans, and Nixon voters, they felt a new warmth toward their candidate.

For the first time in the history of the Paar Show, the first batch of wires were all positive. Following are the texts of some:

"Congratulations on a superb program with Vice President Nixon. I thank you for your efforts to clear the way for this magnificent interview with the next President. Feel certain that Henry Cabot Lodge will also accept your invitation to appear. You will do much to help them help America and the world. Best wishes for continued success on your unique program."

"We feel one of the most interesting programs because we are neither one side or the other but we think the balance is going the right way after we heard this program tonight."

"Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Nixon. We are rooting for you."

"This is what the American people have always needed. Thank you."

"May I offer my compliments on producing a history making interview and may I further compliment you on your courage in not stepping out of character but instead treating the Vice President as an honor but nonetheless

2.

just another guest on the Tonight Show. As a result, you made him a very human individual as both you and he came off simply great."

"Dear Mr. Vice President:

We should like the privilege of supporting your candidacy because we particularly like Richard and Pat Nixon. Your winning smile and your lovely wife are wonderful assets to this land of ours. May our Heavenly Father continue to abundantly bless each of you and your family."

Here are some additional reports:

1. The Rockefeller Headquarters were extremely pleased -- thought it helped a great deal in New York.
2. CBS was very favorably impressed with telecast; wants to get same feeling with Person to Person program.
3. The Voice of America called to say they were thrilled with the telecast - using program overseas.

The advance ratings that have been passed down from New York is that the Arbitron was a 16.3. This is against the August average of 9.6. The previous high was with Kennedy who had a 12. Translated into audience figures, the average viewers are 7.5 million. For your telecast audience was 11.3 million. I sent a note to you Saturday re this.

#### Telecast in South

Birmingham - Many favorable calls. The station feels the telecast was excellent. Our people said it did a lot of good.

Atlanta - Reaction from station, in one word, "fantastic". Many calls simply thanked station for carrying speech since they couldn't get near the rally area. Many older people and housewives appreciative of telecasts. Pictures excellent. Station feels it was one of best decisions they ever made

## REFERENCES

- Abelman, R. (1998). *Reaching a critical mass: A critical analysis of television entertainment*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Abramson, P. R., Aldrich, J. H., & Rohde, D. W. (1994). *Change and continuity in the 1992 elections*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Adams, V. (1960, June 20). Tom Bosley takes TV mystery role—Lar Daly seeks air time. *The New York Times*, p. 57.
- Addatto, K. (1990). The incredible shrinking sound bite. *New Republic*, 202.
- Altheide, D. L. (2004). Media logic and political communication. *Political Communication*, 21, 293-296.
- Anderson, P. (1994). *Electing Jimmy Carter: The campaign of 1976*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Ansolabehere, S., & Iyengar, S. (1994). Riding the wave and claiming ownership over issues: The joint effects of advertising and news coverage in campaigns. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 58, 335-357.
- APPC research on free time. (1997, Summer). *Newslink*, 7, 3.
- Archer, J. C. (2002). *Atlas of American politics: 1960 - 2000*. Washington: CQ Press.
- Archerd, A. (1969, January 7). Nixon bows in Laugh-In. *Variety*.
- Arena, K. (1996, October 10). Boring campaign gets dim media spotlight. In *News*. New York: CNN.
- Arsenio Hall Communications. (1992, June 3). *The Arsenio Hall Show*. In *The Arsenio Hall Show*. Los Angeles: FOX.
- Asher, H. B. (1988). *Presidential elections and American politics: Voters, candidates, and campaigns since 1952*. Chicago: Dorsey Press.
- Asher, H. B. (1992). *Polling and the public: What every citizen should know*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

- Asher, H. B. (1992). *Presidential elections and American politics: voters, candidates, and campaigns since 1952*. Chicago: Dorsey Press.
- Associated Press*. (1996, December 4). Media too powerful, out of touch.
- Atkin, C. K., & Heald, G. (1976). Effects of political advertising. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, *40*, 216-228.
- Atkin, C. K., Bowen, L., Nayman, O. B., & Sheinkopf, K. G. (1973). Quality versus quantity in televised political ads. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, *37*, 209-224.
- Aucoin, D. (2000, March 1). McCain and Bush take to the late-night airwaves. *Boston Globe*.
- Balz, D. (1992, May 19). Candidates skirt news media, favor direct delivery of message. *The Washington Post*, p. A16.
- Bark, E. (2000, October 20). Bush survives appearance on Letterman. *Dallas Morning News*.
- Baum, M. A. (2005). Talking the vote: Why presidential candidates hit the talk show circuit. *American Journal of Political Science*, *49*, 213-234.
- Becker, L. B., Sobowale, I. A., & Cobbery, R. E. (1978). Debates' effects on voters' understanding of candidates and issues. In G. F. Bishop, R. G. Meadow, & M. Jackson-Beeck (Authors), *The Presidential debates: Media, electoral, and policy perspectives*. New York: Praeger.
- Benedetto, R. (2000, October 30). Polls provide snapshots, not hard answers examining how they work helps explain varying results. *USA Today*, p. 5A.
- Benoit, W. L. (1999). *Seeing spots: A functional analysis of presidential television advertisements, 1952-1996*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Benoit, W. L., & Hansen, G. J. (2004). Presidential debate watching, issue knowledge, character evaluation, and vote choice. *Human Communication Research*, *30*(1), 121-144.
- Benoit, W. L., & McHale, J. P. (2003). Presidential candidates' television spots and personal qualities. *Southern Communication Journal*, *68*, 319-334.
- Benoit, W. L., Hansen, G. J., & Stein, K. A. (2004). Newspaper coverage of presidential debates. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, *41*, 17-27.
- Benoit, W. L., McKinney, M. S., & Holbert, R. L. (2001). Beyond learning and persona:



- Extending the scope of presidential debate effects. *Communication Monographs*, 68, 259-273.
- Benoit, W. L., Webber, D., & Berman, J. (1998). Effects of presidential debate watching and ideology on attitudes and knowledge. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 34, 163-172.
- Berkhofer, R. F. (1995). *Beyond the great story: History as text and discourse*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Berkman, R., & Kitch, L. W. (1986). *Politics in the media age*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Bernays, E. (1928). *Propaganda*. Brooklyn, NY: Ig Publishing.
- Bernstein, P. (2000, October 27). Letterman rides Bush visits to bests. *Daily Variety*, p. 4.
- Boyd, R. W. (1969). Presidential elections: An explanation of voting defection. *American Political Science Review*, 63, 498-514.
- Brundage, A. (2002). *Going to the sources: A guide to historical research and writing*. Wheeling, Ill.: Harlan Davidson.
- Burger, T. (2000, March 7). Leno's giving Bush second shot. *Daily News* (New York), p. 24.
- Busch, A. (2005). *Reagan's victory: The presidential election of 1980 and the rise of the right*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Bush visits Leno in new bid for late night laughs. (2000, March 7). *St. Petersburg Times*, p. 4.
- Callison, C. (1988, July 29). Talkative Arkansas governor trades quips with Johnny Carson. *Associated Press*.
- Cantril, A. H. (1991). *The opinion connection: Polling, politics, and the press*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Carpignano, P., Andersen, R., Aronowitz, S., & Difazio, W. (1990). Chatter in the age of electronic reproduction: Talk television and the public mind. *Social Text*, 25/26, 33-35.
- Carson Productions. (1994). *The Johnny Carson collection: His favorite moments*. Buena Vista Home video.
- Carson Productions. (2001). *The ultimate Carson collection*. Carson Productions Group.
- Ceaser, J. W., & Busch, A. (1997). *Losing to win: The 1996 elections and American*

- politics*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Character, not the economy, drives voter choices in 2000. (2000, January 23). *Columbia Daily Tribune*, p. 7A.
- Clancy, P. (1988, July 28). Right up Clinton's alley: A talk show. *USA Today*, p. 2A.
- CNN. (2000, February 11). *Al Gore goes head-to-head with Jay Leno on The Tonight Show*. In *CNN Today*. New York, New York: CNN.
- Corliss, R. (2008, February 27). William F. Buckley: Mandarin of right-wing TV. *Time Magazine*.
- Craig, R. (2000). Expectations and elections: How television defines campaign news. *Critical Studies in Media Communications*, 17, 28-44.
- Cunningham, L. (1995). *Talking politics: Choosing the president in the television age*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- David, P. T. (1983). *The Presidential election and transition 1980 - 1981*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Davis, R., & Owen, D. M. (1998). *New media and American politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Decker, C. (2000, September 18). Gore's come a long way with help from women. *The Los Angeles Times*, p. A1.
- DeFrank, T. M. (2000, October 20). The Al & George show prez rivals yuk it up on the tube. *Daily News* (New York), p.18
- Denton, R. E. (1994). *The 1992 presidential campaign: A communication perspective*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Denton, R. E. (2002). *The 2000 presidential campaign a communication perspective*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Depke, D. (1992, October 26). Talk-show campaigning helps candidates connect. *Business Week*, 34.
- Diamond, E., Shepnick, P., & Stenzler, J. (1996). Is the presidential race a bore...or is it just a press gone stale? *National Journal*, 28(41), 2188-2189.
- Dole announces '96 candidacy. (1995, February 4). *United Press International*.
- Dole, on Letterman, makes it unofficial: He'll run in '96. (1995, February 4). *The New*

- York Times*, p. 8.
- Donaldson, G. (2007). *The first modern campaign: Kennedy, Nixon, and the election of 1960*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Dover, E. D. (1994). *Presidential elections in the television age: 1960-1992*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Dover, E. D. (1998). *The presidential election of 1996: Clinton's incumbency and television*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Dover, E. D. (2002). *Missed opportunity: Gore, incumbency and television in election 2000*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Dover, E. D. (2003). *The disputed presidential election of 2000 a history and reference guide*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Drew, D., & Weaver, D. (1991). Voter learning in the 1988 presidential election: Did the debates and media matter? *Journalism Quarterly*, 68, 27-37.
- Drew, D., & Weaver, D. (1998). Voter learning in the 1996 presidential election: Did the media matter? *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 75, 292-301.
- Drew, E. (1985). *Campaign journal: The political events of 1983-1984*. New York: Macmillan.
- Egan, L. (1962, February 9). Kennedy is assailed by Nixon over Cuba. *The Los Angeles Times*, p. 1 & 6.
- Egos & Ids; Talking Presidential Heads, (1992, June 21). *New York Times*. Sec. 9 p. 4.
- Elder, J. (2000, November 2). The 2000 Campaign: The polls; 4 new polls show Bush with advantage, and Nader as a factor. *The New York Times*, p. 25.
- Epstein, E. J. (1973). *News from nowhere: Television and the news*. New York: Random House.
- Erber, R., & Lau, R. (1990). Political cynicism revisited: An information-processing reconciliation of policy-based and incumbency-based interpretations of changes in trust in government. *American Journal of Political Science*, 34, 236-253.
- Excerpts from Nixon's appearance on The Jack Paar Show. (1960, August 26). *The New York Times*, p. 6.
- Faber, H. (1965). *The road to the White House; The story of the 1964 election*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Farhi, P. (2000, November 4). Al and Dubya's 'Saturday Night' date; Candidates follow laugh track to voters. *The Washington Post*, A1.
- Farnsworth, S. J., & Lichter, S. R. (2003). *The nightly news nightmare: Network television's coverage of U.S. presidential elections, 1988-2000*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Foley, T. (1968, October 6). Politicians take cue from show business; Nixon, Humphrey both use panel shows, documentaries in biggest TV campaign. *The Los Angeles Times*, p. A16.
- Fox News Network. (2000, February 11). *Al Gore's Tonight Show's appearance*. In *Fox special report with Brit Hume*. New York: Fox News Channel.
- Freeman, M. (1988, July 28). Governor getting mileage out of publicity over bad speech. *Associated Press*.
- Frisby, M. (1988, June 4). Clinton, with sax, takes center stage. *The Boston Globe*, p. 28.
- From Doghouse to White House? (1988, July 31). *Associated Press*.
- Gans, H. J. (1979). *Deciding what's news: A study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Garramone, G. (1983). Issue versus image orientation and effects of political advertising. *Communication Research*, 10, 59-76.
- Geer, J. (1988). The effects of presidential debates on the electoral preferences for candidates. *American Politics Quarterly*, 16, 486-501.
- Geer, J. (2003). *Attacking democracy: A (partial) defense of negativity in presidential campaigns 1960-2000*. Address presented at American Political Science Association. The Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Philadelphia [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p62467\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p62467_index.html).
- Geraci, M. W. (2003). *John F. Kennedy and the artful collaboration of film and politics*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Goldman, P., & Mathews, T. (1989). *The quest for the presidency, 1988*. New York: Simon and Schuster Inc.
- Good, O. (2000, September 25). Talk shows become obligatory on campaign trail. *Associated Press*.
- Gould, J. (1961, February 1). Jack Paar shows amateur movies of his trips to far-away

- places. *The New York Times*, p. 71.
- Gould, J. (1961, September 11). TV: Paar as symptom. *The New York Times*, p. 49.
- Gould, J. (1962, October 28). Candidates on TV—The ideal and others. *The New York Times*, p. 220.
- Gould, J. (1963, June 30). Nixon returning as a guest on TV. *The New York Times*, p. 6.
- Gould, J. (1968, September 17). TV Review - Laugh-In team back with a Nixon line. *The New York Times*, p. 9.
- Gould, L. L. (2003). *The modern American presidency*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Gov. Clinton mines the jocular vein. (1988, July 29). *Houston Chronicle*, p. 27.
- Graber, D. (1972). Personal qualities in presidential images: The contribution of the press. *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 16, 46-79.
- Graber, D. (1996). The new media and politics: What does the future hold? *Political Science and Politics*, 29, 33-36.
- Graber, D. & Kim, Y. (1978). Why John Q. Voter did not learn much from the 1976 presidential debates. In B. D. Ruben (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 2* (pp. 407-421). New Brunswick, NJ: Transactions Books.
- Graham, J. (1992, June 16). Hall's political party/sometimes issues stop the music. *USA Today*, p. 1D.
- Grant, A. (1993). The 1992 U.S. presidential election. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 46, 239-254.
- Greppi, M. (2003). Fox setting news agenda. *Television Week*, 22, 25-29.
- Grove, L. (1992, June 5). ...And the critics sound off. *The Washington Post*, p. C2.
- Grutzner, C. (1960, November 10). Polls borne out by the election. *The New York Times*, p. 48.
- Hacker, K. L. (2004). *Presidential candidate images*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Hacker, K. L., Zakahi, W. R., Giles, M. J., & McQuitty, S. (2000). Components of candidate images: Statistical analysis of the issue-persona dichotomy in the presidential campaign of 1996. *Communication Monographs*, 67, 227-238.

- Hagner, P. R. & Rieselbach, L. N. (1978). The impact of presidential debates: Conversion or reinforcement. In G. F. Bishop, R. G. Meadow, & M. Jackson-Beeck (Eds.), *The Presidential debates: Media, electoral, and policy perspectives* (pp. 157-178). New York: Praeger.
- Halberstam, D. (1993). How politicians discovered TV; Adman Rosser Reeves dragged Ike into new medium in 1952. *Advertising Age*, 27.
- Halberstam, D. (1994). Richard Nixon's last campaign. *Columbia Journalism Review*, 33(2), 35.
- Hall, J. (2000, October 19). Candidates seem to get it right on the third try. *Tampa Tribune*, p. 19.
- Hallin, D. (1992). Sound bite news: Television coverage of elections, 1968-1988. *Journal of Communication*, 42(2), 5-24.
- Hanania, J. (2000, October 15). The power of the images paid for by politicians. *The New York Times*, pp. 29 & 36.
- Hanson, J., & Maxcy, D. (1999). *Sources: Notable selections in mass media*. Guilford, CT: McGraw-Hill.
- Hart, G. (1973). *Right from the start: A chronicle of the McGovern campaign*. New York: Quadrangle.
- Hellweg, S. A., King, S. W., & Williams, S. F. (1988). Comparative candidate evaluation as a function of election level and candidate incumbency. *Communication Reports*, 1, 76-85.
- Hellweg, S. A., Pfau, M., & Brydon, S. R. (1992). *Televised presidential debates: Advocacy in contemporary America*. New York: Praeger.
- Helmore, E. (2000, October 4). Hail to the couch. *The Evening Standard* (London), p. 63.
- Hershey, M. R. (2001). The campaign and the media. In G. M. Pomper (Ed.), *The election of 2000: Reports and interpretations* (pp. 46-72). New York: Chatham House Publishers.
- Hess, K. (1967). *In a cause that will triumph: The Goldwater campaign and the future of conversation*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co.
- Hill, G. (1960, October 9). Nixon is opening California drive. *The New York Times*, p. 68.
- Hilton, S. G. (1995). *Senator for sale: An unauthorized biography of Senator Bob Dole*.

- New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Hinck, E. A. (1993). *Enacting the presidency: A history and criticism of presidential character*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Hohenberg, J. (1997). *Reelecting Bill Clinton: Why America chose a "new" Democrat*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Holbrook, T. (1994). The behavioral consequences of vice presidential debates: Does the undercard have any punch? *American Politics Quarterly*, 22, 469-482.
- Hunt, T. (2000, September 19). Gore cues Leno in monologue moment. *Associated Press*.
- Holbrook, T. M. (1996). *Do campaigns matter?* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hutcheson, R., & Pugh, T. (2000, September 15). Presidential candidates making the rounds of TV talk shows. *Knight Ridder Tribune Washington Bureau*.
- Hutcheson, R., & Pugh, T. (2000, September 16). Candidates' trail leads to Oprah, Dave, Regis. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, p. A18.
- In spoof on Letterman, Mrs. Dole presents 10 reasons to elect Bob. (1996, October 13). *The New York Times*, p. 18.
- Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. (1987). *News that matters: Television and American opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- James, C. (2000, March 2). The 2000 campaign: The TV front—critic's notebook; Bush flunks Letterman's late-night examination. *The New York Times*, p. A22.
- James, C. (2000, September 22). The 2000 campaign: The talk show front -- critic's notebook; blurring distinctions while chasing laughs. *The New York Times*, p. A19.
- Jamieson, K. (1996, November 10). Low ratings for campaigns, Washington, DC. In *Weekend Edition Sunday*. New York: National Public Radio.
- Jamieson, K. H. (1996). *Packaging the presidency: A history and criticism of presidential campaign advertising*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jamieson, K. H. & Adasiewicz, C. (2000). What can voters learn from election debates? In S. Coleman (Ed.), *Televised election debates: International perspectives*. (pp. 25-42). Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press.
- Jamieson, K. H., Auletta, K., & Patterson, T. E. (1993). *1-800-PRESIDENT: The report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Television and the Campaign of*

1992. New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press.
- Jamieson, K. H., & Birdsell, D. S. (1988). *Presidential debates the challenge of creating an informed electorate*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jamieson, K. H., & Campbell, K. K. (1992). *The interplay of influence: News, advertising, politics, and the mass media*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Jamieson, K. H., & Waldman, P. (2003). *The press effect: Politicians, journalists, and the stories that shape the political world*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jamieson, K. H., Waldman, P., & Davitt, J. (1988). Mapping the discourse of the 1996 U.S. presidential general election. *Media, Culture & Society*, 20, 323-328.
- Johnson, D. (2005). Feminine style in presidential debate 1960-2000. *Communication Quarterly*, 53(1), 3-20.
- Johnson, G. (2000, March 6). Bush tries to rebound on 'Tonight' *Associated Press*.
- Just, M., & Wallach, L. (1990). Thirty seconds or thirty minutes: What viewers learn from spot advertisements and candidate debates. *Journal of Communication*, 40, 120-133.
- Just, M. R., Crigler, A. N., Alger, D. E., Cook, T. E., Kern, M., & West, D. M. (1996). *Crosstalk: citizens, candidates, and the media in a presidential campaign*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kaid, L., Gobetz, R., Garner, J., Leland, C., & Scott, D. (1993). Television news and presidential campaigns: The legitimization of televised political advertising. *Social Science Quarterly*, 74, 274-285.
- Kaid, L., McKinney, M. S., & Tedesco, J. C. (2000). *Civic dialogue in the 1996 presidential campaign: Candidate, media, and public voices*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Kaid L. & Johnston, A. (2001). *Videostyle in presidential campaigns: Style and content of televised political advertising*. Westport, CT: Praeger/Greenwood.
- Kaid, L. L., Tedesco, J. C., Bystrom, D. G., & McKinney, M. S. (2003). *The millennium election: Communication in the 2000 campaign*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Kenamer, J. D. (1991). Debate viewing and debate discussion as predictors of campaign cognition. *Journalism Quarterly*, 64, 114-119.
- Kennedy gains in the polls. (1960, September 23). *The New York Times*, p. 11.



- Kern, M., Just, M., & Crigler, A. (1997, November). *Citizen use of world wide web sites in the 1996 presidential election*. Lecture presented at Annual meeting of the National Communication Association, Chicago.
- Klienman, H. (n.d.). EQUAL TIME RULE. Retrieved March 15, 2010, from <http://www.museum.tv/eotvsection.php?entrycode=equaltimeru>.
- Knappman, E. W. (1970). *Presidential election 1968*. New York: Facts on File.
- Kolbert, E. (1992, July 17). Selling themselves: Candidates on TV. *The New York Times*, p. C1.
- Kolbert, E. (1992, July 6). Talk shows wrangling to book the candidates. *The New York Times*, p. A10.
- Kolbert, E. (1992, June 28). For talk shows, less news is good news. *The New York Times*, p. E2.
- Kolbert, E. (1992, June 5). The 1992 campaign: Media; whistle-stops a la 1992: Arsenio, Larry and Phil. *The New York Times*, p. A18.
- Kolbert, E. (1992, May 1). As political campaigns turn negative, the press is given a negative rating. *The New York Times*, p. A18.
- Kramer, M., & Barrett, L. (1995, February 13). Eyes on the prize. *Time*, 145, 24.
- Kulberg, E., Ligerman, S., & Lynch, II, P. (Producers). (2003). *The Jack Paar Collection: Complete interviews plus Jack's favorite monologues*. Distributed by Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.
- Kurtz, H. (1996, October 21). Hey! Is anyone listening? *The Washington Post Weekly Edition*, p. 6.
- Kurtz, H. (1996, October 25). Early offensive by Democrats blunted effect of Dole ad blitz. *The Washington Post*, p. A19.
- Kurtz, H. (1996, October 9). Dole and Clinton use each other's words in new ads. *The Washington Post*, p. A20.
- Kurtz, H. (1996, September 28). The debaters argue over expectations. *The Washington Post*, p. A1 & A11.
- Kurtz, H. (1999, January 26). Trial of the century now joke of the day. *The Washington Post*, p. A18.

- Kurtz, H. (2000, December 17). Gore's masters of disaster; The campaign behind the campaign: The secret media blueprint that nearly captured the presidency. *The Washington Post*, p. F1.
- Kurtz, H. (2002, November 4). Mr. Stewart goes to Washington. *Washington Post*, p. C1.
- Lag in polls fails to upset Kennedy. (1960, April 18). *The New York Times*, p. 15.
- Lang, K. & Lang, G. E. (1962). Reaction of viewers. In S. Kraus (Ed.), *The great debates: Background, perspective, effects* (pp. 313-330). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Lanoue, D. (1991). The "turning point": Viewers' reactions to the second 1988 presidential debate. *American Politics Quarterly*, 19, 80-95.
- Lanoue, D., & Schrott, P. R. (1989). The effects of primary season debates on public opinion. *Political Behavior*, 11, 289-306.
- Lanoue, D. J., & Schrott, P. R. (1991). *The joint press conference: The history, impact, and prospects of American presidential debates*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Lar Daly loses plea: Candidate had asked time on Jack Paar Show. (1960, November 5). *The New York Times*, p. 15.
- Lar Daly wins fight to be on Paar Show. (1960, July 7). *The New York Times*, p. 18.
- Lavrakas, P. J., Traugott, M. W., & Miller, P. V. (1995). *Presidential polls and the news media*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Lawrence, J. (1996, October 11). More tuned out than turned on. *USA Today*, p. A4.
- Lemert, J. G. (1993). Do televised presidential debates help voters? *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 37, 83-94.
- Lichter, S. R., & Noyes, R. (1995). *Good intentions make bad news: Why Americans hate campaign journalism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Liebovich, L. (1998). *The press and the modern presidency: Myths and mindsets from Kennedy to Clinton*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Liebovich, L. (2001). *The press and the modern presidency: Myths and mindsets from Kennedy to Election 2000*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Liesse, J. (2008, June 23). How TV alters U. S. elections. *Advertising Age*, 79, C1-C14.
- Lindlaw, S. (2000, September 13). Nader mocked by fellow guest, Leno. Associated

- Press.
- Lines, A. (2000, November 1). Bush in a Gore mask. *The Mirror*, p. 2.
- Loftuss, J. A. (1960, April 26). Nixon mixes jokes and politics on TV; denies policy role. *The New York Times*, p. 1 & 6.
- Mann, P., & Oren, M. (1993). *The death theory of the avant-garde*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Marinucci, C. (2000, October 28). Gore to join Clinton and Davis for final push in California. *The San Francisco Chronicle*, p. A3.
- Marshall, T. (1984). Issues, personalities and presidential primary voters. *Social Science Quarterly*, 65, 750-760.
- Martinez, M., & Gill, J. (2005). The effects of turnout on partisan outcomes in U. S. president elections 1960-2000. *Journal of Politics*, 67(4), 1248-1274.
- Mayer, J. D. (2008). *American media politics in transition*. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- McCombs, M. & Shaw, D. (1977). The agenda-setting function of the press. In D. A. Graber (Ed.), *Media power in politics* (pp. 73-81). Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- McGillivray, A. V., & Scammon, R. M. (2001). *America at the polls: A handbook of American presidential election statistics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- McGinniss, J. (1969). *The selling of the president, 1968*. New York: Trident Press.
- McGuire, W. (1986). The myth of massive media impact: Savagings and salvaging. *Public Communication and Behavior*, 1, 173-257.
- McKinnon, L. M., Tedesco, J. C., & Kaid, L. L. (1993). The third 1992 presidential debate: Channel and commentary effects. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 30, 106-118.
- Media Monitor*, 10(3), 1-6. (1996). Whose campaign did you see? Retrieved January 13, 2010, from [www.cmpa.com](http://www.cmpa.com).
- Media Monitor*, 10(4), 1-6. (1996). Dole's summer doldrums. Retrieved from [www.cmpa.com](http://www.cmpa.com).
- Media Monitor*, 10(5), 1-6. (1996). Take this campaign please. Retrieved January 13, 2010, from [www.cmpa.com](http://www.cmpa.com).
- Media Monitor*, 10(6), 1-6. (1996). Campaign '96 Final. Retrieved January 13, 2010,

- from [www.cmpa.com](http://www.cmpa.com).
- Media Monitor*, 14(6), 1-6. (2000). Campaign 2000 final. Retrieved January 14, 2010, from [www.cmpa.com](http://www.cmpa.com).
- Media Monitor*, 15(3), 1-7. (2002). Politics by punchline. Retrieved January 14, 2010, from [www.cmpa.com](http://www.cmpa.com).
- Media Research Center. (2000, October 20). *David Letterman fails the Oprah test*. Retrieved February 28, 2004, from [www.mediaresearch.org/press/2000](http://www.mediaresearch.org/press/2000).
- Meroney, J. (2000, October). Late-night politics. *American Enterprise*.
- Merriam, J. E., & Makower, J. (1988). *Trend watching: How the media create trends and how to be the first to uncover them*. New York: AMACOM.
- Mifflin, L. (1996, November 3). Free TV-time experiment wins support, if not viewers. *The New York Times*, p. 38.
- Milligan, S. (2000, February 11). On talk show, authentic Gore. *Boston Globe*, p. 37.
- Minnow, N. N., & Mitchell, L. M. (1986). Putting on the candidates: The use of television in presidential elections. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 486, 146-157.
- Moritz, O. (2000, November 1). Gore's no bore on Jay Leno's Tonight. *Daily News* (New York), p. 24.
- Moore, J., & Fraser, J. (1977). *Campaign for president: The managers look at '76*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing. Co.
- Moore, M. (1996, May 9). A true nightly TV debate proves elusive goal. *USA Today*, p. 4A.
- Moore, M. (2000, September 21). Talk shows become a campaign staple Leno, Letterman, Oprah replacing "Meet the Press" *USA Today*, p. 8A.
- Mulder, R. (1978). The political effects of the Carter-Ford debate: An experimental analysis. *Sociological Focus*, 11, 33-45.
- Mulder, R. (1979). The effects of televised political ads in the 1975 Chicago mayoral election. *Journalism Quarterly*, 56, 336-340.
- Murrow, G. R. (1977). Changes in perceptions of Ford and Carter following the first presidential debate. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 45, 423-429.

- NBC. (1960, August 25). *The Jack Paar Show*. In *The Jack Paar Show*. New York: NBC. Transcript of Richard M. Nixon interview received from the Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library
- NBC. (1960, June 16). *The Jack Paar Show*. In *The Jack Paar Show*. New York: NBC. Transcript of John F. Kennedy interview received from John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.
- NBC. (1963, March 22). *The Jack Paar Show*. In *The Today Show*. New York: NBC. Transcript of Barry Goldwater interview received from the Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library.
- NBC. (2000, October 30). *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. In *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. Los Angeles, CA: NBC. Author transcribed George Bush interview from video at Library of Congress-No.1931 -- VBQ 5366.
- NBC. (2000, October 31). *Vice President Al Gore appears on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. In *The Today Show*. New York: NBC. Author transcribed Al Gore interview from video at Library of Congress-No.1932 -- VBQ 5367.
- NBC. (2000, September 12). *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. In *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. Los Angeles, CA: NBC. Author transcribed Ralph Nader interview from video at Library of Congress-No.1907 -- VBQ 3925.
- NBC. (2000, September 19). *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. In *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. New York: NBC. Author transcribed Al Gore interview from video at Library of Congress-No.1931 -- VBQ 5366.
- NBC News. (2000, October 20). *Late-night comedy and daytime talk shows are regular stops on campaign trail*. In *Today*. New York: NBC.
- Nelson, M. (1993). *The Elections of 1992*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Newman, J. (1972). *Guide to the '72 elections*. Washington: Books by U.S. News & World Report.
- Nitz, M., Cypher, A., Reichert, T., & Mueller, J. E. (2003). *The millennium election: Communication in the 2000 campaign* (pp. 165-178) (L. L. Kaid, J. C. Tedesco, D. G. Bystrom, & M. S. McKinney, Authors). Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Nixon appears Tonight. (1960, August 25). *The New York Times*, p. 23.
- Nixon calls makeup on TV a big factor in his 1960 defeat. (1967, November 23). *The New York Times*, p. 28.

- Nixon gets quasi-psychedelic plug. (1968, October 9). *The New York Times*, p. 33.
- Norris, P. (2000). *A virtuous circle political communications in postindustrial societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Brien, M. (2005). *John F. Kennedy: A biography*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press.
- Olick, D. (2000, September 14). *Al Gore appears on the Late Show with David Letterman*. In *CBS Morning News*. New York: CBS.
- Orange, C. M., & George, A. M. (2005). Child sacrifice: Black America's price of paying the media piper. *Journal of Black Studies*, 30, 294-314.
- O'Rourke, W. (1997). *Campaign America '96: the view from the couch*. New York: Marlowe & Co.
- Paar is planning a show on Nixon. (1962, November 24). *The New York Times*, p. 30.
- Paar, J. (1962). *My saber is bent*. New York: Pocket Books.
- Paar, J. (1983). *P.S. Jack Paar*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Patterson, T. E., & McClure, R. D. (1976). Television and the less interested voter: The costs of an informed electorate. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 425, 88-97.
- Patterson, T. E., & McClure, R. D. (1976). *The unseeing eye: The myth of television power in national elections*. New York: Putnam.
- Pentagon orders investigation in Paar TV incident in Berlin. (1961, September 9). *The New York Times*, p. 3.
- Perkins, K. P., & Perry, D. (2000, November 4). Running for president more about entertainment than issues. *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, p. 1.
- Perse, E. M. (2001). *Media effects and society*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Assoc.
- Petersen, K. (2004, February 21). Late-night becomes must-see-me TV for presidential candidates. *San Diego Tribune*, pp. 1-2.
- Peterson, R. L. (2008). *Strange bedfellows: How late-night comedy turns democracy into a joke*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Pew Research Center. (2000). A tough job of communicating with voters. Retrieved February 2, 2005, from [www.peopleandthepress.org](http://www.peopleandthepress.org)

- Peysner, M. (2000, October 30). Al and Dubya after hours. *Newsweek*, 136, 38.
- Pfau, M. & Eveland, W. P. (1994). Debates versus other communication sources: The pattern of information influence. In D. B. Carlin & M. S. McKinney (Eds.), *The 1992 presidential debates in focus* (pp. 155-173) Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Pfau, M., Cho, J., & Chong, K. (2001). Communication forms in U.S. presidential campaigns; influences on candidate perceptions and the democratic process. *Harvard International Journal Press/Politics*, 6, 88-105.
- Pfau, M., Houston, J. B., & Semmler, S. M. (2007). *Mediating the vote: The changing media landscape in U.S. presidential campaigns*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Pietrusza, D. (2008). *1960: LBJ vs. JFK vs. Nixon: The epic campaign that forged three presidencies*. New York: Union Square Press.
- Poll by Daily News gives Kennedy 55.2%. (1960, October 28). *The New York Times*, p. 21.
- Polsby, N. W., & Wildavsky, A. B. (2000). *Presidential elections: Strategies and structures of American politics*. New York: Chatham House Publishers.
- Pomper, G. M. (1993). *The election of 1992: Reports and interpretations*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers.
- Pomper, G. M. (1997). *The election of 1996: Reports and interpretations*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers.
- Pomper, G. M. (2001). *The election of 2000: Reports and interpretations*. New York: Chatham House Publishers.
- Popkin, S. L. (1994). *The reasoning voter: Communication and persuasion in presidential campaigns*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Price, J. (1992, October 7). From the boob tube to the ballot box. *The Washington Times*, p. A18.
- Purnick, J., Aucoin, D., Rich, G., Collins, G., & Silver, S. (2000). Playing the celebrity game: Candidates transform themselves into entertainers. *Nieman Reports*, 54, 35-36.
- Reagan, R. (1990). *An American life*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Reston, J. (1960, August 28). Who can sit down with Paar? *The New York Times*, p. E10.

- Rich, F. (2004, February 8). Paar to Leno, J.F.K to J.F.K. *The New York Times*, pp. Sec 2-1.
- Ridout, C. (1993). News coverage and talk shows in the 1992 presidential campaign. *Political Science and Politics*, 26, 712-716.
- Roberts, J. (1995, February 12). The "new" Bob Dole: Man to beat in GOP. *The San Francisco Chronicle*, p. A7.
- Robinson, M. J., & Sheehan, M. A. (1983). *Over the wire and on TV: CBS and UPI in Campaign '80*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Romano, L. (2000, October 20). For candidates, it's show time; from 'Regis' to 'Rosie,' a tight presidential race is played out on talk TV. *The Washington Post*, p. A11.
- Romer, D. (2004). *Capturing campaign dynamics: The national Annenberg election survey: design, method, and data*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rorabaugh, W. J. (2009). *The real making of the president: Kennedy, Nixon, and the 1960 election*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Rosen, M. (2000, March 2). Prez wanna-bes try late-night TV. *Daily News*, p. 28.
- Rosenstiel, T. (1992). *Strange bedfellows: How television and the presidential candidates changed American politics, 1992*. New York: Hyperion.
- Rosenthal, A. (1992, July 1). Taking heat at every turn, Bush shows a boiling point. *The New York Times*, p. A10.
- Rosenthal, A. (1992, June 16). Bush considers following his rivals on TV talk programs. *The New York Times*, p. A22.
- Roush, M. (1988, August 1). Women creators catch political fever. *USA Today*, p. 3D.
- Rowan, F. (1984). *Broadcast fairness: Doctrine, practice, prospects*. New York: Longman.
- Royster, V. (1972, November 9). The meaning of the Nixon landslide. *Wall Street Journal*, p. 26.
- Runkel, D. R. (1989). *Campaign for president: The managers look at '88*. Dover, MA: Auburn House.
- Sabato, L. (1991). *Feeding frenzy: How attack journalism has transformed American politics*. New York: Free Press.



- Saffell, D. C. (2004). *The encyclopedia of U.S. presidential elections*. New York: Franklin Watts.
- Sammon, B. & Boyer, D. (2000, October 20). Gore hypnotizes Philbin as Bush eyes Rushmore mom. *The Washington Post*, p. A3.
- Schiller, H. I. (1973). *The mind managers*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Schlesinger, A. M. (1994). *Running for president: The candidates and their images*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Schneider, W. (2000, October 20). *Candidates take advantage of TV talk time*. *CNN World Today*. New York, New York: CNN.
- Schorr, D. (1988). Go get some milk and cookies and watch the murders on television. In R. E. Hiebert & C. Reuss (Eds.), *Impact of mass media: current issues* (pp. 132-143). New York: Longman.
- Schram, M. (1977). *Running for president, 1976: The Carter campaign*. New York: Stein and Day.
- Schramm, P. W. (1987). *The 1984 election and the future of American politics*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academy Press.
- Schultz, D. A. (2004). *Lights, camera, campaign! Media, politics, and political advertising*. New York: P. Lang.
- Schwartz, T. (1973). *The responsive chord*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.
- Sears, D., & Chaffee, S. (1979). Uses and effects of the 1976 debates. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 54, 567-585.
- Sella, M. (2000, September 24). The stiff guy vs. the dumb guy. *The New York Times*, p. 72.
- Sever, R. (2004, January 28). Jack Paar, unpredictable TV host who kept Americans up late, is dead at 85. *The New York Times*, p. A23.
- Shade, W. G. (2003). *American presidential campaigns and elections*. Armonk, NY: Sharpe.
- Shadegg, S. C. (1965). *What happened to Goldwater? The inside story of the 1964 Republican campaign*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Shales, T. (1994, April 25). Nixon and TV: A strange but fascinating fit. *The Washington*

- Post*, p. C1.
- Shanley, J. P. (1960, August 23). TV: Limiting the debate—Networks pleased by House approval of suspension in Equal-Time Rule for '60. *The New York Times*, p. 59.
- Shepard, R. E. (1960, August 27). Nominees and TV face a problem. *The New York Times*, p. 39.
- Shepard, R. F. (1960, June 9). Senator Kennedy to be Paar guest. *The New York Times*, p. 67.
- Sigel, E. (1992, June 5). Candidates try to face TV's strange new world; television. *The Boston Globe*, p. 28.
- Sigel, R. S. (1966). Image of the American presidency—Part II of an exploration into popular views of presidential power. *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 10, 123-137.
- Simon, P. (1989). *Winners and losers: The 1988 race for the presidency—one candidate's perspective*. New York: Continuum.
- Simon, R. (1998). *Show time: The American political circus and the race for the White House*. New York: Times Books.
- Simon, R. (2001). *Divided we stand: How Al Gore beat George Bush and lost the presidency*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Simons, H. W. & Leibowitz, K. (1979). Shifts in candidate images. In S. Kraus, J. Carter, & G. R. Ford (Eds.), *The great debates: Carter vs. Ford, 1976* (pp. 398-404). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Sniderman, P. M., Brody, R. A., & Tetlock, P. E. (1991). *Reasoning choice: Explorations in political psychology*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Sobieraj, S. (2000, February 11). U. S. governor? VP trades one-liners with talk-show host. *Daily Breeze*, p. B2.
- Sorensen, T. C. (1965). *Kennedy*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Speech gets a lot of laughs/Bill Clinton goes on Carson. (1988, July 29). *San Francisco Chronicle*, p. B9.
- Spivack, R. G. (1960, October 8). It's up to Kennedy... *The Nation*, 220-222.
- Steele, C. A., & Barnhurst, K. G. (1996). The journalism of opinion: Network news coverage of U.S. presidential campaigns, 1968-1988. *Critical Studies in Media*

*Communication, 13*, 187-209.

- Stempel, G. H. (1991). *The media in the 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Stevens, R. (n.d.). *Talk show democracy: The effect of televised talk shows on the 1992 presidential election campaign*. Policy analysis exercise, John F. Kennedy School of Government.
- Stuckey, M. E. (1991). *The president as interpreter-in-chief*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers.
- Tannenbaum, P. H., Greenberg, G.S., & Silverman, F. R. (1962). Candidate images. In S. Kraus (Ed.), *The great debates: Background, perspective, effects* (pp. 271-288). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Taylor, P. (1997). The future of free time. *Media Studies Journal, 11*, 61-64.
- The '92 Follies. (1992, November 1). *The New York Times*, p. 26.
- The 1992 campaign: Campaign watch face to face, Clinton and Brown Show their best. (1992, April 7). *The New York Times*. p. A24.
- The 1992 campaign: On the trail; For Bush, some progress in the polls. (1992, August 15). *The New York Times*. p. 6.
- The 1992 campaign: On the trail; poll gives Perot a clear lead. (1992, June 11). *The New York Times*. p. 21.
- The 1992 campaign: On the trail; presidential race not stabilizing, (1992, June 19). *The New York Times*. p. A25
- The campaign: First turns. (1960, August 29). *Time Magazine, 76*, 11.
- The love-hate relationship between politicians and the news media. (1994). *American Journalism Review, 16*(7), 4-7.
- The nation: The campaign ahead. (1960, July 11). *Time Magazine, 76*, 17.
- Thomas, E. (1997). *Back from the dead: How Clinton survived the Republican revolution*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Thomas, E. (2000). Getting to know you: As many candidates retreat from the press, what we learn is what their strategists want us to know. *Nieman Reports, Summer, 27-29*.

- Toner, R. (1992, March 3). The 1992 campaign: In poll, voters are unhappy with all the choices. *The New York Times*, p. A10.
- Tosh, J. (2002). *The pursuit of history: Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history*. London: Longman.
- Trent, J. S., & Friedenber, R. V. (2000). *Political campaign communication: principles and practices*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Trent, J. S., Short-Thompson, C., Mongeau, P. A., Nusz, A. K., & Trent, J. D. (2001). Image, media bias and voter characteristics: The ideal candidate from 1988-2000. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 44, 2102-2124.
- Tuchman, B. W. (1981). *Practicing history: Selected essays*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Walkosz, B. J. (2003). Issue advocacy and political advertising in election 2000. In L. L. Kaid, J. C. Tedesco, D. G. Bystrom, & M. S. McKinney (Eds.), *The millennium election: Communication in the 2000 campaign* (pp. 27-42). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Walsh, K. T. (2008, January 28). Great campaign moments. *U.S. News & World Report*, 144, 28-55.
- Walsh, S. (2000, September 15). Gore does Dave. In *CBS News*. New York: CBS.
- Waltzer, H. (1966). In the magic lantern: Television coverage of the 1964 national conventions. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 30, 33-35.
- Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University Survey Project poll. (1996). In M. R. Just, A. N., Alger, D. E., Cook, T. E., Kern, M., & West, D. M. (Eds.), *Crosstalk: citizens, candidates, and the media in a presidential campaign* (p. 106). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Waters, L. (2000, March 2). *Political comedian Mark Russell looks at election 2000*. In *CNN Today*. New York: CNN.
- Weaver, D., Drew, D., & Wu, W. (1998). Voter interest and participation in the 1996 presidential election: Did the debates matter? In T. J. Johnson, C. E. Hays, & S. P. Hays (Eds.), *Engaging the public: How government and the media can reinvigorate American democracy* (pp. 87-95). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Weaver, D., Graber, D., McCombs, M., & Eyal, C. (1981). *Media agenda-setting in a presidential election: Issues, images and interests*. New York: Praeger.

- Weiss, J. (2003, November 22). Late-night's not always a laughter for candidates. *The Boston Globe*, p. C1.
- West, D. M. (1994-1995). Television advertising in election campaigns. *Political Science Quarterly*, 109, 789-809.
- White, F. C. (1981). *Why Reagan won: A narrative history of the conservative movement 1964-1981*. Chicago: Regnery Gateway.
- White, T. H. (1961). *The making of the president, 1960*. New York: Atheneum Publishers.
- White, T. H. (1973). *The making of the president, 1972*. New York: Atheneum Publishers.
- Wicks, R. H., Souley, B., & Verser, R. M. (2003). Differences and similarities in use of campaign websites during the 2000 presidential election. In L. L. Kaid, J. C. Tedesco, D. G. Bystrom, & M. S. McKinney (Eds.), *The millennium election: communication in the 2000 campaign* (pp. 189-200). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Williams, D. C., Weber, S. J., Haaland, G. A., Mueller, R. H., & Craig, R. E. (1976). Voter decision making in primary election: An evaluation of three models of choice. *American Journal of Political Science*, 20, 37-49.
- Wizda, S. (2000). Late-night with Al and Dubya. *American Journalism Review*, 22, 10.
- Woelfel, J. (1995). *Communication and science*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Woodward, B. (1996). *The choice*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Worldwide Pants, Inc. (1995, February 5). *The Late Show with David Letterman*. In *The Late Show with David Letterman*. New York: CBS.
- Worldwide Pants, Inc. (2000, October 19). *The Late Show with David Letterman*. In *The Late Show with David Letterman*. New York: CBS. Author transcribed George Bush interview from video at Library of Congress-No.1497 -- VBQ 4423.
- Yawn, M., & Beatty, B. (2000). Debate-induced opinion change: What matters? *American Politics Quarterly*, 28, 270-285.
- Young, D. (2004). Late-night comedy in election 2000: Its influence on candidate trait ratings and the moderating effects of political knowledge and partisanship. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 48, 1-22.

- Young, D. G. (2003). *The kiss, the coke-head and the creator of the Internet: Late-night comedy's influence on the salience of campaign events, candidate traits and issues in election 2000*. Lecture presented at The Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Philadelphia.
- Young, P. (2000, November 7). Humor helps candidates' intangibles. *Daily News* (New York), p. 5.
- Zajonc, R. (1968). Attitudinal effects of mere exposure. *Journal of Social Psychology Monograph Supplement*, 9, 1-27.
- Zaller, J. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Zhao, X., & Chaffee, S. (1995). Campaign advertisements versus television news as sources of political issue information. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 59, 41-65.
- Zhu, J. H., Milavsky, J. R., & Biswas, R. (1994). Do televised debates affect image perception more than issue knowledge? A study of the first 1992 presidential debate. *Communication Research*, 20, 302-3.