

JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING

MAY 3, 2004

PAGE 1

THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING
KENNEDY LIBRARY FORUMS
MONDAY, MAY 3, 2004
5:30 TO 7:00 P.M.

JOHN SHATTUCK: Good evening and welcome again to the John F. Kennedy Library. I'm John Shattuck, the CEO of the Kennedy Library Foundation. And on behalf of myself, Paul Kirk, who chairs our Board of Directors and Deborah Leff, who directs the Library, I'm here to introduce another in our wonderful ongoing series of Kennedy Library Forums.

And before doing that, let me urge those of you who haven't visited our museum lately to come on by, particularly after the opening on May 20th -- remember that date -- of a special exhibition on the 1960 presidential campaign (you may have heard there's another campaign on now) that will run through the summer and the Democratic National Convention and on into the fall. So please, do come.

And before introducing this afternoon's discussion and our distinguished panelists, let me also thank the institutions that make these forums possible, starting with our lead sponsor, Fleet Boston, as well as Boston Capital and The Lowell Institute, and our media sponsors, WBUR, which will broadcast today's forum next Sunday evening and *The Boston Globe* and Boston.com.

Political advertising is as much a part of American culture as apple pie. From the bland but catchy slogan "Tippy Canoe and Tyler Too" which we all learned in high school to the progressive movement's cartoons of Tammany Hall's Boss Tweed,

JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING

MAY 3, 2004

PAGE 2

political ads have been a part of the American political land since the earliest days of the Republic.

And it was a fairly peaceful landscape until television came along and TV political ads have been with us now for more than half a century, believe it or not, starting with Eisenhower who -- I did a little research -- hired the Madison Avenue ad man who persuaded kids of my generation to believe, contrary to our experience, that M&Ms would melt in your mouth, not in your hand. [Laughter] He went on to a great career as Eisenhower's TV spot person.

But it wasn't until the Kennedy/Nixon campaign of 1960 that television really took off and became the major forum for presidential politics. It has been ever since. And it was in 1960 that negative ads made their debut. Kennedy, for example, got a boost from an ad that we'll screen for you later showing Eisenhower at a press conference responding to a question about what major ideas Richard Nixon had contributed as Vice President. And the famous reply? Eisenhower said, "If you give me a week, I might think of one." Perfect material for a Kennedy campaign TV spot and very accurate in the sense that it was spoken by President Eisenhower.

Today we're going to take a close look at political advertising, how it's done, how it's changed over the years, and how it affects our democracy and the way people participate in it, or unfortunately too often these days, don't participate, and how they make their decisions about candidates.

JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING

MAY 3, 2004

PAGE 3

To help us do that, we have an all-star panel of experts whose names are as well known as the candidates they've written about or worked for. David Broder, to my immediate left, is one of America's most respected national political writers. His syndicated column for *The Washington Post* is carried twice a week by more than 300 papers in the U.S. and around the world. A Pulitzer Prize winner for his distinguished commentary, David was rated, and I quote, "Washington's most highly regarded columnist" in a survey by *Washingtonian Magazine* of editorial page writers, editors, and members of Congress, leading all others for "overall integrity, factual accuracy and insight." He has won numerous awards for his political writing and is a frequent commentator on CNN's *Inside Politics*, NBC's *Meet the Press* and public broadcasting's *Washington Week in Review*.

Mark Shields is a national columnist and commentator on American politics with credentials unmatched by anyone except other members of this panel. He can be seen Saturday nights as the moderator of CNN's *The Capitol Gang* and Friday nights on the *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*. Since 1979, Mark has written a syndicated column on politics for *The Washington Post*. And in 1989, the *Political Almanac* named Mark Shields and David Gergen, whom I will introduce in a moment, as the best television pundits of the 1988 presidential election. A reviewer of his book *On the Campaign Trail* wrote, "Mark Shields is one of the wittiest political analysts around and he is frequently the most trenchant, fair-minded, and thoughtful."

Dee Dee Myers is the first woman and youngest person ever to serve as the White House Press Secretary. She joined Bill Clinton's campaign in 1991 and went on to

JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING

MAY 3, 2004

PAGE 4

stardom in the Clinton White House where from my lowly position in the State Department I watched her win the respect of the world's toughest press corps with her sharp political instincts, her great sense of humor, and her knack for explaining complicated things in straightforward language. Before the Clinton Administration, Dee Dee served as press secretary for Diane Feinstein and worked on the presidential campaign of Michael Dukakis and Walter Mondale. She is currently a contributing editor to *Vanity Fair* and a consultant to NBC's *West Wing*.

Our moderator this evening is David Gergen, who has been a highly visible player on the American political scene for nearly three decades, spending a third of his time in the White House as advisor to four presidents: Nixon, Ford, Reagan and Clinton. David currently serves as editor-at-large of *U. S. News and World Report*, which he helped revitalize as editor from 1984 to '93 before returning to government in the Clinton White House. He is also a professor of public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. David is a much sought after television commentator and appears regularly on the PBS *NewsHour*. His earliest claim to fame, I should add, in the media came when he was managing editor of the *Yale Daily News* when I first got to know him along with other up and coming Yale students of that era like Joe Lieberman, John Kerry, Bill Clinton and, of course, George W. Bush.

Please join me in welcoming to the stage of the Kennedy Library David Broder, Mark Shields, Dee Dee Myers and David Gergen. (applause)

JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING

MAY 3, 2004

PAGE 5

DAVID GERGEN: Thank you, John Shattuck, and thank you very much indeed for bringing intellectual vitality to this institution, and I think over time, creating Boston's best public forum. It's so nice to have a place in Boston where everybody can come. [Applause] And you've really done that. I congratulate you on that. It's been wonderful. I want to thank all of you ladies and gentlemen for coming here. We're delighted to have some students from the Kennedy School, who have come over here to the Kennedy Library.

Before we turn to the film clips and advertising, it seems appropriate that we might pause a moment to let each of these members of the panel offer a few words about someone who has been very near and dear to them and has recently died, a native of this city, Mary McGrory. And so if we might, David Broder, you were her friend, her colleague at *The Washington Post* and wrote a column about her after her death that people are still talking about. Perhaps you could say a few words about Mary. And then Dee Dee and Mark, that would be great.

DAVID BRODER: Well, all of us have our own favorite memories, but this city has given America many great gifts over the years but certainly in my generation, no greater gift for journalism than Mary McGrory. We started working together 44 years ago when I joined her at the old *Washington Star*. And I can honestly say there was nobody in my lifetime who set a higher standard for journalism than Mary McGrory, in two respects. First of all, she could write rings around everybody else in the business. And second, because right up until a year ago when a stroke stopped her, she could also outwork everybody. Mary was 85 when she died 10 days ago, and well into her 80s she was out on the beat every single

day. She only knew one way to cover stories and that was to be there watching and asking the questions herself. She was not somebody who relied on C-SPAN or the Internet to know what was going on. Mary was an old fashioned, shoe leather reporter and as such, she was a model to everybody else in the business.

DAVID GERGEN: Dee Dee?

DEE DEE MYERS: I didn't know Mary nearly as well as David and Mark, but I certainly did come to know her when I was at the White House, and I was amazed by how often I would see her, because so many columnists you read but you don't see. But Mary you would see, and that wasn't always a good thing. [Laughter] You know, Mary sometimes came to share her two cents with you about ... or more often in my case, about my boss. Just because she was a liberal didn't mean she was going to put up with much from the likes of Bill Clinton. So I admired that very much about her, how often I would see her even when it wasn't pleasant. And the breadth of her interests. I continued to be friendly with Mary after I left the White House and the last kind of column conversation I had with her was about an episode of the *West Wing*. So she was not only following politics in the real Washington, she was following things that were going on in television. But the thing I admired most about her, she was sort of ... She didn't really consider herself a feminist, but she was a model for a lot of women. She was covering real news in an era when a lot of women weren't and writing columns in an era when no women were. And yet she managed to do it all without ever carrying her own suitcase. [Laughter]

DAVID BRODER: That's right.

DEE DEE MYERS: And I know every man on this stage ...

DAVID BRODER: Absolutely!

DEE DEE MYERS: ... can testify to how many times they carried her suitcases, and they weren't small suitcases. So she will be greatly missed for a lot of reasons.

DAVID GERGEN: Mark?

MARK SHIELDS: Dee Dee and David said, I just want to underline. Mary was a friend in addition to being a colleague. And David's absolutely right, she was a shoe leather reporter. She haunted committee hearings, she talked to the lowliest witnesses appearing. She once said she considered herself to be a psychiatric social worker because all those who felt left out, put upon, and downtrodden were her natural constituency. And one of Mary's favorite quotes was from Thomas à Kempis, St. Thomas à Kempis, who said, "Fawn not upon the great," and she never did. She didn't go to have private ... Too many, certainly not David, but certainly too many columnists do the private lunch with the cabinet secretary. That was not Mary's style at all. And in addition to that, in addition to writing like a song and reporting endlessly, she also had a very human side. Her life's work was the abused, neglected, and abandoned children of St. Anne's Maternity and Orphanage Home in Washington. And she forced more of her friends -- and you couldn't write a check, that wasn't enough. I mean, you had to go there and spend time

with these children, all of whom Mary knew by their names. She knew their case history, and she cared about them. She once said to me that nobody, and not to me alone, nobody in life can get too much encouragement. And so there's going to be a fundraiser in Washington next month for St. Anne's, and it was her love and her passion. And in addition, her love for the underdog was not in the abstract.

DAVID GERGEN: You can see, I think, not only why Mary McGrory was such a beloved figure in Washington, but also the quality of people we have here tonight. And I think we're very fortunate to have this panel. And what could be said about Mary always going to the scene and being there, can also be said about our journalists here, David Broder and Mark Shields. One of the things I've admired about them year after year after year, they're there. They go out there, they watch, they talk, they know, they go into small places and they really understand. And it's becoming a rarity in politics. We have people who really understand politics, that lived it, breathed it. Dee Dee has been just part of this scene now here for the last decade. You're up to a dozen years in the Washington scene now.

DEE DEE MYERS: Getting old.

DAVID GERGEN: And so it's a very, very distinguished panel to talk about what we're going to be seeing with some of these ads. We're going to show a set of three ads from different campaigns early and then have a short discussion and have three or four more and have a little short discussion, and then three or four more and have a little, short discussion. Then talk ourselves for a few minutes

about how ads have evolved over time. And then we'll open this up to your questions and thoughts. But we're going to stretch all the way back to the first, and I think immediately we'll see that there has been some evolution in the nature of television advertising for political campaigns. Why don't we roll if we could with 1952 and Dwight Eisenhower.

[VIDEO]

DAVID GERGEN: Well, it does bring back memories. David, you broke into journalism in the 1960 campaign, was it right around then, wasn't it?

DAVID BRODER: Yeah, 1960 was the first one I covered.

DAVID GERGEN: Yeah, 1960 was the first one you covered?

DAVID BRODER: Right.

DAVID GERGEN: And so when you see these ads, starting with Eisenhower, what memories does it bring back about political advertising and how different it was then?

DAVID BRODER: Brings back a lot of memories. But I think what's relevant for our discussion was that it was a rudimentary art form, and I think on the margins in terms of its impact. I was surprised to see that Kennedy ad from West Virginia. That was the first primary the old *Washington Star* sent me out on. And there was

a lot going on in West Virginia, but I don't remember ever seeing that ad on the air in West Virginia. And I think it was much more the personal appearances of the candidates there, Kennedy and Humphrey, who were contesting in that primary that had to do with the outcome than any ad that was run during that campaign.

DAVID GERGEN: Oh, that's interesting.

DAVID BRODER: Obviously, in the general election it was the debates much more than the ads that were run for either Nixon or Kennedy that really influenced public opinion.

DAVID GERGEN: Did the candidates give speeches on public television as well?

DAVID BRODER: No. I think they gave a lot of formal speeches which were then covered on the television news programs along with the press. The television news at that point was 15 minutes a night, not 30 minutes. So people were learning about what the candidates were saying partly from television news broadcasts, but I think only in a minimal way from the television ad.

DAVID GERGEN: That's interesting. Any other thoughts here before we roll on?

DEE DEE MYERS: Just mention that you can see ... Well, by 1960, 95 percent of American homes had televisions, and you can see the importance of televisions

and the effectiveness of a candidate like Kennedy and the emerging importance of looking good on television. So by the mid-1960s, people recognize that television as a political medium was here to stay.

DAVID GERGEN: Yeah, it was interesting in the negative ad that Kennedy ran, the picture of Nixon was from the debate.

DEE DEE MYERS: And he was looking side slanted, you know, shifty-eyed and even then picking the worst possible picture of your opponent. But clearly the '52 ads with Eisenhower wouldn't have worked in a later age when people were getting more information from television.

DAVID GERGEN: Right.

MARK SHIELDS: The only thing cinéma vérité -- it was the style a lot of TV people used -- Eisenhower was a lot more cinéma than it was vérité. [Laughter] I mean, it was so staged and so contrived and so ... But what struck me most of all was how little the message has changed in 50 years. I can remember Ronald Reagan, covering Ronald Reagan, when he said 247 taxes on a loaf of bread.

DAVID GERGEN: I remember you ...

MARK SHIELDS: And there's not 247 taxes. We went looking one day, we couldn't find them. But, you know, a hundred taxes on just an egg. I guess that's 1200 on a dozen or whatever. [Laughter] And then Jack Kennedy talking about

church and state and you got Cardinal Lorenzi and John Kerry right now. So that one hasn't gone away, either. And it just ... I had never seen the "if you give me a week" before. I mean, I knew the quote and everything else. I didn't realize how effectively it was used. I mean, as negative commercials go, that's about as good as you can get when you've got Dwight Eisenhower as your attack vehicle.

[Laughter]

DAVID GERGEN: Okay, let's roll on. The first ad is one of the most famous in television history and I believe was only shown once. But the second ad is one I enjoy a lot. And we have four here stretching from '64 through 1976.

[VIDEO]

DAVID GERGEN: David Broder, coming back to the daisy ad, that first ad, as I recall that was only shown once?

DAVID BRODER: That is right, and then they pulled it. But it did have the intended effect. It became the total topic of conversation and discussion and it was a devastatingly effective ad and probably the cheapest ad that anybody ever had. The striking thing about this is we start in '64 and go through '76. But you can see the tremendous change that's taken place because in none of those ads that we just saw do you actually see the candidate. And what's happened now is the advertising people have decided you can sell a candidate as if you were selling any other commodity by testimonials or by pure symbolism as in the daisy ad. You don't have to risk making the candidate himself do his own sales.

DAVID GERGEN: That was Tony Schwartz who made that?

MARK SHIELDS: Yes.

DAVID GERGEN: Do you remember the circumstances, Mark?

MARK SHIELDS: Well, never mentioned Barry Goldwater's name in that ad, which made it even more devastating. And it led to ... The viewer had to conclude that it was Goldwater they were talking about and Johnson's voice about we'd all better love each other or we perish. The laughing commercial, which the audience got a big reaction from, Agnew reminded me that nobody votes for vice president. Probably the most compelling case to make for vice president was Michael Dukakis' choice of Lloyd Bentsen in 1988 against Dan Quayle, and Bentsen totally vanquished him and probably permanently disabled Quayle as a serious political figure in that debate. And yet, he couldn't carry his home state, Benson couldn't, and he made no significant difference. And I guess Agnew and Quayle were probably the two most dubious choices for vice president I can recall, and yet both nominees won. And so I would caution, even though it's inviting to do that.

The other thing that hit me, I thought Jerry Ford's campaign in 1976 was the best political television I have ever seen up until this moment, including this moment. I mean, it was a wonderful message. And you heard that song in the second one, "I'm Feeling Good about America." Understand: this is the end of Vietnam and Watergate. And the Ford message was essentially he's not Abraham Lincoln, he's

not FDR, but he's not Richard Nixon, he's not LBJ. I mean, that was the message that came through about what a decent man he was. Everything they said was true. The argument basically was Jerry Ford's the old shoe. Jimmy Carter's a new suit. You're not really sure of him and that's why we want these people from Georgia to tell you what they know about him.

It was the most remarkable come back in American political history. He was 32 points down in the polls on Labor Day. He came within a switch of 14,000 votes in two states, Iowa and Mississippi, from beating Jimmy Carter. It was an amazing, amazing achievement and it was all on television because the campaign itself, he was liberating Poland in the second debate you'll recall. I mean, it was just totally unhelpful and it was ... You know, they were arguing about Clarence Kelley, the FBI director, grapes and valances. I mean, it was not a big issue campaign, so the campaign was on television.

DAVID GERGEN: Yeah, but that was Doug Bailey and John Deardourff.

MARK SHIELDS: Doug Bailey and John Deardourff and it was a great campaign. And Stu Spencer, and David's right. Stu Spencer, who later was Ronald Reagan's advisor, had to go to Jerry Ford and say -- that's when Ford did his Rose Garden strategy, never really went out and campaigned -- He said, "Mr. President, you are a disaster when you go out." He used more graphic language, which I'll save the tender ears of the people in this room. And this is to Jerry Ford, who'd done 300 chicken dinners a year on behalf of Republican candidates. "Everywhere you go, you cause points. You're a terrible candidate, but you're a

great President. You're going to stay in the Rose Garden.” And that's how they ran that campaign. And they ran it essentially on television and what he did officially as President.

DAVID GERGEN: Yeah. It was also true that that was one of the last moderate campaigns on the Republican side.

MARK SHIELDS: That's right.

DAVID GERGEN: That was very much appealing to the center, it was not ...

MARK SHIELDS: Yes.

DAVID GERGEN: And Bailey/Deardourff came to represent that. Doug Baily, by the way, has gone on to invent the hot line in politics and has been involved in a number of efforts to improve the quality of politics. And John Deardourff went off to do a lot of things about pro-choice issues. But they found after that, I think they found themselves increasingly stranded in Republican politics in terms of ...

MARK SHIELDS: Howard Baker was their last one in 1980.

DAVID GERGEN: Yes, right. Dee Dee?

DEE DEE MYERS: Just a couple thoughts. The daisy ad was, I think, subsequent documents proved that it was designed specifically to be shown one

time and to drive a conversation. It was shown on NBC during the movie of the week in September of that year. And it subsequently made the cover of *Time* magazine and a number of other places, and so it did generate a huge conversation. And what struck me about some of these ads was how not only the themes are the same, but the tactics repeat themselves. Because we saw the same thing in 1988 against Governor Dukakis here, the really important ad, which we'll see only aired one time. But that was incredibly effective and it obviously was ... It reminded people that Barry Goldwater had said things like he was in favor of using tactical nuclear weapons and extremism in defense of liberty is no vice. So it sort of reminded people about their fears of Goldwater.

The Humphrey ad is hilarious, everyone laughs, but I don't think those ads, my sort of reading is they're not particularly effective. And, again, we saw that one echoed during the Dukakis campaign when they did one about Dan Quayle. The whole ad was just focused on the Oval Office, basically saying one in five vice presidents has gone on to be president. So you see this thing, oh, we got to be terrified if this guy's vice president, but they don't really have that much affect. Because as Mark said, people don't really vote for vice president. And I think those ads sort of underscore the difference between the elites in Washington and what they think is scary or funny and what the people at home are thinking about. So I don't think those are particularly effective.

As for the Ford ads, what I was struck at in that whole campaign, looking back at some of it, was how both of those candidates were trying in the aftermath of Watergate; it was all about character. And both their ad campaigns focused so

intensely on “this is a good man.” He has good values, and when push comes to shove, he’ll be for you. And both campaigns parallel those two things and I think some of Ford’s gaffes and his association with pardoning Nixon clearly cost him that election because they were two good men. Ford had more experience at a time when the world was still in the midst of the Cold War, but a few mistakes cost, and his association with Nixon cost him the election.

DAVID GERGEN: Yes. We're going to move on now to our final brace of ads. Pay particular attention, if you might, this time because we’ll come back and talk about it, to the ads from the 1988 campaign that were very much the product of Roger Ailes and Lee Atwater. And we’ll talk a little bit about the connection between those ads and what we’re seeing today, because there's some interesting parallels. So we’ll run these.

[VIDEO]

DAVID GERGEN: Ouch! Yes, ow, is that what you said? Yes, right. Wow, we covered a lot of ground in those ads. David Broder, I always felt that that Reagan, “The Morning in America,” was a wonderful ad. But it was content-free as opposed to his 1980 campaign when he campaigned and got a mandate for change on specifics. His 1984 campaign was his feel good campaign and it helped to win him a big election but left him without a mandate.

DAVID BRODER: That is such a picky ... [laughter] ... I thought the idea was to win the election and clearly that's what Reagan and Jim Baker and the others

thought. That was a perfect ad for that year because America was finally feeling relief from the humiliation of the hostage crisis, inflation that was tied to the energy crisis. It took a while because there was a recession in the first year and a half of the Reagan administration. But by the time we got to '83, '84, Americans were feeling for the first time that they could actually make some plans for their own family and their own future that wouldn't be disrupted by external events. And that ad captured the public mood perfectly. And I thought it was just a superb ad. It did not create a mandate for any particular governance, and second terms often turn out, as you know David better than I, not to have much in the way of an agenda or a mandate to them.

DAVID GERGEN: Right. I remember Ed Rollins the day after the election, and he wanted to go, after the '84 election, he wanted to go out and claim a mandate. And Baker said, "You can't do it. You just can't do it," because of that. Mark?

MARK SHIELDS: I think the first ingredient that all TV spots be tested on is their truth. And that was true in that "Morning in America" spot. People did feel better. Ronald Reagan had re-purchased the nation's optimism. And you have to recall the campaign of 1980, there were serious scholars, I mean even those appearing on the op ed page of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, distinguished journals, the presidency is too big a job for one man. We ought to have one, single secure term that no president should have to seek reelection because the problems -- the word was intractable -- And what Ronald Reagan did in addition to purchasing our optimism was he purged the word intractable from the nation's vocabulary. There's a longer version of that spot in which the narrator

says, "Interesting that no one anywhere is saying the job of President is too big for one person." And it was absolutely true. It laid the precedent to seek a mandate. It obviously wasn't mandate-seeking in itself. Reagan was seen as having failed. The Harris Poll at the time, how his dealing with the Soviets had failed, dealing with El Salvador had failed, the environment had failed, helping the needy, controlling defense spending had failed in voters' judgment and all that in the micro test. But on the macro test of the presidency and how the nation felt about itself, felt about him and the optimism, Ronald Reagan decided to run on a macro level. And that was something his opponents couldn't manage.

DAVID GERGEN: Dee Dee, I wonder if we could skip all the way over to the Clinton and Gore ads and then I want to come back to '88 if we could. That Clinton ad brought back a lot of memories. How effective was that, that first Clinton ad, "The Man from Hope"?

DEE DEE MYERS: I think it was a terrific introduction. I mean, keeping in mind people didn't know much about Bill Clinton when they saw that. And I think the image of him shaking hands with President Kennedy in the Rose Garden was tremendously powerful and Bill Clinton talking about his own experience with that. But now through the prism of all we know, you see him and he says, "And I think, you know, what a great country this is that I can shake the hand of a President, and it made me think that I could make a career in public service." When you know what he meant to say was, "I could be President." So it's a great moment. And it reminded me of all the hope that was infused in the early part of the '92 campaign when Bill Clinton really seemed like he might change the world.

And I think the ads throughout that campaign were tremendously effective. And one of the things we've seen is when candidates are good on television, the ad people use the candidates and Clinton was good on television.

DAVID GERGEN: That's interesting. And they could use them, they could use Gore very effectively against him.

DEE DEE MYERS: Against himself?

DAVID GERGEN: Yeah.

DEE DEE MYERS: That's devastating. That's painful to watch now and you think there's nothing else they need to say, which is why all they have is the simple television sitting there in the kitchen and people thinking, "You're watching this in your kitchen. This man cannot be President."

DAVID GERGEN: Let me then juxtapose '88 versus '92. It seems to me that what we're now seeing in this campaign is very much like what we saw in '88. I mean, the advertisement about John Kerry on defense seems almost a son of that ad. "He cut this, he cut that," or "He voted against this, he voted against that." There's no John Kerry in a tank, but John Kerry's been unable to get a kind of Man from Hope kind of ad on to introduce himself.

DEE DEE MYERS: Well, he did in Iowa. I think some of the testimonials from his Vietnam comrades were tremendously effective. I think they were out of the

same genre. But I think the Bush camp did ... This Bush campaign used Kerry's words against him in a similar way when he said, "Well, actually I voted for the \$87 billion before I voted against it." And I think one of the most damaging things can be people using their own words or their boss's -- in Eisenhower's case -- his words against them, and it doesn't need any explanation. It doesn't need any more words; the viewers see it for themselves and the advertisers know how incredibly powerful that is. People make their own judgments.

DAVID GERGEN: We're not going to be watching any ads from this campaign. I wonder if you all can describe what we're seeing. David, do you see some parallel between the '88 and what's happening now with the anti-Kerry ads? Because I see a sense of here's Lee Atwater running the '88 campaign and running the Willie Horton and then running that tank ad. And then now here's his protégé, Karl Rove running the ads which have some echo?

DAVID BRODER: Some echo? I would say it's right off of the same play book. The thing that struck me looking at the tank ad is that we think about the tank ad as making fun of Michael Dukakis's stature and appearance. But the real message of that ad was what was being ...

DAVID GERGEN: Script.

DAVID BRODER: ... scrolled over those pictures there about his alleged weakness on weapons policy. And we are certainly seeing that again used against John Kerry. What is absent and what is exactly the point that you were going to

make with Dee Dee is Kerry has not as yet found a narrative of his own life or a link between his own life and where the country is at the moment that is anything that could be communicated through this sort of visual shorthand of a television commercial. When we see John Kerry on television, he is talking in a very objective way about an external reality. But he hasn't linked himself to that story in any respect so far and whether they can find that is something we'll find out over the next six months or so.

DAVID GERGEN: Mark?

MARK SHIELDS: Better find out in the next three months, David. I mean, I guess if it isn't found by the first of August, it's not going to be found. But I agree, I agree with both Dee Dee and David. I would say this. This race between Kerry and George W. Bush strikes me very much as a race between George W. Bush and George Herbert Walker Bush. The parallels with John Kerry and George Herbert Walker Bush I think are striking. Young man, great courage as a young man. They spent the rest of their life wanting to become President, not identified with any defining issue or overarching mission in their public life. And in a strange way, I think that's part of what is lacking in the Kerry candidacy right now. And that's why the Vietnam experience is so important. To those of us who covered the primaries, it was a different John Kerry we saw in the company of his comrades than it was the rest of the time. And the rest of the time, he sounded like a [inaudible] for Congressional Quarterly in the co-sponsor and the motion to recommit. But they tabled the motion to recommit and as the eyes just glaze over. But in the company of those with whom he served and hear their testimonials

about him, I mean, you could see the effect upon the audience. But you could see the effect, more importantly, upon John Kerry.

I think one change between '88 and this year, and it's an important one, is in the McCain-Feingold Bill -- I should say Meehan-Shays as well here in Massachusetts and New England. And that is that now we have the tag line that the President himself or the presidential candidate has to say, "I approved of this ad." And I think in a strange way, it's going to lead to greater accountability and perhaps less of a scorched earth campaign than the one that we saw in 1988 against Michael Dukakis. Because even though you've got a narrator and a voice, it's still at the beginning or the end; it has John Kerry or George W. Bush saying, "I approved of this ad." That's in the law now, the candidate has to appear, not in little tiny print that looks like the back of an insurance policy that was sold somewhere in Nova Scotia, "Paid for by ... " So I think that's a difference and it's a salutary and positive difference, I think.

DAVID GERGEN: Did you do a double take on that, David?

DAVID BRODER: Yes. I think it's very optimistic, Mark, to think that the disclaimer is going to improve the content of the ads. As long as the consultants can convince the candidates that going negative on your opponent moves the numbers more effectively than anything positive that you can say about yourself, I think we are sentenced to this kind of sleazy advertising that we're seeing again in this campaign.

MARK SHIELDS: I'd just add, not by way of response, I think we in the press have done a lousy job of covering television ads. I really do. I think television news has done a miserable job. And I would hope that when they appear on *Meet the Press* or *Face the Nation* or George Stephanopoulos or any place else, that they'll have the imagination to put up an ad and say, "Now, tell us, you just spent, Mr. Bush or Mr. Kerry, \$15 million. You had the attention of the American people. You said this is the most important message I want to get out," whether it's George Bush double parked outside an orphanage on Christmas Eve or whatever the hell. He ripped the tag off the mattress in violation of federal law, whatever else. You know, I mean that you really ... Because this is the most important message of every campaign. This is it. Forget the speech to the VFW or the Little Sisters of the Poor or anybody else; this is the campaign, and this is where they devote their time, their resources, and they ought to be held accountable. And candidates ought to ask each other. I mean, you'd hope a national debate that George Bush would run that 30-second spot and say, "John Kerry, do you really believe that?" Because it should be part of the campaign. And once you've got that disclaimer in there with the candidate himself does endorse it and approve it, I think his accountability can't be denied. He can't do what the Bush people did in '88 and say, "Oh, that was an independent expenditure," as was done on the original.

DEE DEE MYERS: But the thing is they can because what's happened in the wake of campaign finance reform is soft money was eliminated and now all that money is flowing into these unregulated 527's which are independent expenditure committees. No one has to disclose who's giving the money or exactly how they're

spending it, and they're going to have no bones about running Willie Horton style ads if that's what it comes down to. Remember, Willie Horton was created and financed and run one time by an independent expenditure.

DAVID GERGEN: Yeah, but this was an independent ad. This was not a campaign ad, it was run by an independent ...

DEE DEE MYERS: Right, exactly. And Roger Ailes said, "Don't know anything about it, never heard of it, never saw it." But it only ran once and yet it's had a tremendous impact on politics. So I sadly disagree that campaign reform ... I mean, it might make Bush's ads a little bit, or Kerry's ads a little bit different.

The other thing that's happened in the wake of campaign finance reform is the candidates have blown the caps. And so what we've seen is John Kerry raising more money than any challenger to a president ever and President Bush breaking every conceivable record. We couldn't even imagine this much money a few years ago. And John Kerry just today announced that he was going to be spending \$25 million in the next three weeks. He's got two new spots, \$25 million in three weeks, which is a staggering amount of money.

DAVID GERGEN: Just help us all understand this. Why are people going so early with these big blitzes? I mean, the newspapers were full this weekend. As much as \$90 million has already been spent and we're months away from this election. Why so early? And why has advertising become -- David said at the beginning of this, in the first ads, how marginal advertising was back then. And

now Mark has said how central it is today. Why so early and why has advertising come to dominate our political discourse?

MARK SHIELDS: I'd take a shot at it. First thing is you have total control. I mean, that's what advertising is. It's the message that the candidate and the campaign want to deliver. They don't have to worry about being filtered through any other medium -- the press, print, TV, or anything. And plus you can speak to everybody at the same time, which is one of the better things about television and television advertising is that you have to assume that every ad you put on, your opponents are going to see. That wasn't the way it was; it isn't the way it is with direct mail, it isn't the way historically it was.

And I think what we have is two candidates running earlier campaigns. George W. Bush is running the 1992 campaign of his father. He's convinced at some level, there's a conviction that his father lost because he broke his word on taxes and because he angered the cultural religious right of his party, leading to a challenge by Pat Buchanan, and that cost him the reelection. So his presidency and his political message has been devoted to assuring that neither of those things happen.

John Kerry is influenced by Michael Dukakis, okay? That Michael Dukakis had a 16 point lead coming out of Paul Kirk's convention in Atlanta in 1988. Best convention the Democrats ever had, by the way. And the heroin was put in the bloodstream about Michael Dukakis. And the Gipper himself at a press conference talked about whether or not he'd had a nervous breakdown. "Oh, gee, I shouldn't attack an invalid, shouldn't criticize an invalid." So they started planting this stuff

and the feeling was that Dukakis did not fight back and it crystallized obviously in the Bernie Shaw question in the debate. "What would you do if somebody -- your position on capital punishment -- if somebody raped and murdered Kitty Dukakis." And Dukakis managed to turn it into a ... I have great respect for Michael Dukakis, but he managed to turn it into an international commission on drug laws meeting in the Caribbean that ought to be held. And, you know, you're just dying for somebody to say, "I want to kill the son of a bitch with my own hands, that's what I'd want to do. But, you know, because I think of Kitty, I wouldn't do it because I remember her memory and I know this isn't the answer," however they do it. And the point is because he didn't, now John Kerry's going to answer every slight. And if they're spending \$25 million on the two commercials I've seen, wow. I mean, gee, the one was just a litany of the three things he's interested in doing. There wasn't any emotional connection in it. Maybe the other one's gangbusters. Let's hope.

DAVID GERGEN: David, why so early and why has advertising become so front and center?

DAVID BRODER: Well, I think Mark's explained the dynamic of what's in the back of their minds. But the other thing that's moved it early is the fact that despite the noble efforts of McCain-Feingold and their partners up here in New England, the money chase has accelerated and not slowed down, as Dee Dee pointed out. And if you give that much money to people who make money out of putting ads on the air, they're going to persuade the candidates that it's damn well time to start getting the ads on the air.

There is one small, slight countertrend which may over time give us some relief from some of this. As the television spectrum has divided into smaller pieces, there are now beginning to be some doubts about how effective television advertising is. And the parties are rediscovering the virtues of two-way communication which basically means going back to the future of old fashioned precinct work. Started with organized labor, was picked up by the Democrats. Republicans say that in states like Iowa and Wisconsin, they lost the states because they got out-worked on the ground. So now the Republicans have moved in with all of the resources that they command to try to do precinct work again. Precinct work is much healthier for our politics because it actually conveys a message to the person whose door is being knocked on that they have an active role that they can play if they choose to in the campaign. They're not sitting back on the couch having the campaign roll over them unwillingly there. It makes them participants potentially instead of just spectators.

DAVID GERGEN: Dee Dee, I had the impression as well that this early advertising was something that Clinton did in '96 to great effect, that he basically carpet-bombed Bob Dole before Dole ever got his campaign off the ground. And Dole never was able to get any altitude.

DEE DEE MYERS: Right. Clinton decided to start early. In '95, he started airing commercials and people thought that was a very risky strategy to spend what money he had. And two things, one, he reinforces all his accomplishments. And, two, as David said, he carpet-bombed Bob Dole. And it turned out to be very

effective. The Dole campaign for reasons having nothing to do with Clinton, never really found their footing. But that certainly is something people remember and Karl Rove, among other people, remembers.

I think there's another reason. So I think certainly the Bush campaign is doing some of that, but they didn't really start advertising partly because of the ongoing war until February when ... And I think that was partly generated by the Democrat's decision to condense the primary schedule. And so what we basically had was the entire Democratic primary happen between late January and the beginning of March. It happened in five or six weeks and all of a sudden it was March 2nd and we had a general election. We knew who the nominee was going to be and we knew the President was obviously going to be the Republican nominee. And so there was no reason for the Bush people to hold back. They knew they had \$200 million if they needed it, and they wanted to take Kerry out before he ever really got his sea legs. And they did a pretty effective job, \$60 million already in mostly negative ads.

But I think one of the things about all these 500 channels means that sophisticated advertisers will just micro target. And one of the things the Bush campaign has done is looked for their constituency. Which is, you know, one group that they do very well with is white men who watch a lot of sports, so they buy a lot of ESPN and things like that. They've been able to reach [inaudible] ... who's, you know, he's obviously their prime target. [Laughter] No, but seriously now you can just ... Any demographic group you want to reach, you can do that through television. And so I think it's a combination of the calendar and the money.

DAVID GERGEN: ... \$90 million with 25 more coming on top of this soon. Is this a healthy way to elect a President?

MARK SHIELDS: Depends on the President we end up with. [Laughter and Applause] Yeah, you know, it was broken. Just review the bidding. I mean, George W. Bush decided with no opponent -- it wasn't like in 2000 -- he just decided to raise whatever they could. They doubled the limits and so they decided to double the pot and they went from pioneers to rangers to what, sheriffs? They got all these categories, Wyatt Earp, or whatever, that raise money. [Laughter] And so the Democrats, I mean, Howard Dean changed campaign financing this year. Let's be very blunt about it. I mean, Howard Dean proved you could raise a lot of money not dependent upon the traditional, conventional givers of \$2,000 checks. And he proved that hundreds of thousands of people were willing to write small checks. And once that was gone, I mean Kerry was then given the chance to compete by mortgaging one of their small properties in a trailer park. [Laughter] And the key is once John Kerry, whoever got the Democratic nomination in 2004, was going to sit under a waterfall of money.

You have to understand that George W. Bush has more unfavorable ratings among members of the other party than any president in the history of the Gallup Poll, okay? Fewer Democrats give George Bush a positive rating than Republicans gave Bill Clinton a favorable rating. One-half as many have a positive feeling about George Bush as did about Ronald Reagan; 18 percent fewer than Richard Nixon. I mean, so whoever got it -- I mean, it could have been Micky Glotz would

have been the nominee, would have been sitting there and getting an awful lot of money. And I think once the barrier had been broken, it was just all bets were off. And I think the Dean miracle is really what set the whole thing in motion.

DAVID GERGEN: All right, let's go to the floor. Your questions are welcome, the microphones are here. Sir, you have the first question.

AUDIENCE: My question relates to the coming debates between the two candidates. It appears to some people that if Kerry learns how to speak without being a radio announcer, he might warm up and beat Bush. Bush might not do quite well in a debate against Kerry, whose mind is very sharp. What do you think?

DAVID BRODER: Well, Mark and I both covered the Kerry-Weld race up here and we saw how well John Kerry did in debates against a very charming, attractive and probably more likable Republican opponent. So he's had some experience in this kind of a situation. And I don't discount that he may do very well against President Bush. The risk, as some Democrats will tell you, is he may do too damn well and appear to be just sort of so patronizing towards the President that there could be a backlash against his knowledge ability.

MARK SHIELDS: And give this to Dee Dee, because she's been through this personally. American voters pick presidents and there's not a race in which the candidate counts more than the presidency. And they really feel they have an information overload about these people. And remember Peter Hart, the wonderful

democratic pollster ran a series of focus groups in 2000 and I was lucky enough, and David was there as well, but I was lucky enough to see him ask the same question of several groups. And he asked participants, "If you were transferred from your job 60 miles from home, and you had to get back and forth in time, make your trip shorter, you had one of these candidates, Pat Buchanan or George W. Bush or Al Gore ride in your car pool, to be in the HOV lane." And not one person ever chose Al Gore.

At the same time he asked, Peter did the same groups, remember Regis Philbin's show was quite popular at the time, *Do You Want to be a Millionaire?*, and you had a hot line call to make if you were stumped for a question, and who would you call, and not one person mentioned George W. Bush, okay? [Laughter] I say that because, you know, I guess Al Gore probably on points won those debates in 2000, but people decided they didn't want him in the car pool. They really didn't want him in the living room or kitchen or wherever for the next four years.

And I would say in a debate, the one time I saw Kerry in this whole campaign debate well was in New Hampshire before the New Hampshire primary and they had imposed a limit of one minute on the answers. And Kerry was prevented from his preambles and his circumlocution and his wind up delivery to end. And he was forced to go in a minute, and he was pretty damn good, and David's right, against Bill Weld who had an IQ of 200 and was a lot more liked by the press and people that covered him, you know, he was a successful politician. I mean, Kerry did take him out.

DEE DEE MYERS: Yeah, Mark, you said it so well. I would just add that everybody thought that Gore would clean the floor with George W. Bush the last time around. That didn't happen. Maybe on substance points Gore did a little bit better, but Bush held his own. And there was the moment to me that was ... There's always an unexpected moment in debates, and they usually have very little to do with substance although sometimes it can be substantive. But there's a moment where voters, kind of sums up how voters feel. And in 1992, it was the debate where George Bush looked at his watch. They were in the middle of a town hall debate. Clinton was completely enthralled, and George Bush looked at his watch.

DAVID GERGEN: That's right.

DEE DEE MYERS: There was a moment in the Bush/Gore debates that I thought sort of summed it all up where Gore got up out of his chair and kind of lurked over Bush. And the thought over ...

MARK SHIELDS: Stalked him.

DEE DEE MYERS: He stalked him, exactly. The thought bubble over Bush's head was, "I'm going to take him outside after this debate and beat the living daylights out of him." And everybody sympathized with Bush at that moment. And so there's always an unexpected moment that sort of explains to people what non-verbally how they view these two guys and it's important. It's why there's so much time and effort that goes into trying to take all the unpredictability out of the

debates in terms of who are going to be the panelists and what exactly is the format going to be. And is it going to be limited to a minute or are we going to let them go on. And in the end, it's out of anyone's control.

DAVID GERGEN: And who would you predict would win a Kerry/Bush debate?

DEE DEE MYERS: I think Bush comes off on television at this point as so much more likeable that that's a big problem for Kerry. But I think the potential for Bush to make a substantive mistake possibly, or for Kerry to make a Gore-like lurking kind of mistake, are huge. And so I think it's definitely not a slam dunk for either of them.

DAVID GERGEN: So somebody ought to call the Kerry campaign and say, "Limit this to one-minute answers?"

DEE DEE MYERS: And make him sit in his chair or something. Don't let him get up and walk around. [Laughter] Yeah, believe me, they will spend hours, days, weeks in the next couple of months before they get to the point of negotiating formats, trying to figure out how to limit the candidate's liability in every conceivable way. Height of podiums ...

MARK SHIELDS: I'm sorry, excuse me, Dee Dee. One more testimonial to Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan debated in 1984 as an incumbent President and he didn't have to. Jerry Ford had to in 1976, he was running 20 points behind Jimmy Carter. That was his only hope. It was the first time we'd had a debate since 1960

and Reagan institutionalized it. He made it affirmative. He made it so now incumbents couldn't ... I mean, the Bush people are trying to get this down to one debate.

DAVID GERGEN: They are? They tried to?

MARK SHIELDS: I don't think there's any question of it. I think they'll try to ...

DAVID GERGEN: Do you think they can get away with that?

MARK SHIELDS: No, but I think they'll try.

DAVID GERGEN: David, do you think they can get away with one debate?

DAVID BRODER: I think Mark's right that they will try to have it early and single.

DEE DEE MYERS: I think they can get away with it.

DAVID GERGEN: You think they can?

DEE DEE MYERS: They don't respond to pressure from the press and the public doesn't care that much.

AUDIENCE: That's not true.

DAVID GERGEN: You think they can get away with it, David? I think they would have to have at least two and maybe ... At least two and maybe three?

DAVID BRODER: I don't know. Paul will have to arbitrate this ultimately, but I think ...

DEE DEE MYERS: I hope I'm wrong.

DAVID BRODER: Debates are not Bush's best format. [Laughter]

MARK SHIELDS: Yeah, you're right.

DAVID BRODER: And if you're the incumbent, you hold the high cards. I mean, I remember very well, this is an un-polite thing to say to a Boston audience, but Paul Brontas, who is a very smart lawyer, got taken completely to the cleaners by Jim Baker in the negotiations because Baker was sitting there as the incumbent representing the incumbent President. And he knew he had the high cards and he used them. I can't believe that that lesson has been lost on young George Bush.

DEE DEE MYERS: The only thing I would add, though, is I'm not sure one debate is really in their interests because then it becomes such a high wire act that you don't have a chance to have a second opportunity. And given Bush's ... You know this is not his greatest format. They might want two debates just to lessen their odds.

DAVID BRODER: The one caveat I would give to John Kerry going into the debate with George W. Bush, knowing the names of the NATO countries and their principal products is not what this is about. [Laughter] And *The Los Angeles Times* has a wonderful four-part question that they asked nationally at the end of last year. And they asked, “Which of these four categories do you fit into? I like George Bush personally, and I mostly agree with his policies. I like George Bush personally, and I mostly disagree with his policies. Or then, I dislike George Bush personally, and mostly disagree with his policies. And then a very bizarre subgroup called, I dislike George Bush personally, but mostly agree with his policies.” So about four or five percent of real eccentrics in the country.

But what is most interesting to me is that 68 percent of Americans like George W. Bush, okay? And it drives my wonderful wife of 38 years absolutely looney because she doesn't know anybody who likes George Bush. Doesn't dislike George Bush and dislike his policies, and that's 20 percent of the electorate.

So for John Kerry or any Democrat to beat George Bush, you have to somehow persuade that 28 percent of voters, almost a third, who like Bush personally but disagree with his policies, that his policies are enough to vote against him and to vote for the other way. There's no point in going in and belittling him or make him into Dr. Strangelove or whatever else. And those are the 20 percent of the people who have fueled financially the Kerry campaign. I mean, because they're still writing checks today.

DAVID GERGEN: Yes, ma'am?

AUDIENCE: Thank you. I'm from New Hampshire and I wanted to know your opinion on our former Governor Jean Shaheen and what impact she is having on Kerry's message.

DAVID GERGEN: Response here?

DAVID BRODER: I think Jean Shaheen was very important to Senator Kerry in New Hampshire. Because when he decided basically to pull the campaign out of New Hampshire and take his shot in Iowa, it was left to Jean Shaheen and her husband Bill to carry on the campaign. And they did it very well. She is a superb organizer, and she really did him great service there. I think in a national campaign where she is not a known personality, her impact is likely to be much less.

DAVID GERGEN: So we'll get to as many, why don't we go on if we could. Yes, ma'am?

AUDIENCE: Thank you for being here, it's exciting. My name is Barbara and my question is more or less a request. I was wondering what you thought of the SBG fiasco, the censorship as far as the station was shut down because of the soldiers, the homage to the soldiers?

MR. GERGEN: The *Nightline*?

AUDIENCE: Yeah? And how censorship will affect your job in the future. Do you think this is a precedent? Thanks.

DAVID GERGEN: Someone want to take a crack at that and repeat the question?

MARK SHIELDS: Yes. Well, the Sinclair Broadcasting Group in particular had eight ABC affiliates and struck *Nightline* from its programs last week, which they regularly show. They had one in Springfield, I think, Columbus, Ohio, St. Louis, Baltimore. And because Ted Koppel devoted the entire show to doing what Jim Lehrer does on the *NewsHour* every week, which is to show a photo in the home town and the name of Americans who have died in the war. And I just thought John McCain, it showed why John McCain is a great national treasure. And he said anybody who thinks about war -- and he said, I supported this war and backed the President -- who does not understand the sacrifice and the pain and the loss that American families are enduring and doesn't want to honor those dead, does a disservice to this country and to eliminate those shows was unpatriotic. He said that to Sinclair Broadcasting. And I think he said it better than I could say it.

DAVID GERGEN: Do you think we're going to face, or we have faced, obviously, a shut down and we don't see the coffins at Dover. There was controversy over the photos that came out, the coffins. Are we going to see an increasing effort to hide from us those who are killed? Do you think a backlash is ... Do you think there's a lot of support for not bringing those to the air?

DEE DEE MYERS: I think this administration has had its way in many ways with the press in terms of really clamping down on the amount of information that it provides on the issue of the war and the war dead, among many other issues. I thought it was quite striking that Paul Wolfowitz recently, in front of Congress, did not know the number of war dead. He was off by a count of a mere 240 I think, which was shocking.

But I do think that the administration doesn't want the public to see those pictures and they've used the families, some of whom have said that they think their privacy dictates that they not be shown. And I think there's probably at least a family for every family that doesn't want the picture shown, there's another family that thinks having the country understand their sacrifices, as Mark was describing, would be a good thing.

MARK SHIELDS: I cannot understand why John Kerry hasn't been to families, I mean, in Massachusetts, personnel killed? I mean, the President is not only Commander in Chief, the President is Comforter in Chief. And at the time of the Challenger, and I don't mean to sound like a one note for Reagan, but Reagan did speak to the nation and comfort the nation. Bill Clinton did go to Camp Lejeune after the slaying of both our ...

DAVID GERGEN: Went to Oklahoma City.

DEE DEE MYERS: Went to Oklahoma City as well.

MARK SHIELDS: The embassy personnel. And it's what a President does. And the Dover test is very simple. It was laid down by General Hugh Shelton, who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2000 over at Harvard. He said in a speech, he said, "Before we go into any battle, we must first face the Dover test," and that is whether we as a nation are willing to accept the caskets and the deaths, and the deaths in particular, symbolically and visually, and the caskets returning to Dover Air Force Base are our most valuable treasure, our young people. And if we're not, then we shouldn't go to battle. And so what has been done in this case is to obviate that question and just to skip that test.

But I think in a strange way, the only two faces that we really have of Americans who've died or been hurt are Jessica Lynch and Pat Tillman, the NFL defensive back for the Arizona Cardinals. And you could see almost the administration and politicians in general being a little bit nervous about how to handle Tillman. Because they wanted to pay homage to him, but you can't have it both ways. You can't ignore the others who aren't NFL players and then elevate him, I mean, to the position of heroism, which he obviously deserves. He won the Silver Star posthumously.

DAVID GERGEN: Yes, sir?

AUDIENCE: Thank you for coming. We hear the high cost of television is what's driving the high cost of campaigning. We hear Congressmen bemoaning the fact that they spend all their time going for money. We hear the fact that lobbyists bring money in order to get laws. Why doesn't Congress do something to

control the cost of television ads, political ads? Or at least make it so that there is free television for politicians? [Applause]

DAVID GERGEN: David, could you respond to that and also with the Paul Taylor effort that's been going on?

DAVID BRODER: That's a proposal that is worth applauding. I think it gets much more to the heart of our campaign finance problems, frankly, than efforts to regulate the flow of money from the private sector to the political world, which we're seeing once again end up being pretty futile.

The Senate, through some act of inadvertence, actually passed a provision for low cost television time and the broadcast lobby, which is powerful, managed to kill it so quickly that it never saw the light of day. We're up against a very tough lobby which has, as you know, outlets in every single congressional district all across the country. And which I think frankly intimidates a lot of members of Congress from considering seriously a proposal that actually would open up the political dialogue in this country more effectively probably than every other single step.

DAVID GERGEN: What about the notion of having time available to the parties toward the end of the campaign where they could actually address people in a serious way about the issues as they do in Britain? Does that have any future at all?

DAVID BRODER: It runs into the same ... I think it's, again, a very useful idea that would do a great deal to change the dynamic of campaigns, potentially. But it runs into exactly the same opposition. This is a big money-maker. Campaigns, as we write about them in terms of what the cost to the campaign and how much money they are collecting, that money doesn't end up in the hands of the campaign. That money ends up largely in the hands of the television industry.

MARK SHIELDS: David, sadly, is absolutely right about the power of the broadcast lobby and the fact that you have to understand, one of the reasons I admire Russ Feingold and John McCain and Marty Meehan and Chris Shays is that every member of Congress is an expert on two subjects. One is education, because they all went to school. And second, is campaign financing because they all got elected. And they don't like to tamper with a system that produced them. They think the system is divinely inspired. "After all, I got elected by it." And it's no accident that the last president who really made this an issue was Teddy Roosevelt, I mean, to his everlasting credit. So it's going to take, I feel, on the question of free time, it's going to take a president, presidential leadership, I really do.

DEE DEE MYERS: I think the world is changing so much, and the ways in which people get their information is changing so much, I think there's still going to be tremendous pressure to raise money and spend it on television. But I think that efforts to, say, set aside time where Americans are going to sit down in front of their televisions together, that's an era that has passed us by. If the candidates are speaking at 9:00 on Tuesday, then every, you know, the cooking channel is going to put their iron chefs on against them. I mean, there's going to be counter

programming on the 500 other channels and people aren't going to watch it. And so I don't think, while that's admirable and potentially could happen, I don't think it will. And I don't think it would change things.

I think what we're looking at is we're on the verge of a change in the culture in the ways we get information generally. One of the things that was interesting about the Dean campaign is they raised all this money on the Internet. They didn't spend any of it on the Internet, but that's clearly the next frontier. So if there's limits on television advertising, then that money is going to find its way onto the Internet or onto radio or into some medium we haven't yet devised. We live in a market-driven culture where money will find a way to be spent in pursuit of whatever it is people want. And if it's elective office, elective office it will be.

DAVID GERGEN: The hour's late, we'll try to get through as many of these questions that are on the floor now as we can, and we'll probably run just a few minutes past. We started a little late, so we're going to go a few minutes past, but we'll try to go rapidly through. But if we could limit ourselves now to the six people on the floor. Yes, sir?

AUDIENCE: The last election was won in a four to three partisan vote by the Supreme Court. I've traveled this nation, I have not met one person who is not polarized, does not know who they're going to vote for. I don't care how much money you spend on TV. It defines what newspapers we read, it defines what television shows we watch. It defines what news, whether you watch Fox news or you watch ABC news. It defines what comedy shows we watch, whether it's Jay

Leno or *The Daily Show*, minds are made up. Who are we spending all of this political money for to try and convince someone to vote for somebody else in this election?

DEE DEE MYERS: Such a great question. [Applause]

DAVID GERGEN: Yeah, it is. David, you all at *The Post* had a wonderful series on the splits.

DAVID BRODER: Well, we did and we did a focus group in St. Louis last week that gave me a couple of clues about that. There are actually people who are quite conflicted. In our group, for example, there were people who were eloquent about their concern about what they see and hear coming out of Iraq, but feel that we cannot at this point just simply pull out of Iraq. Those folks are persuadable, depending on what the candidates say and perhaps even more on what events take place between now and November. Similarly, we had people who were poised between concern about whether there will be more jobs lost through mergers and outsourcing, or beginning to feel a little hopeful about there being more jobs created. Those folks are still on the fence.

DAVID GERGEN: Is it a small percentage, smaller than usual though, who are still persuadable? Do we have a far larger percentage of the population that's made up its mind than normal?

DAVID BRODER: I think that's probably correct.

DEE DEE MYERS: And, you know ...

DAVID BRODER: Go ahead, Dee Dee.

DEE DEE MYERS: I'll just add that in addition to there being a very small undecided in the middle of the spectrum, the conventional wisdom in this campaign is this election is going to be decided in a handful of states and already we're looking at both campaigns having target states, about 18, 17, 16. It'll shrink as time goes on, so not only is all that money being spent for a narrow universe of persuadable voters, it's going to be spent in a narrow band of states. So if you live in Ohio, you're going to be bombarded. If you live here in Massachusetts, you're probably not going to see a lot of ads.

MARK SHIELDS: That's right.

DEE DEE MYERS: But if you're a persuadable voter in Ohio, nothing else is going to ... You're going to see nothing else for months.

MARK SHIELDS: Dee Dee is absolutely right, and as David, in this case, they know how Massachusetts is going to vote, they know how Texas is going to vote, they know how California is going to vote, although there will be some dodging and fainting, and they know how New York is going to vote. They know how Utah is going to vote. So the money is going to be spent in those states. So actually in a strange way, national polling means very little in this campaign

because George Bush is carrying Texas by 40 points, it doesn't translate into more than the electoral votes of Texas. And if John Kerry is winning Massachusetts by 40 points. The conflicted voter is the key. Ohio I'm somewhat familiar with. It's somebody who's economically pressed and leaning Democrat and probably populist in his or her economics; at the same time conflicted by what they see as the Democrats sort of anything goes, laissez-faire attitude on cultural and religious issues. And that's a voter that both sides will try and win by appeals to what the party sees and the candidates see as strength.

DAVID GERGEN: And Iraq, are they conflicted over Iraq?

MARK SHIELDS: Yeah, they are conflicted over Iraq and I think ... I mean, one of the growing concerns for Kerry has to be is that there is a growing movement in this country right now just to get out. I mean, it is real. I can tell you from my own interviewing and my own travel and reporting. I mean, it's real. And if we have another month like we had in April in May, it's ... And if the turnover on the first of July goes to whoever knows who, and what new Saddam general is going to be brought back into the picture, at that point it becomes a little bit of a problem for Kerry because I think there will be a building represented by Ralph Nader to say, "What the hell are we doing there? Let's get the hell out now. It was a bad decision to go in there. John Kerry, you said in 1971 who's going to be the last person to die for a mistake?" So I think it could become very conflicted.

DAVID GERGEN: Yes?

AUDIENCE: Yes. I understand, or I've been told, that the FCC does not charge for a license for television stations. Is that true? And if that's so, the airways are free. If the airways are free, then why are such exorbitant prices charged during political years for presidential campaigns on the television stations? Does the FCC not charge? I understood that that was all ... The airways are free?

DAVID BRODER: That is correct.

AUDIENCE: That is correct? There was something in Massachusetts in a newspaper and the article was like two by two. I belong to the League of Women Voters and it was an issue we started to study. And we thought it was coming, it was in *The Boston Globe*, this little tiny thing. And we kept watching for it, and it disappeared, nothing happened.

DAVID BRODER: Well, the answer to your question is the companies that own television stations, including the company that I work for, *The Washington Post* Company, seek to maximize their profits. And they charge candidates pretty steep rates for the ads.

AUDIENCE: It seems to me as though it's unpatriotic for them to make money. They should do it as a public service. But presidential elections, there should be parity on television especially if the airways belong to the American people. It belongs to everyone!

DEE DEE MYERS: It's an idea that's been debated for a long time. But I think, again, the power of the broadcast lobby, among other things, has kept the system the way it is and the refusal of Congress to take any big stand or have any unanimity in their approach to changing it.

DAVID GERGEN: Let me ask you folks this question. Do you think that journalists are reluctant to take on the broadcast interests because so many journalists work for the broadcast interests?

AUDIENCE: Yes.

DAVID BRODER: Yes. I'm not sure that this is correct, so I should not state it, but let me put it this way: I did not, during the time of all unlikely reformers, when Bob Torricelli's amendment was before the Senate and in that conference, I don't remember ever seeing a story about that on television.

MARK SHIELDS: At the lowest rate.

DAVID BRODER: What?

MARK SHIELDS: About the lowest rate you mean?

DAVID BRODER: About the lowest, the subsidized rate for ...

DAVID GERGEN: Forcing down the rates?

DAVID BRODER: Yes, right.

DAVID GERGEN: Mark, do you have a view?

MARK SHIELDS: You know, I honestly hadn't thought about it, but I think it's plausible. I mean, I really do. I mean, I haven't heard anybody ever say that, or nobody's ever said it to me at 16 years at CNN or with the *NewsHour* at PBS, which of course doesn't take advertising in that sense, candidate advertising. It may very well be the case.

DAVID GERGEN: Yes, ma'am?

AUDIENCE: Thank you. It's a pleasure to ask you a question and I was pleased when the gentleman that introduced you talked about Tippy Canoe and Tyler Too, because I was raised in a city in Ohio that were so excited about that slogan at the time that they changed the name from Clarkville to Tippy Canoe City, Ohio, and a town in Indiana did that as well. And that brings me to my question, which is slogans are so important. Do you have a favorite slogan that you think has been more effective, contemporary slogan, and should each campaign capture a slogan early, or where do they come from?

DEE DEE MYERS: I sort of like, "It's the economy, stupid." [Laughter and Applause]

AUDIENCE: Happy days are here again.

DEE DEE MYERS: [Laughter] Happy days are here again, another good one. I think slogans are useful only in that if you can come up with a slogan that sort of defines what the candidate's for, that's a good thing. That means the campaign's doing its job. I don't think you should win or lose a campaign on the basis of a slogan, but I think if you can say in a couple of words that fits on the proverbial bumper sticker, there's just definitely something to that.

MARK SHIELDS: No, I agree. I mean, I think you can say something in a lot less than 30 seconds. That's one of the knocks that's made against television advertising, you can't say anything. "I'll go to Korea," as Dwight Eisenhower said in 1952, was a pretty effective five second statement. Or "Will you marry me?" is a pretty profound statement you can put in a lot less than 30 seconds. "I intend to kill you." All of those can be ... It depends on how you want to use it.

AUDIENCE: ... (inaudible)

MARK SHIELDS: As far as the ... The real deal [laughter] ... As far as the slogan that I recall that made, I thought, the most sense was when Hugh Carey ran for governor of New York in 1974. He was running against Howard Samuels who had deep pockets and many millions of dollars. And Carey had a long and rather effective and not well publicized, but quite a successful career in Congress. And his slogan was, "This year before they tell you what they're going to do, make them show you what they've done." And I always thought that was about as good a way

of encapsulating the difference between two candidates and with John Kerry, I don't know. Do you have a slogan for Kerry?

AUDIENCE: The real deal.

DEE DEE: I don't know, that's ...

MARK SHIELDS: The real deal.

DAVID GERGEN: He needs a slogan. Yes, ma'am?

AUDIENCE: Hi. I have two questions that are related. My first one is over the last year I've been watching the campaign on the news and I've gotten to the point where I turn my TV off. I can't look at the newspapers. I find that the news isn't objective anymore. And can we trust our press? Are they objective? I mean, we're all human here. Is it just too tempting to put that little political jab or exaggerate the story to make it better for your candidate? I mean, it's sad because we trust our press, or have in the past, but now I don't even turn on the TV anymore. I go to an event, I go, "Oh, I'm going to watch it on the 11:00 news." I look at the 11:00 news and it's like a different country, it's like a different place. It doesn't even relate to what I actually saw. So my question is, is the press really objective anymore?

And my second question is, is the press, is the balance of power out of whack?
Are they too powerful? And how do we check the press? It's important to have
press, of course, but is it out of whack?

DAVID GERGEN: Thank you.

DAVID BRODER: That's a topic for another whole discussion. I think the short
answer that I would give is if you mean by objective something that they used to
teach, I think, in journalism schools, that the job of the press is to hold up a mirror
to reality and let you see what you would have seen or experienced if you had been
there, that is beyond our capacity. I don't think we will ever attain that any more
than we could ask every single person in this room to walk out and do a three
sentence summary of what has just taken place here. People will respond
differently to similar events.

What we can attempt to do in the press, and I think what most of the working
reporters attempt to do, is to be as fair and as balanced and as aware of our own
biases and prejudices and values as we can be, to come as closely as we can
humanly come to that objective that you talk about.

AUDIENCE: Is the balance of power unbalanced? That's my other question. Do
you think there is a check on the press?

MARK SHIELDS: I mean, I think it's hard to argue that. I mean, President Bush
who certainly has not been someone who's solicited the press, courted the press,

wooded the press, I mean other than a very select, small group in the press, is, you know, doesn't indicate that most of the press, I think, would be disappointed in the access to him and the coverage, his availability. Irrespective of what your point of view is, but I don't think it's had any real effect upon his political fate or fortune of future right now.

I agree with David, you can't be objective. No human being is objective. All you can try to do is be fair, and I think I could make the case that there are major news organizations in the country that are not fair. I mean, I saw Bill O'Reilly condemning the casket photos that had been released -- very respectful treatment of Americans in the casket, flag draped coming back. What's interesting, he made this a sort of crusade on his show. It had never appeared, those photos had never appeared on Fox because they'd been boycotted. They never appeared in *The New York Post* which Rupert Murdoch owns. And so I mean there is ... I'm not pretending that everybody in the press is the same, and I think Fox is a different animal.

DAVID GERGEN: Yes, ma'am?

AUDIENCE: I haven't heard anything positive about Al Gore, but I thought he won the election. [Laughter and Applause]

DAVID GERGEN: Dee Dee, you want to be very brief about that? Let's go, all right. Yes, sir, fine. The other final word, sir?

AUDIENCE: I thank you very much for coming tonight. I don't know how I'm going to follow that act. My biggest push against all the advertisement is I think it drives people away from the polling places.

DAVID GERGEN: I'm sorry, you think it drives people away from the polls?

AUDIENCE: Away from the polling places. Election time comes, everybody's so happy to get rid of all the politicians, they stay away. Look at the turnover we've had in the last two years. Even 2000, the turnover was what, 43 percent? Just terrible.

DAVID GERGEN: Is the flood of television advertising a factor, or a serious factor, in the decline of voting?

DAVID BRODER: Well, a negative. It's a campaign strategy if you do negative campaign commercials to depress the turnout. I mean, that is a tactic that has been used in more than one race that I've covered where you just try and depress the turnout among voters who are going to vote for your opponent, or an area where the vote is disposed to your opponent, by just running negatives there instead of saying, "Well, what difference does it make if you do vote?" And so I think there's no question. I think negative politics over a sustained period of time does depress voter turnout. Somebody said to me, not original, but if you can imagine Budweiser and Miller, beer advertisers, running commercials the way politicians do? I mean, come on, if you say, "Drink Budweiser, you'll have a big belly and you'll have bad breath and a hangover. And you'll probably get in a car accident."

“Well, drink Miller and nobody will like you and you’ll burp a lot.” You know?

[Laughter] I mean, that's really what political advertising has become. The other guy’s an ax murderer? Well, yeah, he’s an ax murderer, so. I think it’s inevitable that negative TV advertising depresses voter turnout.

MARK SHIELDS: I think you've raised the most important question of the evening here, and I'm a bit of a fanatic on this, but let me say I think it has effects beyond depressing the turnout, which I suspect as you do is one of its effects. The other thing is that it makes it very, very difficult to govern. Paul may remember that there was back in the old days a Republican National Committee chairman named Thurston Morton from Kentucky who was also a United States Senator. And in his speeches, he used to use one line that really has stuck in my mind. He said, “The purpose of politics is the establishment of government.” Campaigns are for the purpose of creating governments. We have given so much power now and so much license to people who now view the purpose of politics simply is to prevail on election day. Campaign consultants take no responsibility for the government that they create. Winning is the whole game to them, and it makes no difference to them what tactics are used in achieving that victory.

For people who see politics as the purpose ... The purpose of politics is the establishment of government, the way in which you win is terribly important because the campaign is the preface to governing. And unless and until we find some way to bring back that ethic to the campaign people, I think we are going to face continual frustrations, not just in lower voter turnout but in the kind of

government gridlock and rancid partisanship that overwhelms Washington today.

[Applause]

DAVID GERGEN: How do we do that? How do we get beyond this rancid partisanship?

MARK SHIELDS: Politics is the most imitative business in the world. There are still people running for state legislature in Massachusetts saying again and again because John Kerry said again and again. [Laughter] There are people, they ask what color bumper stickers shall we use. And they'll say, "Gee, Jimmy Carter used green and he won." It's incredible. All you need is somebody to win. Joe McCarthy, who Mary McGrory so aptly described as a school yard bully, spawned a whole series of imitators because, you know, you take the cheap shot at somebody, you make the unfounded charge, and you get away with it. And it gets you publicity, it gets you attention. What it's going to take is somebody winning the way that David described.

I mean, it's not just being a namby-pamby, you've got to answer and rebut your opponents charges, but you've got to lay down what you intend to do once you're in office. And just the mention of Thurston Morton, if you want to know how it's changed, the business has changed, when Thurston Morton was chairman of the Republican Senate Campaign Committee, Warren Magnuson of Washington was the chairman of the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee. And one day -- this was before full disclosure of contributions and their names and addresses and all the rest of it -- the Democrats private contributor list was delivered by mistake, an

honest mistake, by a page in the United States Senate to Thurston Morton's Republican Senate Campaign. And the staff director came in and said, "Jeez, look what we've got, this is wonderful. We know who their contributors are and boy we can shake them down or whatever else." And Thurston Morton said, "Seal it up immediately. I want it returned. I want you to walk it over to Warren Magnuson's office because I know he would do exactly the same thing for me if it was mis-delivered to him." And that sadly is an era that's gone in American politics.

DAVID GERGEN: Dee Dee, it sounds to me like what we need to do is elect a woman president. [Laughter]

DEE DEE MYERS: It would certainly help. No, I think the entire culture has become coarser, and it's not just our politics, it's our entire culture. Whether it's politics or any other aspect of American life, we are bombarded with so much more information, unflattering information, about the people in public life and about each other, and I think that's the unfortunate backdrop against which we do our politics. So I don't think there's a quick fix, but I do, I think Mark and David are right, that it will take a couple of courageous people to win. In the meantime, I think when we have a ... I think for a long time people thought, "Oh, it doesn't really matter who wins." That's another problem we have in our great democracy. People feel like, "Well, my vote doesn't matter, it doesn't really matter. Either of these guys is going to be about the same."

I think this election we may see a spike. It turned out -- David Broder and I were talking about this earlier -- people feel so strongly and that will be, regardless of the negative ads, regardless of everything, there are real issues on the table from jobs and how we create jobs or whether we create jobs to the war in Iraq. And I think that will hopefully send people to the polls, and whoever the next president is will have a difficult time governing, but it will be helpful if a lot of people weighed in on who that should be.

DAVID GERGEN: Ladies and gentlemen, we still have seven months to go in this campaign, but it's hard to imagine ...

MARK SHIELDS: Six.

DAVID GERGEN: Six now? Thankfully.

DEE DEE MYERS: From today.

DAVID GERGEN: Oh, yeah, that's right. I don't think we'll hear a better discussion from a better panel. Thank you John Shattuck for putting this together. Thank you all for coming, and thank you to Dee Dee Myers, Mark Shields and David Broder. [Applause]

END