The Spot

The Rise of Political Advertising on Television

Edwin Diamond and Stephen Bates

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Diamond and Bates

World Radio History

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Political advertising on television represents a form of persuasion scarcely thirty years old. Already, however, the short thirty- or sixty-second political commercial, or polispot, has developed both distinct rhetorical modes and distinct visual styles. The polispot has also grown to dominate political campaigns in this country, especially in the large states and in presidential elections. For example, of the $29 million in federally allotted campaign funds that Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter each spent in 1980, almost half went into political advertising, mainly on television.

The Spot is a rich and provocative examination of the polispot form. It begins with the first spot use of television in the Eisenhower-Stevenson campaign of 1952 and carries through to the advertising and marketing campaigns of 1980 (and, prospectively, 1984). It discusses such famous—and infamous—examples of political television advertising as Richard Nixon's Checkers speech, Lyndon Johnson's Daisy spot, and Gerald Ford's "Feelin' Good About America" series.

Diamond and Bates interview the chief media practitioners, examine their techniques, and analyze the effects of their handiwork—on individual campaigns as well as on the political system as a whole. Scores of scripts and illustrations from key polispots are also included.

Edwin Diamond, a journalist and critic, heads the News Study Group at MIT. His previous books include *The Tin Kazoo, Good News, Bad News,* and *Sign Off: The Last Days of Television.* Stephen Bates is a media researcher at the Institute of Politics at Harvard University.

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To Justine and Jared
—*E.D.*

To my parents
—*S.B.*

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INTRODUCTION

In 1948 Harry S. Truman announced his determination to bring his presidential reelection effort to the villages and towns of America. He was able, by his own estimation, to log 31,000 miles in three months and shake the hands of some 500,000 voters. Scarcely four years later, Dwight D. Eisenhower sat down in a New York City studio to film three dozen television commercials, for which the voters were brought to him—a few days later an enterprising agent for Rosser Reeves of the Ted Bates advertising agency rounded up a group of tourists waiting to see the show at Radio City Music Hall, and took those "typical Americans" to a studio where their questions for Eisenhower were filmed, to be joined to Ike's answers. With that bit of splicing into a series of spots, called "Eisenhower Answers America," a new era of media campaigning began.

Dating from Rosser Reeves and Ike, political advertising on television represents a form of persuasion a little more than thirty years old. In that period the short (thirty- or sixty-second) political commercial, or polispot, has developed both distinct rhetorical

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modes and distinct visual styles. The polispot has also grown to dominate U.S. political campaigns, especially in national presidential elections and in the megastates. For example, of the $29 million in federally allotted campaign funds that Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter each spent in 1980, almost half went into "paid media"—political advertising, mainly on TV—and the same ratio is expected to hold in the 1984 election. In New York in 1982 a rich unknown named Lewis Lehrman, who had never run for public office before, spent close to $10 million to run as the Republican-Conservative nominee for governor. His aggressive polispot campaign gave him statewide recognition (from zero to ninety percent) and the nomination. In the general election Lehrman almost won the governorship.

Despite the importance of the polispot form, however, little has been written in any orderly fashion about the recent rise and present role of political advertising and marketing in American politics. Every four years magazine and newspaper articles appear, summoning up fears of campaign manipulation and behind-the-scenes image-makers. Those few books that have touched on political advertising have fed the popular iconography of media mercenaries who sell candidates like soap. We have found these old fears to be groundless and/or exaggerated. The real state of affairs is probably more serious: a new form of political communications has appeared, one that depends on high technology and big dollars and that may be turning elections and campaigns into a kind of spectator sport, a television entertainment, something to watch and enjoy but not necessarily to participate in by voting. In order to present that argument, our account is divided into four parts. Part I is a short depiction of the opening rounds of the 1984 presidential campaign, showing how media strategy fits within the wider campaign. Part II is a narrative of the role of television and polispots in the presidential elections from Eisenhower-Stevenson in 1952 to Carter-Reagan in 1980. The emphasis is on description and the presentation of representative spots from those campaigns, both in the text and

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in illustrations. Part III is our analysis of the major persuasive techniques and the visual styles of the polispot form, based on textual and visual examples from campaigns for mayor, governor, congressman, and senator, as well as president. Part IV brings together the political narrative and the media techniques in order to explain how polispots work and to assess the actual (as opposed to the fanciful) effects of television campaigns.

Our findings are based on two primary sources. First, we conducted extensive interviews with nineteen of the leading media managers in the country. Along with these question and answer sessions some media managers allowed us to watch them at work, and others arranged for screenings of their videotape collections of polispots, accompanied by their commentaries. We thank them for their help: Roger Ailes, John Deardourff, David Garth, Robert Goodman, Charles Guggenheim, Michael Kaye, Arie L. Kopelman, Malcolm MacDougall, Scott Miller, Joseph Napolitan, Barry Nova, Daniel Payne, Gerald Rafshoon, Rosser Reeves, David Sawyer, Tony Schwartz, Stuart Spencer, Robert Squier, and Ken Swope. In addition to the interviews and screenings with the media managers, we talked with other communications specialists, scholars, archivists, consultants, political candidates, and elected officials. We thank them too, and especially F. Christopher Arterton, James David Barber, Becky Bond, Walter Dean Burnham, L. Patrick Devlin, Ed Dooley, Dick Dresner, Albert Eisele, Jack Flannery, John Florescu, Curtis Gans, Kay Israel, Andrew Litsky, Eddie Mahe, Bill D. Moyers, Gary R. Orren, J. Gregory Payne, Raymond K. Price, Jr., Robert Shrum, Jane Smith, Lewis Wolfson, and Stephen C. Wood.

Our other source of primary materials is the polispots and other political television materials in the archives of the News Study Group in the Department of Political Science at MIT. This collection, begun in 1972, now numbers some 650 commercials, from "Eisenhower Answers America" (1952) to "John Glenn—Believe in the Future Again" (1984). The News Study Group archives have been organized and administered over the past

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four years by Jack Link, who assisted with our textual analyses of the polispots. Barry S. Surman analyzed these videotapes and prepared and photographed storyboards and stills for the illustrations. In addition to our own reporting, interviewing, and analysis we consulted reports, articles, campaign memoranda, books, public opinion polls, and political memoirs.

For administrative assistance and unfailing support, we thank Eva Nagy of the Department of Political Science at MIT and the staff of Harvard's Institute of Politics, especially Jonathan Moore, Elizabeth Pleasants, and Ruth Ballinger. We also thank Ann Fryling, Christine Gratto, John O'Sullivan, Kate Odgers, Paul E. Schindler, Jr., Cynthia Schmechel, and Polly Smith. Final responsibility for the argument and the analysis rests, of course, solely with us.

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1984

PART I

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FRAMING THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN: THE LAUNCHING AND ABORTED FLIGHT OF JOHN GLENN

CHAPTER 1

Eight p.m., and David Sawyer and Scott Miller settle in to work for their client, John Glenn, U.S. senator from Ohio, candidate for the Democratic party nomination for president, genuine national hero. It has been a long day, and Sawyer and Miller must be conscious of time. Though it is October 1983, with the presidential election still one year away, candidate Glenn trails Walter Mondale in the early maneuvering for the nomination. Mondale has already won important endorsements; the AFL-CIO, the National Education Association, and Democratic party leaders such as Governor Mario Cuomo of New York have come out for him. If activists dominate the party caucuses and closed primaries, then Glenn must get "the mandate of the people" in the open primaries—demonstrate his ability to attract those moderates (Democratic and Republican) and independents who will later be needed to win the general election. Glenn's pragmatic answer to Mondale's institutional lead at this point in the campaign is media (as Mondale's would be if the situation were reversed).

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That is why Sawyer, a forty-seven-year-old former filmmaker, and Miller, an ex-advertising copywriter who helped create some of the most acclaimed Coca-Cola ad campaigns ("Coke Is It!" "It's The Real Thing!"), are working late. They are the communication strategists for the Glenn campaign, hired to create his television advertising and to help make his mandate. They don't have much time.

Tonight, with the telephone at last silent and the conferences out of the way, Sawyer and Miller have two assignments. First, they will review the campaign's "early media," a Glenn television commercial made for airing during Saturday night prime time on the CBS network. Next they will prepare an "instructional" videotape of Glenn's speaking style, to be played for the candidate in his Washington office in strict privacy.

Sawyer's involvement in political campaigns goes back to the late 1960s, and he has submitted to enough reporters' interviews to be sensitive to what may be written that can hurt him, or his candidate. Inevitably there have been news stories about the media mercenary in politics only for the hefty fees (upwards of $15,000 to $25,000 a month, plus the advertising industry's standard fifteen percent commission of the hundreds of thousands of dollars paid for television commercial time). A few days earlier a newspaper article had referred to Sawyer as Glenn's "voice coach," a description that pained the consultant. More important, Glenn himself had been stung by a Mario Cuomo comment about the candidate's "celluloid image." The barb of course cut two ways. While Glenn is a certified national hero, he has had a hard time parrying the charge that he hasn't accomplished all that much in the two decades since his Mercury orbital flight. "Mr. Glenn's candidacy is still firmly bolted atop the rocket that lifted him into orbit 21 years ago," Howell Raines wrote in the *New York Times* on this very day that Sawyer and Miller are working late. Moreover, as a hoped-for consensus candidate seeking to occupy the middle of the political road, Glenn has tried to avoid taking too many specific policy stands in his early campaign. His

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opponents, especially Mondale, have homed in on Glenn's fuzziness.

Clearly Glenn must offer some substance in his advertising. His commercials can't look too stylized. His demeanor on the stump can't seem too staged. Images, celluloid or real, can't be too prominent in the campaign. And Sawyer in any event says he doesn't believe slickness works in political advertising. The audience voter, he says, has grown too sophisticated to be taken in. "They have been watching television for years," he says. "They have been exposed to paid political advertising, to news, to speeches. There is no way you can manipulate them, not now."

But just as clearly some communications strategy has to be followed. It is the way of the political world now, for any office bigger than village selectman. Aristotle argued that the ideal state ought to be no larger than a few thousand in population, so that citizen and magistrate could know each other. Madison in *The Federalist Papers* recognized that citizens would organize into factions and counted on the size of the American republic (with its population of three million) and on the federal system to prevent any single faction from gaining ascendancy. Today, in David Sawyer's view, technology has reunited the 230 million people of the republic, drawing together the voters and their leaders. Face-to-face meetings with everyone are no longer possible, but substitutes are available. All during the summer and fall of 1983 the public opinion specialist William Hamilton worked with Sawyer and Miller, polling voters on their opinions of the candidates (as were Peter Hart for Mondale and Richard Wirthlin for Ronald Reagan). Sawyer's associate, Ned Kennan, a social psychologist by training, convened representative samples of the electorate for small meetings called, in the marketing trade, focus group interviews (FGIs). In FGIs lasting as long as three hours, people expressed their feelings about their own lives and their attitudes about the country and its leaders, about family, friends, work, goals. The findings of this research became the basis of Glenn's

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first television advertising spots. True enough, critics might complain about the prominence of media mercenaries in the campaigns, about the high-tech marketing of candidates, about the manipulation of the hapless voter. But Sawyer saw it all as *greater* democracy and choice; polling, attitudinal surveys, and television would together achieve the Aristotelian goal. "We can now engage in a genuine dialogue with the voter," Sawyer told us, "and we can measure the impact we are having."

Reaching for "Hot Buttons"

The offices of D. H. Sawyer & Associates are at 60 West 55th Street in New York. DHS & Associates, like a score of similar firms across the country, is equipped to do time-buying, FGIs, advertising, and all the other work of the modern political campaign. Its work is substantive, though it must necessarily deal in appearances too. During the fall of 1983 Sawyer and Miller were involved in what John Carey at the University of Pennsylvania called the metacampaign—the campaign within the campaign. The metacampaign is waged not so much to win public support as to convince the big contributors, party workers, reporters, and the other attentive political elites of the actual campaign's credibility. If the metacampaign succeeds, money and volunteers will flow in; the press and the opinion makers will promote the desired positive image. In the campaign of John Glenn this would mean the appearance of a winner to Mondale's loser image, even though Mondale might in fact be leading in the public polls.

Metacampaigns and media politics begin so early, require so many specialist talents, and cost so much that their very prominence often obscures the fact that this is a relatively new development in American politics. The Mondale strategy was until very recently the exclusive path to victory—a traditional old politics campaign of organizational loyalties, institutional endorsements, and party identification. Glenn, by contrast, started out as a new politics campaigner. Sawyer may have been exaggerating when he told us, that autumn night, that the Mondale

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versus Glenn race was a "battle for the soul of the Democratic party." But it did begin as a contest about where the muscle and bone of modern electoral politics were and a test of how much could be achieved by media and advertising. Certainly, when it started, no one could say with assurance how it would turn out.

Sawyer holds a Scotch whisky and ice in a glass. Miller is sipping Coke from a can. Sawyer went to Milton Academy and studied Chaucer at Princeton. Miller, as it happens, is from a small town in Ohio, just like Glenn. Sawyer is dressed in the manner of an Ivy League executive about Manhattan: gray suit, oxford shirt, muted silk tie. Miller, thirty-eight, is wearing blue jeans, a blue denim jacket, and boots; with his reddish-blond hair and bent nose he looks like a New York City plainclothes detective. Sawyer made independent documentaries, including one nominated for an Academy Award, before going into the political communications business fourteen years ago. Miller joined Sawyer in 1976 to moonlight in political campaigns, while still holding down his creative job for Coca-Cola and other clients at the McCann-Erickson advertising agency in New York. Those campaigns for Coca-Cola remain as close to his consciousness as the can of Coke in his hand. Miller did the Mean Joe Greene television spot in 1978, an ad so popular that it spawned a TV movie. Many people who don't drink Coke—somewhere, someone said it's not "good for you"—can still remember today that old Mean Joe commercial as an emotional experience. Why were we moved by it? Why should a thirty-second commercial pitch on an ephemeral medium, for what is, after all, a trivial product, affect us so? And what might that have to do with the advertising campaign of John Glenn and the choice of the next president of the United States? Sawyer had spoken of a type of commercial that touches us personally, that hits what marketing specialists call our "hot buttons" of emotional response. Soft drink commercials on television are usually full of frolicking and fun: people playing with dogs, Frisbees, children; handsome young couples nuzzling; above all, folks smiling while consuming the product.

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Coca-Cola usually does its commercials that way and so does Pepsi-Cola. The trade calls them life-style commercials. We the viewers are supposed to associate all the good feeling and all the good living with the drink—and reach for it. The Mean Joe spot, however, went against this frothy wave of advertising.

Joe Greene was a large, menacing-looking (and black) football player of the champion Pittsburgh Steelers teams of the 1970s. He served in the trenches of the game, on the defensive line where the toughest physical combat takes place. Even if much of the audience didn't know this background, the commercial makes it clear that Greene has been beaten around and is scowling more than usual:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on grim Greene, limping slowly down tunnel from field toward locker room; words "Mean Joe Greene" superimposed on picture. Because he is alone, game must still be going on with Greene out of it, due to injury.	
Cut to kid (white, about age nine) standing in tunnel, bottle of Coke in hand.	Kid [sound on film (SOF)]: "Mr. Greene! Mr. Greene!"
Cut to Greene, scowling.	Greene [SOF]: "Yeah?"
Cut to kid.	Kid [SOF]: "You need some help?"
Cut to Greene.	Greene [SOF]: "Uh-uh."

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Cut to kid.	Kid [SOF]: "I just want you to know: I think—you're the greatest!"
Cut to Greene, grimacing.	Green [SOF]: "Yeah. Sure."
Cut to kid, offering bottle.	Kid [SOF]: "Want my Coke? It's okay. You can have it."
Cut to Greene, sighing. He takes it, drinks greedily.	Greene [SOF]: "Okay. Thanks."
Cut to kid, who hesitates, waiting for autograph or some sign of recognition from his hero.	As music swells under dialogue, lyric is heard: "A Coke and a smile/Makes me feel good/Makes me feel nice."
Finally kid turns to leave, reluctantly.	Kid [SOF]: "See ya, Joe."
Cut to Greene, suddenly animated and smiling.	Greene [SOF]: "Hey, kid!"
Greene grabs his game jersey and tosses it.	Greene [SOF]: "Catch!"
Cut to kid, beaming, catching shirt.	Kid [SOF]: "Wow! Thanks, Mean Joe!"
Supers fill screen: "HAVE A COKE AND A SMILE" (centered), "COKE ADDS LIFE" (in right corner).	Music swells.

Undeniably, we feel good after seeing this thirty-second playlet. "A transition has taken place," Miller explains, gesturing with his own can of Coke. "The world is an unhappy place: your boss doesn't appreciate you, or your spouse, or your parents, or your

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kids." But in the miniworld of "Mean Joe and the Kid," "an emotional exchange occurs"—between adult and child, hero and audience, black and white. The black man still cares, with all the burdens he has had to bear. The kid can still dream of bright tomorrows, when he is a man and a hero. We all can still hope. We begin to feel good about ourselves and the world. Our hot button has been touched. And the medium of this human exchange, its symbol, is Coke.

At this point, in our view, the transitional picture gets murky. Some people, at some level of cognition, will associate their good feelings with Coke and go out and purchase the drink. Others will savor the spot—and continue to drink 7-Up. Memorable advertising, we know, often wins prizes but fails to move goods. No one has been able to encapsulate the successful marketing of products, let alone political candidates, in one surefire formula. "Ninety percent of my advertising doesn't work, and ten percent does," a bit of Madison Avenue apocrypha has an executive complaining. "But I don't know which ten percent." None of this stops advertising and marketing people from trying to find the ten percent that works. And Sawyer and Miller admit to no self-doubts. As Coke is the common ground for "Mean Joe and the Kid," so too in the Sawyer-Miller 1984 scenario is Glenn to be the common ground for Americans: the hero symbol who makes us feel good. An observer may doubt whether the public will buy the product. But if Sawyer and Miller are worried, they aren't showing it this night.

A Narrow Window of Opportunity

Sawyer and Miller have finished editing and are screening their first Glenn commercial on a videoplayer in a conference room; the shelves on the wall are stacked with cassettes. A file of survey research, thick as the Manhattan phone book, sits on Sawyer's desk. As much as possible has been done to discover the hot buttons of the contemporary American voter. For weeks now,

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Sawyer and Miller have been studying the Hamilton polls and the Kennan FGIs. Voters have been telling the researchers that they feel oppressed by events: the economy swings, incomprehensibly, between highs and lows; the nuclear weapons buildup outpaces the efforts at arms control; Dioxin, toxic waste, and acid rain seem to threaten the air they breathe and the land they live on. They feel unappreciated, misunderstood. Above all the characteristic American confidence in a plentiful future—the belief that our kids will have it even better than we did—has been reversed. As the Reagan eighties reach midpoint, Americans are telling the Glenn researchers that they believe things will be worse for their kids than they have been for them.

These same Americans also have much to say about the putative leaders of the country. Walter Mondale, for example, comes across as honest and likeable—"Heck, I like him too," says Sawyer. The FGIs reveal that while many Americans consider Mondale a traditional politician, they also believe that the current troubles of the nation are moral rather than political. Mondale, as the Glenn strategists have been reading the research in late 1983, is identified with the discredited past and with the waffling policies and big spender approaches of the Jimmy Carter administration "that got us into all this trouble in the first place." The immediate beneficiary of this disenchantment with Carter and traditional Democratic party policies has been, of course, Ronald Reagan. In the FGIs that Sawyer and Miller have in front of them, Reagan appears as the "stern father," in Sawyer's phrase, who in 1980 administered the bitter medicine we all knew we needed to take. We were too soft, too permissive, too lazy. The Japanese were producing better cars and TVs. The Russians—even the Iranians—were pushing us around. A typical Reagan voter, a blue-collar worker on an assembly line, might say in his focus group, "I've been a Democrat, and I was making $20.50 an hour. But I wasn't working that hard, and we weren't doing that good a job. We needed to be shaken up." He approved of Reagan's attacks on "welfare bums." (When he lost his job, and when his unemployment benefits seemed threatened, he may have felt

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differently.) Reagan may have been right for 1980 and for today, though even that was beginning to be questioned. But he had not been all that fair to the poor, the black, and the dispossessed. Indeed, some of the research uncovered voter fears of impending social upheaval, especially in the northeast (real-life mean—and mad—Joes would throw rocks rather than jerseys). It was, in short, time to move ahead.

If Mondale represented policies of the past and Reagan those of the present, then that left one direction for John Glenn. What would be more apt for the first American to go into orbit than to identify with the future? It seemed perfect for Glenn as a communications strategy. But when people were asked in their FGIs what they knew of John Glenn, they would offer "former astronaut" and little else. Glenn may have become, post-astronaut, both a successful business executive (good enough to become a rich man) by the late 1960s and a U.S. senator by 1974. Yet few people knew that. One of the first tasks of DHS & Associates would be, as Sawyer explained, "to help fill in the gaps in the candidate's record." If Glenn was being positioned in the political marketplace as a leader for the future, then his early advertising had to tell people what he had been doing the last twenty years.

Still Glenn's past contained the major edge that DHS & Associates would be extremely reluctant to lose. When the men and women in the focus groups expressed their pessimism about the state of the country, they also recalled a time when, they said, things were good, when the country was on the move, when it was possible to believe in themselves and in their leaders. That time, according to Sawyer, was the early 1960s, with the mythic John F. Kennedy in the White House. In all the surveys, Kennedy's presidency was remembered (or misremembered) with pride as a time of Camelot and Can Do. He promised to get Americans on the moon before the Russians, and we did it. He scared the steel barons into line. He faced down Khrushchev in the Cuban Missile Crisis (never mind Castro and the Bay of Pigs).

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With this research Sawyer and Miller began shaping the words and images for Glenn's first advertising. A camera crew went to Ohio to tape Glenn delivering a speech at a school; the crew followed him to a factory visit and a county fair. In Newton, Iowa, Glenn and his wife Annie met with some thirty voters assembled by the Glenn campaign at the Izaak Walton League lodge. Glenn is standing in front of a fireplace and an American flag. The Iowans are seated on folding chairs. The questions and answers are spontaneous. Glenn gives long "untelevision" answers; to the first question about nuclear arms, he says he has a five-point program—and explains each point. The emotional hot point—the human exchange—is clearly intended to be the appearance of Mrs. Glenn, who until a few years ago had a major debilitating stutter. She is asked what kind of man, and potential president, her husband is, and she replies quietly, exerting control over each word: ". . . He knows about war . . . he has been in two. He doesn't have to watch late-night television to know about war. . . . He will work hard and keep his promises. He cares about the poor . . . the people without anything to eat . . . he cares about the en, nnnn, envir, enviro . . . let me try that again. He cares about the *environment*. He cares about the handicapped. I ought to know. I'm one. I was one of them, and he helped me. I could go on and on. . . ." Glenn then comes to his wife's side and says, "Well, I guess I have one vote here. . . ." "Annie," he explains, "used to be an eighty-five percent stutterer, which means that she couldn't get out eighty-five percent of all her words without stuttering. . . . You don't know what it means to Annie to get up and give a speech like that."

Sawyer had two crews at the Izaak Walton lodge shooting about two hours of the exchange; then, back in New York Sawyer's editors cut the material to thirty minutes. Meanwhile other researchers obtained NASA film and news stock of Glenn's orbital flight and his return to a joyous national welcome. The Walton lodge material was shown on statewide Iowa television only, on the evening of October 19. On that night several thousand Iowans

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were invited to some seven hundred house parties around the state to see the program. Glenn had been having severe staff problems with his Iowa state campaign, and the house parties were intended to be an "organizational tool" to attract volunteers. While the Iowans saw the Walton lodge material, the Ohio tapes together with the historical footage were edited into a four-minute, thirty-second spot for national exposure. The political realities of Glenn's situation—his strategists' conviction that he had to create his mandate at the very beginning of the nomination process, in Iowa and New Hampshire—had dictated an early start. "We have," said Sawyer, "a very narrow window of opportunity." The shorter spot, called "Believe in the Future Again," first aired on CBS at 8:55 p.m. EST, October 15, 1983:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on white letters against blue background: "At a time when most politicians are caught up in the policies of the past, or the issue of the moment, only one man is talking about the future."	Announcer reads script from video.
Cut to close-up (CU) of Glenn at microphone at outdoor rally, talking animatedly.	Glenn [SOF]: "As we move into this whole new time period, that I think is going to be every bit as changed and notable as was the days of the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, for instance—we're into computerization, automation, new ways of farming, new research, new ways of pro-

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	duction in our factories. We're just moving into a whole new time period that has tremendous advantages for the future, if we just set goals, and go for it!" [Applause]
Cut to medium shot, showing Glenn standing at rostrum, an American flag to the right.	Announcer [voice-over (VO)]: "John Glenn is talking about our future, what America *can* be."
Cut to extreme close-up (ECU) of Glenn. As he speaks, camera pulls back and pans his listeners, a group of transfixed young people.	Glenn [SOF]: "I'm still convinced that this country, if we set our goals, and set our values, set our objectives properly, this country can still out-invent, out-research, out-educate, out-produce, out-market any nation on this earth."
	Announcer [VO]: "He doesn't play to the special interests, doesn't play the old political game."
Cut to medium shot of Glenn in a factory, talking with workers. Reaction shots.	Glenn [SOF]: "It'd be very easy for me to come before a group just like you, right here this morning, and say, we're going to cut everything off at the border; we're going to protect American jobs, and we're going to make certain that there isn't a single prod-

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uct that comes into this country. It's easy to say that during an election period. I think we have to be honest with the American people. I will not promise things that I can't actually try to deliver on once I get there."

Announcer [VO]: "He's setting an agenda to move us into the future."

Cut to Glenn outdoors, talking informally.

Glenn [SOF]: "You know, on the international assessment scores, that compare our students with other students around the world, we rank tenth. We ought to hang our heads in shame. We rank tenth in education with our own kids in this country. Now, what's wrong with saying in ten years we will be number one in this world in educating our kids? And we can do it."

Cut to hands typing on computer keyboard, then pan up to Glenn, standing behind. Cut to various scenes of Glenn talking with voters.

Announcer [VO]: "Talking about goals for education, for the research and development of new technologies. A new commitment to rights and opportunities. A foreign policy that emphasizes a comprehensive arms control pro-

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	gram. A plan to build the economy and turn around the disastrous Reagan deficits.
Cut to shots of Glenn in his Senate office.	"In nine years in the United States Senate he has shown the courage to set his own course. He doesn't bend to political pressure. He doesn't compromise on principle."
Cut to Glenn in profile, addressing crowd. Pan crowd.	Glenn [SOF]: "The president said they were going to be there thirty days, period. And then they were going to come out. And that nothing would change that. And when the president says that he still does not report to us under the War Powers Act because they are in defensive positions—that has to be about as tortured logic as anything I can think of. I can tell you that the families that just attended funerals for the four Marines that got killed over there, and those that have had twenty-eight Marines wounded over there—they certainly think it was combat, I know that."
	Announcer [VO]: "A commitment to peace that comes squarely from the heart."

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Cut to Glenn in ECU, talking with small group. Reaction shots.

Glenn [SOF]: "I've been there. I've been shot at myself. My plane was hit on twelve different occasions. I know the terrors of war firsthand. I know what it's like to come back from a mission and sit down and have to write a next-of-kin letter to people I knew in the states, friends. Your husband isn't coming home; your father is not coming home. I know what that's like. And that sears your soul, I can tell you that. I don't want to see combat ever visited again on anybody if we can possibly prevent it. And nobody is going to negotiate any harder for peace than I will."

Cut to Glenn in space suit, walking by camera, waving; cut to ECU of Glenn's face seen through visor of helmet, as he prepares for blast-off.

Announcer [VO]: "They call him one of the true American heroes."

Mission control voice, as heard inside Mercury capsule [VO]: "Godspeed, John Glenn!"

Cut to rocket lifting off; cut to Glenn inside capsule, moving slowly in weightlessness.

Announcer [VO]: "Hurtling through space at five miles per second, as the whole world held its breath.

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Cut to John F. Kennedy, walking in front of Glenn; then Kennedy and Glenn in motorcade (black and white footage).	"He represented America in one of its finest hours, fulfilling the pledge of a young president full of hope and courage and faith in our future.
Cut to various shots of Glenn campaigning.	"Astronaut, Marine officer, successful businessman, senator—a lifetime dedicated to excellence, dedicated to this country."
Cut to Glenn outdoors, talking to voter, then walking off and shouting.	Glenn [SOF]: "Got one vote today!"
Cut to Glenn and his wife in motorcade, waving; then cut to various shots of Glenn with voters.	Announcer [VO]: "This is the message he takes forward, with his wife Annie by his side. Talking about what we *can* do, not what we can't. Not just promising what he'll do for you but telling you what we can do together."
Cut to Glenn at outdoor rally.	Glenn [SOF]: "This is a time to set a new direction. It's a time to begin setting goals again for this country. It's a time to challenge the American people—"
	Announcer [VO]: "This is John Glenn."

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	Glenn [SOF continuing]: "—to give their best. It's a time, in short, for our nation to once again reach for greatness."
Cut to shot of Glenn waving. Freeze frame. White letters superimposed: "John Glenn." Then beneath them a moment later: "Believe in the future again."	Announcer [VO]: "John Glenn for president. Believe in the future again."

In "Believe" the spot makers say they have positioned Glenn as the common ground, the link both to a patriotic heritage and to a confident future. "He shows he has no fear," Miller says. The political present is ignored: no specific Glenn votes in the Senate are mentioned. The transition point, the emotional exchange, occurs with the evocation of Kennedy and the space program's triumphs. That was the time when, the commercial implies, America had the right stuff. Glenn has it now, to lead America to greatness again.

Not so incidentally, the day after the "Believe" spot ran on CBS, the motion picture *The Right Stuff*—with its highly sympathetic portrait of the seven Mercury astronauts, but especially of John Glenn—premiered in Washington. The movie marketing plan called for an initial showing in 250 theaters, later expanding to more theaters for the December holiday season. If the movie continued to show "legs"—popularity at the box office—its producers planned to invest some $500,000 weekly in advertising. By the late winter–early spring primaries, however, the picture was judged a critical success but a box-office failure: eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds, the key movie-going group, stayed away in large numbers, thinking it more "political" than entertaining, and thereby missed its three-hour, ten-minute commercial for the good old patriotic days.

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The air time for "Believe" cost $35,000—a real bargain, says Sawyer—and the fund-raising trailer at the end brought in some $5,000 in contributions. This was a bonus; "Believe" basically had been designed to begin the metacampaign aimed at the attentive political audiences. As Sawyer explained, Glenn, by being first with his message, was attempting "to frame the campaign with his chosen themes." The media campaign itself came next, in January, with a $3 million series of spots intended to accentuate the differences between Mondale and Glenn. The spots depict a Mondale who is a tool of big labor and other special interests, whereas Glenn is framed by such words as "independent," "honest," and "courageous."

Every four years presidential campaigns produce a vogue word, like *credibility* (much used in the first post-Watergate election of 1976) or *momentum* (George Bush was said to have it, briefly, in 1980). For 1984 *framing* seems to be favored. Glenn's attempts to frame the campaign reflect an understandable concern for taking the initiative and presenting his candidacy and the race in his own terms. A frame, however, also implies setting rather than substance. In the early months of his candidacy Glenn had a growing series of major problems with the substantive part of the campaign—the contents of the frame.

Trouble at the Controls

There was, first of all, the matter of his fuzzily defined demeanor. Who, exactly, was John Glenn? As his detractors saw him, Glenn was a not very bright, retired Marine colonel. Barry Nova, a New York advertising man, did the media and advertising when Glenn first ran for the Democratic nomination for U.S. Senate in 1970. Nova is now a business executive in Greenwich, Connecticut, out of advertising and politics ("I don't even go to Madison Avenue any more," he says). Glenn, Nova now says, was a "great astronaut and a valid national hero" but also "shallow of thought . . . an egocentric." On the other side, Glenn's supporters see self-reliance and an admirable independence of spirit. Glenn

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1984: JOHN GLENN

Glenn ID Commercial

"We're just moving into a whole new time period"

"I will not promise things that I can't actually try to deliver"

"In nine years in the United States Senate he has shown the courage to set his own course"

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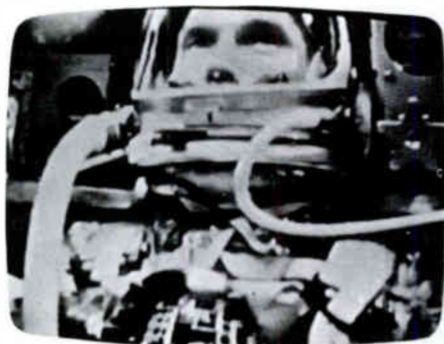
"Godspeed, John Glenn!"



"Fulfilling the pledge of a young president"

"John Glenn for president"

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lost that first primary race—to Howard Metzenbaum, himself defeated by the Republican nominee, Robert Taft, Jr., in the subsequent general election. Part of the problem, a former Glenn aide involved in 1970 later explained, was that Glenn has the sensibilities of a fighter pilot: "They want good support crews but they don't want any copilots." Both friends and enemies agree that Glenn is not the typical driven politician. Glenn himself often tells reporters,"I don't need the ticker-tape parades. I've already had them."

Glenn's political accomplishments were a second matter of dispute. On the plus side, he easily won his second term in 1980, a bad year for many other Democratic incumbents. There also is general agreement that in the Senate he has concentrated on developing an expertise in a few important, though highly technical, issues such as the difficulties of verifying a nuclear weapons limitation (one of his reasons for opposing the Salt II treaty of the Carter administration). Few people consider him a broad stroke policymaker; one Washington lobbyist was quoted as saying, "He doesn't see the forest or even the trees, only branches and twigs." Frank Van Riper, author of a campaign-year biography (*Glenn: The Astronaut Who Would Be President*), concluded that Glenn made a very effective legislator, especially for a standoffish sort who doesn't like politicking.

Third, his abilities to organize his own campaign came into question after a series of resignations and reshufflings of his staff in December and January. Primary races may not serve as a pretest of every facet of a candidate's prospective performance in the White House, but certainly the ability to organize and lead a staff is a condition of first-rank presidential service. And Glenn was getting barely passing grades in this respect in the weeks before the first primaries. Finally, there was little dispute about Glenn's erratic ability to communicate his goals. In 1970 Nova found Glenn "pedantic in speech," and declared he didn't know what his candidate stood for and didn't think the Ohio voters

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knew either. Nova made a thirty-second spot, called "Pollution," for Glenn:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on women voters, asking candidate Glenn what he intended to do about pollution.	Glenn [SOF]: "That is a very important question. I'm glad you asked it. Pollution blows and flows across state lines. We have to stop it now. Strong laws against polluters would help. It's really an important issue. I'm glad you asked that question. I hope I've answered it well."
Closing graphic (words superimposed over Glenn picture): "Once in a great while a man like John Glenn comes along."	

Glenn, Nova noted drily, wrote the line "pollution blows and flows" and "absolutely adored it." Some thirteen years later, media managers still worried about Glenn's speech abilities, and Nova said he still didn't know what Glenn stands for.

Sawyer and Miller had compiled two videotapes, the bad John Glenn and the good John Glenn. A young woman associate threaded the tapes on an editing board, equipment with essentially the functions of a tape deck: play, pause, reverse, search, fast forward. First the good Glenn appeared on the monitor above the board. A flick of a switch and the bad Glenn appeared. Such tapes could be produced for just about everyone in public life, college professors and journalists as well as U.S. senators. After delivering the same lines fifty times, public speakers must fight

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hard to keep from droning on. Words, sentences, whole paragraphs seem to marshal themselves, the fire goes out of the voice, the eyes glaze over. "The speaker is on automatic pilot," in Miller's phrase. When this happens to Glenn, his voice climbs higher and takes on sing-song cadences. During the editing of a commercial spot such as "Believe," these passages become the outtakes. In the earlier technology of film, outtakes fell to the cutting room floor; with videotape, outtakes can be wiped clean electronically. When a public speech is given, however, no one can zap the bad passages. But the bad and the good parts, when played together, may offer some lessons worth learning for the candidate.

As the videotape plays, the good John Glenn comes into view. He is talking about Lebanon, and Ronald Reagan's seeming open-ended commitment of Marines as targets in Beirut. Ex-Marine Colonel Glenn, in close-up, talks about his own 149 missions. How his plane was shot at, riddled, twelve times. How after returning from missions, he, an officer, had to write condolences to the next of kin, parents, wives, children. How no one will work for peace harder than someone who knows war. Glenn comes across as firm, clear-eyed, determined, a leader. The tape resonates, not with the pollution spot of 1970 but with an episode from 1974 when Glenn and Metzenbaum once again faced each other for the Democratic nomination. Metzenbaum had miscalculated in a speech two weeks before primary day, charging that Glenn had never held "a real job." The Glenn campaign said nothing until the traditional climactic debate the Friday before the primary at the City Club in Cleveland. In his final turn to speak, Glenn looked at his opponent, and said: "It wasn't my checkbook, it was my life on the line. Go with me and tell a Gold Star mother her son didn't hold a job. Go to Arlington Cemetery . . . and tell me those people didn't hold a job. I tell you, Howard Metzenbaum, you should be on your knees thanking God there were some men who held a job." The effect was stunning. Lamely Metzenbaum apologized: "I was talking about

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a job in the private sector." Glenn won the general election, and Metzenbaum finally won the other Ohio Senate seat in 1976. It seems that John Glenn, properly framed, has a hot button that can ignite a candidacy. And it is this quality that Sawyer has worked on with Glenn in a sound studio on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington.

Walter Mondale, for his part, also had an early framing strategy, one intended to prevent being engulfed in Glenn's elaborate media launching. Throughout 1983 Mondale consistently raised the most money of any candidate from private sources. He entered 1984 with some $9 million—to Glenn's $6 million—and, under the terms of campaign finance law, got an additional $3 million in federal money, an allocation based on the amount of money raised privately (through the convention, each candidate could spend $24 million). With money and organization in place, Mondale's framing strategy called for attack: Mondale would challenge Glenn on his voting record, while surrogates would take on Glenn for his alleged lack of experience—the celluloid candidate label. As it happened, a perfect metacampaign event provided the stage for one execution of this strategy. During September and October of 1983 the New York State Democratic party held a series of candidate forums throughout the state. Party workers, contributors, and press made up the by-invitation-only audience; the seven declared Democratic candidates were asked to appear, and none other than Governor Mario Cuomo, the leading Mondale supporter in the state, served as host and interlocutor. Not every candidate attended every session; Glenn came to Syracuse on September 26 and Mondale to Rochester on September 28. Cuomo, however, arranged for a dialogue to take place between the two front-runners, a dialogue in which Glenn would be forced to ad lib while Mondale would come in with a well-studied script.

It started in Syracuse when Cuomo caught Glenn by surprise, asking Glenn to tell the audience how he differed from Mondale.

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1984: OTHER TV IMAGES

Walter Mondale

Down by the riverside, as fisherman

In suit and tie, looking presidential

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Gary Hart

Denim jeans, Atari graphics, and a New Hampshire upset

Ronald Reagan

Announcing for reelection

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The automatic pilot locked into place. Glenn said that while he had been going around the country discussing his own views, he was not going to characterize the views of another candidate, drone, drone, drone. Two days later in Rochester, Cuomo pitched the readied Mondale the same question. Mondale replied in forceful detail, ticking off traditional Democratic party policies that he had supported and Glenn opposed; score a big win for Mondale.

Glenn may have been set up in the Syracuse-Rochester forums; he came better prepared for the final candidates' meeting at Town Hall in New York City. One of the three designated questioners, the Duke University political scientist, James David Barber, asked Glenn in effect if his orbital flight wasn't something of a stunt, like Evel Knievel hurtling the Snake River Canyon on a motorcycle. Barber had voiced a legitimate concern of voters, asking if Glenn possessed sufficient knowledge of political affairs, if he had the "right stuff" to be president. But the reference to the stunt man was maladroit, a slowball pitch that can be knocked out of the park. The crowd began hissing Barber before he had finished. Glenn pounced, linked the question to the "celluloid image" charge—Cuomo was also on the Town Hall program—and forcefully talked about his military service, his fighter pilot missions in World War II and Korea. "I was not doing *Hellcats of the Navy* on a movie lot"—a reference to a Grade B Ronald Reagan-Nancy Davis movie—"when I was doing 149 missions." To rising applause, Glenn declared how proud he had been to represent the United States as an astronaut and to show the world what America could accomplish. Hot buttons tingled all over.

This may have been the high point of 1983, and of his campaign, for Glenn. In the early fall of 1983 he was leading Mondale thirty-nine to thirty-three in some polls; by the end of the year the figures showed a startling reversal, with Mondale being favored over Glenn forty-three to twenty-nine as the institutional endorsements and organizational strengths of the Mondale cam-

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paign began to pay off, at least in the popularity polls. Mondale's old politics approach brought victory in the Iowa party caucuses on February 20. In New Hampshire's first primary on February 28, Senator Gary Hart emerged with an unexpected win. In both contests Glenn was a disappointing "also-ran."

In the Iowa-New Hampshire stage of the 1984 campaign Glenn had framed his issues, re-identified himself, introduced his theme of leadership for the future, and attacked Mondale in negative ads—Sawyer preferred to call them contrast ads—as the candidate of the special interests. Glenn had used his astronaut image and the bulk of his campaign capital, and the voters rejected him. In mid-March he withdrew.

What happened? As we shall see repeatedly in the narrative that follows, electoral politics involves much more than the media plans of any one candidate. In 1984 it's clear that Mondale's initial organizational successes and Hart's early "momentum" provide some explanation for Glenn's faltering trajectory. But John Glenn himself must answer too for his sputtering campaign. His television ads were in our opinion excellent—on the whole better than any of the spots for the other Democratic primary candidates, and as good as any primary spots we encountered in our research. They helped "blow a hole," in Sawyer's words, in the notion of Mondale's "invincibility."

But the real Glenn, as opposed to the videotape Glenn, couldn't exploit that hole. Gary Hart, whose media also positioned him as the candidate of the future, was able to move into the breach—even as Glenn failed to stir those Iowa and New Hampshire voters who came to take his measure. Some of them, on meeting him, were to declare that there was "no there there." When we ourselves saw Glenn in Manchester, New Hampshire, at the League of Women Voters debate in late February, he seemed at times to be asleep in his seat, a more advanced affliction than automatic-pilot speech. (The proclivity of candidates or audiences to nod off during campaign meetings was termed St. Anselm's Disease, after the New Hampshire college where it was first noted

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by reporters.) The Glenn effort suffered from a dissonance between the candidate's advertising image and his actual demeanor, as have any number of other candidates for offices from mayor to president. Indeed, most of what we observed in the early 1984 primaries—the pervasiveness of television, the skills of the political ad people, the clash between the old politics and the new politics, the growing sophistication and skepticism of the viewing public—fits in with developments that began when the broadcast advertising arts first came to American politics.

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1952–1980

Part II

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THE RADIO AGE AND THE BIRTH OF SPOTS

CHAPTER 2

In the beginning, there were no commercials. And, for a while, no one demanded any. The first radio station in the United States, KDKA in Pittsburgh, went on the air in 1920. Owned by Westinghouse, its programming—live music, theater, sports, and speeches—was offered solely as a means to sell more Westinghouse radio sets. By late in the decade corporate America had discovered the airwaves, but only for generating so-called "trade-name publicity." Listeners could tune in the *Maxwell House Hour*, the *General Motors Family Hour*, the *Cities Service Orchestra*, and the *Ipana Troubadours*, among others. No direct advertising was allowed. Indeed, there was to be no description of the product, much less any mention of price. The sponsor advertisers, said NBC president Merlin Aylesworth in 1928, were content with "the goodwill that results from their contribution of good programs."

The contentment didn't last, and neither did broadcasters' fastidiousness about products and prices. By the 1930s short,

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punchy commercials, called "spot announcements" or simply "spots," were commonplace. The broadcast historian Erik Barnouw credits two factors for the change in policy: the 1929 stock-market crash, convincing business executives that "resolute salesmanship" was now needed, and the creation of a new network, the Columbia Broadcasting System, whose survival seemed to require breaking the rules. These developments gave advertisers the upper hand in their dealings with broadcasters. If George Washington Hill, the storied head of American Tobacco (and the model for the Sidney Greenstreet character in *The Hucksters*) wanted to promote Cremo five-cent cigars in specific, even graphic, terms, CBS would let him. "Between blaring numbers of the Cremo Military Band," writes Barnouw, "its announcer shouted: 'There is no spit in Cremo!' "

Political campaigns also discovered that radio time was for sale. In 1924 both presidential candidates, Democrat John W. Davis and Republican Calvin Coolidge, bought radio time for speeches (but not for spots). The Republicans spent $120,000 on radio, the Democrats, $40,000, and Coolidge won. Four years later the first political spots appeared, when the GOP organized some 6,000 "Minute Men" all over the country to present brief radio talks on behalf of the Republican ticket. Scripts were sent in advance, so that the same talk was given nationwide on a particular day. The Democrats meanwhile permitted engineers to carry out an experiment. Pictures of New York Governor Al Smith's announcement of his presidential candidacy were carried live, from Albany to Schenectady (fifteen miles) by a new process called television. Smith's unsuccessful candidacy featured two other innovations: a radio play based on the candidate's life and the first five-minute speeches via broadcasting.

Television went nowhere for two more decades, but political operatives intuitively understood the power of moving images. In 1934 the muckraker and Nativist Radical Upton Sinclair became the Democratic candidate for governor of California. Businessmen and conservatives, who regarded Sinclair's program to end poverty

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as a Bolshevik plan to redistribute the wealth, were horrified. The Republicans hired Lord & Thomas, a top ad agency, and also retained the California political consulting firm, the first in the nation, of Whitaker & Baxter to fight Sinclair. Whitaker & Baxter produced phony newsreels of staged events. In one, dozens of bedraggled hoboes leap off a freight train, presumably having arrived in the Promised Land of California. Explains one bum: "Sinclair says he'll take the property of the working people and give it to us." In another, a bearded man with a Hollywood-Russian accent explains why he will vote for Sinclair: "His system vorked vell in Russia, so vy can't it vork here?" The bogus newsreels were shown in California movie theaters, between features, thanks to Louis B. Mayer, head of MGM Studios and a power in the California Republican party.

Except for their physical location in theaters, these Republican newsreels would serve as a model for television spot advertising when TV became a dominant national force, overshadowing radio and indeed killing off the theatrical newsreel. Just as movie programming gathered a captive audience for Whitaker & Baxter's phony newsreels, so did television programming collect crowds for the advertisers' brief spots. Of course it took time for television to become that dominating force, and it took time before the spot became the dominating form of TV advertising. World War II delayed television's commercial development until the late 1940s, and only then, as it became apparent that television would be a bigger, more lucrative enterprise than radio—emblematically, radio's *$64 Question* quiz show became the *$64,000 Question* on television—did the networks assert economic control over the airwaves. As it happened, 1952 was a year of change for television, as well as for the advertising spot. The year 1952 also transformed the way Americans elected their presidents—a change directly related to the twin developments of television and the TV spot.

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The Desilu Revolution

In the election of 1948 the victorious Harry S. Truman could boast: "I traveled 31,000 miles, made 356 speeches, shook hands with a half million people, talked to 15 or 20 million in person." Truman's predecessor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, had used radio to become the Great Communicator, a role half forced on him—confined as he was, with his polio-withered legs, to a wheelchair—and half seized by dint of his wonderful, assured, commanding radio voice and manner. Truman, with his flat, sharp Midwest accent, about as pleasing as the sound of chalk squeaking across a blackboard, had a low opinion of broadcasting."My own experience is all in personal contact," he allowed. His campaign did produce a single short spot, with the candidate urging people to vote; records do not indicate whether it was shown in movie theaters or on TV. When, at a news conference after the election, a reporter asked Truman whether TV had boosted his campaign, the other reporters present burst out laughing. Truman said television had been of some use, and added that he was sorry it hadn't reached more people.

Developments in the next four years helped TV reach a far larger audience. A transcontinental cable, inaugurated experimentally in 1951, permitted nationwide TV networks to form. The number of sets fast proliferated, to an estimated nineteen million in 1952. By then some forty percent of American households could be reached by TV, with the percentage rising to sixty-two percent in the populous northeastern areas. Programming began to fill with faces soon to be familiar—Milton Berle, Ed Sullivan, Arthur Godfrey, Dave Garroway, and the cast of the golden age comedy classic *Your Show of Shows*, among them Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca, Carl Reiner, and Howard Morris. One of the fastest climbing programs on the new A.C. Nielsen ratings was *I Love Lucy*, starring forty-two-year-old Lucille Ball and her husband, Desi Arnaz.

Millions of Americans watched Ball play the zany, calamitous Lucy Ricardo on CBS Mondays at 9 p.m. EST, but the situation

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comedy manufactured more than laughs. *I Love Lucy* was produced by Ball and Arnaz's own corporation, Desilu Productions, and co-owned with CBS. As such, *I Love Lucy* marked the beginning of a major change in the structure of television. At first, following the precedent established by early radio, television programs were sponsor owned and sponsor controlled. Advertising agencies generally supervised and sold the shows, incorporating the sponsor's name into the title (*The Goodyear Television Playhouse*). But network executives, notably William Paley, the founding father of CBS, were not satisfied with merely renting out the airwaves; they wanted program control for themselves. So the networks, in concert with producers like Desilu, gradually eased sponsors out of programming during the 1950s. Increasingly, if advertisers wanted to be heard—aside from Procter & Gamble owning daytime soap serials, or IBM underwriting a prime-time special—they had to buy thirty- or sixty-second advertising units.

While some sponsoring companies and advertising agencies may have deplored the passing of the good old days, one Madison Avenue adman in particular, Thomas Rosser Reeves, Jr., couldn't have been happier. Rosser Reeves was born in Danville, Virginia, in 1910, the son of a Methodist minister. He came North to make his fortune in advertising in 1934 and did so well that he retired a millionaire several times over at the age of fifty-six. We talked to Reeves one summer afternoon in 1983, in his co-op apartment overlooking Gramercy Park in New York City. He explained his enthusiasm for spots, his philosophy of the USP—unique selling proposition—and his role in helping elect a president with the first TV spot campaign. (Reeves died in January 1984.)

In the 1950s Reeves was dean of the hammer-it-home school of advertising, the prince of hard sell. The most effective selling method, Reeves felt, was USP. Whereas most ads use words like "best," "biggest," "brightest" interchangeably, Reeves's theory was that the most effective ads boldly stake out a claim untouched by the competition. A long-standing ad slogan developed by Reeves, for instance, boasted that M&Ms melt in your mouth,

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not in your hand. Though a skeptic can argue that the phrase on examination doesn't mean much, Reeves would hold that it is memorable, it is unique, and it is so attached to M&Ms that no other candy would dare make a similar statement. "The USP leaps out at you!" Reeves wrote in his book, *Reality in Advertising*. "And the result is not only usage pull but high penetration as well."

Reeves and the Ted Bates agency, where he worked, gave the USP hard-sell treatment to a number of products: Anacin (the spot showed animated hammers bashing away at cerebrums), Rolaids (holes burned in cloth by stomach acid), Colgate Dental Cream with protective Gardol (baseballs hurled toward the viewer), and Bic Pens (ballpoints shot from rifles and crossbows). Reeves once told Thomas Whiteside of *The New Yorker* that the sixty-second Anacin spot cost the client $8,400 to produce and "made more money [for Anacin] in seven years than *Gone With the Wind* did for David O. Selznick and MGM in a quarter of a century." Reeves added of his own role: "Not bad for something written between cocktails at lunch."

Ted Bates was the hottest agency in New York in the early 1950s. Quite simply, Reeves said, the reason was television. "Nobody else knew what to do. The advertising agencies didn't know how to write copy. Everyone was floundering around." The Bates agency, however, had begun working with TV almost from its start as a commercial medium. "There were so few TV sets it was idiotic," Reeves recalled. "We didn't make money on it." The agency did gain experience, however, and gradually, said Reeves, an understanding that they were onto something big. "We discovered that this was no tame kitten; we had a ferocious, man-eating tiger. We could take the same advertising campaign from print or radio and put it on TV, and, even when there were very few sets, sales would go through the roof." In the process Bates got the jump on the competition: "It was like shooting fish in a barrel."

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One of the Bates group's discoveries was that spots could help reduce the risk for advertisers—and ad agencies. Because many programs in the early days were produced by agencies, the agency would find a sponsor and buy network time. If the program was a hit, the advertiser's announcements in and around the program would reach a large audience. If the program flopped, the sponsor would lose money, and the agency might lose the account. In the transitional period between the old sponsor system and the new network system, Reeves saw an opening: why not wait until some other agency created a hit program, letting them take the risks, and then buy spot announcements before or after the hit? "We walked in, seized all the great spots, sewed them up for sponsors, put them in the contract, worked out the techniques, and took over," said Reeves.

Television spots, Reeves had learned, could sell consumer products. Why couldn't they do the same for a politician? In 1948 he tried the idea out on Thomas E. Dewey, the governor of New York and Republican candidate for president against Harry S. Truman. "This could be a very close election," Reeves recalls saying. "I can pretty much tell which states are going to be close. If you would start two or three weeks before election day, and saturate those critical states with spots, it could swing the election." Dewey dismissed the suggestion, according to Reeves. "I don't think it would be dignified," said Dewey, whose small stature, black moustache, and stiff manner had earned him the invidious title, "little man on the wedding cake." So Reeves sat back, and watched Dewey lose. Effective use of TV by Dewey, Reeves says now, could have made the difference.

In 1948 there were fewer than half a million TV sets in the nation. In 1952 there were nearly nineteen million. If the idea had been a good one in 1948—and Reeves was confident that it had—it was better still in 1952. A number of people outside the Bates agency also gave some thought to joining TV and politics. One of them was Dewey. The New York governor, after all, had grown comfortable with Madison Avenue. The Republican

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party, especially in New York State, had traditional ties with the big advertising agencies: both were apostles of free enterprise, and both, at least in the first half of the century, drew from the same ranks of white, Protestant, upper-class males for their leaders. Among the agencies closest to the Republican party was Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn; Bruce Barton, a BBD&O senior partner, helped Dewey deal with the new medium.

Barton appears as a figure in the popular culture of the near past well worth studying for an understanding of both advertising and politics. He had been an informal adviser to Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover in the 1920s; he had served as a GOP congressman from New York City briefly in the 1930s, worked on publicity for Alf Landon in 1936, and advised Dewey in his first presidential race in 1944. Four years later BBD&O formally got the Republican National Committee account. The historian John E. Hollitz found in Barton's papers, in the archives of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, some reasons why Barton enjoyed such a long, productive career. BBD&O had handled advertising for two of the packaged goods giants, General Mills and Lever Brothers. When the product is cereal or soap, the audience is large and undifferentiated. Barton had done well by the giants; he believed that the same approach would work in politics. Candidates, he thought, needed to seem above "the plane of partisan politics." They needed to be "humanized" in order to appeal to "the great silent majority of Americans" (Barton used the phrase in 1919, some fifty years before Richard Nixon would popularize it). In 1924 Barton was warning Coolidge: "The radio audience is very different from the assembled crowd. The radio audience tires quickly and can walk out on you without your knowing it." Barton also wrote a life of Jesus Christ, *The Man Nobody Knows*, that was a best-seller in 1925. Barton introduced readers to a secular Jesus, a go-getter in the 1920s American style, a super-salesman who could "translate a great spiritual conception into terms of practical self-concern" with methods "not unlike those used now" for overcoming "unreasoning re-

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sistance to a helpful idea, service, or product." As such, wrote Barton, "Every one of His conversations, every contact between His mind and others, is worthy of the attentive study of any sales manager."

But even an advertising expert who knew the real Jesus could be sorely tried in a political campaign. Dewey's close circle of advisers and his Albany staff kept Barton and BBD&O from getting access to the campaign or the candidate. The political crowd, in a refrain from the gut to be repeated in many campaigns since, didn't think the ad agency men knew the ins and outs of politics. Barton, not one to turn the other cheek, delivered his own indictment of the shortsightedness of the cronies and hangers-on—a counterrefrain also heard often in the years since. In February 1948 Barton wrote Dewey about the governor's circle of advisers and speechwriters: " . . . Albany does not think about the United States; it thinks about Jews and Catholics, and the CIO and the AF of L and of . . . God knows what." Barton advised Dewey to "forget about all the racial and economic groups to whom platforms make their separate appeals and simplify and clarify the whole thinking of the people. . . ."

Dewey listened, but not until two years later. His 1950 campaign for reelection in New York included a touch of the General Mills–Lever Brothers approach to addressing society as a mass. The governor, aided by BBD&O, held an eighteen-hour "talk-athon" on television. Voters congregated at camera locations all over the state to ask questions, with Dewey answering from a studio. The production captivated the critic John Crosby, writing in the pro-Dewey *New York Herald Tribune*: "Dewey threw the script away. . . . He spoke extemporaneously; he moved from spot to spot, picking up state reports and documents; he sat on the edge of his desk (never once did he sit behind the desk); he scratched his head, put his glasses on, took them off, wiped them. Essentially, though, he answered questions—hundreds of them. . . . He answered them in awe-inspiring detail, spouting figures and facts without hesitation." During the program, a

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Dewey aide lamented that a great statesman should be forced to undergo such theatrics. A BBD&O man shrugged and quoted Jimmy Durante: "Dem's da conditions dat prevail." Dewey won by over half a million votes, and analysts attributed a hundred thousand votes to the TV finale. Dewey had seen the picture-tube light.

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IKE, BBD&O, USP, AND TV

CHAPTER 3

In 1952, after twenty years of Democratic party rule, the country seemed to agree with the Republican slogan, that it was "Time for a Change." American troops were engaged in an indecisive, bloody war in Korea; at home, the New Deal machinery of reform sputtered. Truman decided not to run again. On the Republican side, Dewey, a two-time loser, hardly stirred the party faithful. A fresh start seemed called for, and both Democrats and Republicans reached outside the party ranks to find their candidates.

It was April when Truman announced he would not run, leaving the field wide open and only a few months to go to the Chicago convention. Estes Kefauver, the Tennessee senator, came to Chicago with the greatest number of delegates. Kefauver had delivered some televised speeches in the primary campaign, but he told *Newsweek* that TV is "very expensive." Otherwise, the Democrats did virtually no advertising, though the party did hire the Joseph Katz agency of Baltimore and New York to help stage

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the Chicago convention and lend a hand with TV-radio speeches. But the Democrats back then didn't believe, deep in their hearts, in the advertising arts. Madison Avenue was, well, *Republican.* Moreover the Democratic party in convention was largely made up of powerful satrapies: Tammany Hall in New York, Boss Hague in New Jersey, the Kelly-Nash machine in Chicago, the labor bloc from the AFL and CIO, southern senators with their loyal delegations.

In the convention the assembled satrapies drafted the ostensibly reluctant Adlai Stevenson, governor of Illinois. A Princeton man, he had served in the State Department in Washington, acquiring the reputation of an "internationalist." Stevenson delivered an eloquent acceptance speech, televised live. Unfortunately most of the country was in bed by that time. The convention schedule had been upset in part by the presence of the new factor in politics, television. The Massachusetts delegation discovered that, by demanding a roll call on a vote, each delegate would have a few seconds in the camera's eye, to be seen by the folks back home. Other delegations followed suit, and the convention came to a standstill. That set the pattern for the Democrats' misadventures with television in 1952.

Eggheads and Miscues

Stevenson needed TV. A spring poll found that only a third of voters knew who he was—this for a man soon to be running against General Dwight D. Eisenhower, adjudged by the same polls to be the most admired living American. Trying to generate familiarity—what would come to be called name ID—Stevenson made heavier use of TV in the earlier stages of the campaign than the Republicans and hired ad agencies to help out. In addition to the national committee's arrangement with the Joseph Katz agency, the Stevenson volunteers' organization contracted with Erwin, Wasey Co. of Chicago. The Milton Biouw agency also worked for the Democrats, and radio executive J. Leonard Reinsch

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of the Cox stations, who had advised Truman on broadcasting, helped Stevenson with his television style.

Stevenson was no TV star. Columnist Marquis Childs uncharitably described him as "a short, stocky, almost bandy-legged man whose appearance was hardly calculated to win the mass television audience." In fact Stevenson was attractive, in a Princeton gentleman's way. More than any other feature, his distinguishing marks were his balding head and donnish manner (the term "egghead" was coined as a put-down of Stevenson and his intellectual followers). Ike too was balding; but while Ike came off as sincere and likeable, Stevenson often seemed aloof. If Ike was everyone's father, then Stevenson was everyone's brother-in-law, and a smart one at that. Still, Stevenson was a literate, meticulous speaker, and in 1952, the year that television arrived as a political tool, the Democrats formulated an advertising strategy ideally suited to the radio age. They put almost all their TV money, $1.5 million (or nineteen out of every twenty dollars they had to spend on the medium) into eighteen half-hour segments for speeches by Stevenson, Truman, and other Democrats. The air times they bought were Tuesday and Thursday nights, between 10:30 and 11:00 p.m. They did this well in advance, in May, so as not to have to pay preemption charges (the salaries of the stars, writers, and directors whose program was being preempted; for programs already filmed, say the *Jack Benny Show*, these costs could run as high as $80,000). By using late-evening time slots, they also saved money. And, they theorized, the regular time slots would build a steady audience, switching to the Democratic speeches from habit.

The drawbacks of the Democratic advertising plan gradually became apparent. The evening speeches attracted an average audience of 3.8 million, in all probability an audience of people already committed or leaning to Stevenson. William Paley, the founder of CBS and a broadcast presence for six decades, once remarked that in his experience he found "the cheapest things often turn out to be the most expensive, and the most expensive

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things turn out to be the cheapest." So too in politics. As Democratic National Committee Chairman Steven A. Mitchell would tell the House Elections Committee after the November debacle, "We chose the more economical and apparently less effective method. . . ."

The bargain basement time slots created some, but not all, of the Democrats' difficulties. Stevenson contributed too. He would get so involved in his speeches that he missed his time cues. As he built to his rhetorical climax, the televised Stevenson would abruptly fade, in midsentence, to be replaced by the station's next program. It was, for a man who took such care in writing his speeches, inexcusable, and it happened repeatedly. Time cues weren't a problem in filmed, edited commercials, and Stevenson's spots were generally tight and focused, conveying the major themes of the campaign. Several Stevenson spots advertised the candidate's courage—the man who would "talk sense to the American people." In one, a demure woman speaks in a monotone about how "excited" she is about Stevenson. Another, no more animated, uses a man who could be the woman's suburban husband:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Medium shot of thirtyish, dark-haired man, standing behind podium; podium has on front "ADLAI E. STEVENSON" and a check mark, as if from a ballot.	Man [VO]: "You won't get up and turn your television set off, will ya, if I start talking about politics? Don't get me wrong—I'm not a politician. I just get excited about politics once every four years. And I'm really excited this time. I can't get over this man Stevenson. There's a man with real courage. When I think of

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what he believes in—and what he has the backbone to say—

"Well, for example, he said that he'd resist any special privileges for pressure groups—and he told *that* to labor unions in Detroit. And another time, he said that he wouldn't stand for special privileges for any special interests, including veterans—and he told *that* to the American Legion. That took real courage. And about tideland oils—Stevenson believes they belong to all of us—and he told *that* to the governor of Texas. Oh, he may lose Texas, but he sure stuck to his guns. He hasn't sold out for *any* special votes.

"You know, it takes courage to be a great president. But in my book, it takes even greater courage to be an honest candidate.

"You're right—my vote's for Stevenson."

In 1960 John Kennedy picked up on this "blunt truth technique" (as a public relations consultant had termed it), discussing his Catholicism before a hostile audience of Protestant ministers; in 1980 John Anderson also used the technique, telling gun owners that he favored handgun control. In 1952, though, the blunt

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truth was that the Democrats were strapped for money, unconvinced about the efficacy and dignity of spots, and critical of the Eisenhower advertising campaign. The Democrats thus bought only $77,000 in air time for their spots.

The Stevenson election-eve telecast was a fitting end to the campaign. The program begins with Vice-President Alben Barkley gamely trying to put a positive light on the Democrats' minimal TV budget: "Ladies and gentlemen, since the Republicans have occupied the last thirty minutes over these facilities, and will occupy thirty minutes after we have finished, I presume it would be fair to say that the Democratic speechmakers constitute the wholesome meat between two slices of stale bread." Barkley then introduces President Truman, who speaks slowly and calmly. His words, though, are anything but calm. The election "may decide whether we will find lasting peace, or be led into a third world war." The Republicans have tried "to spread confusion and discontent" with a "campaign of fear and deception." After Truman finishes giving 'em hell, the program cuts to Stevenson and running mate John Sparkman ("The men you will elect president and vice-president of the United States when you go to the polls tomorrow"). The two men sit together at a desk in a living-room set, surrounded by two of Stevenson's sons (the third, the announcer explains, is on Marine duty at Quantico), Mrs. Sparkman, and the Sparkmans' daughter. Stevenson starts with a question for his teen-age son: "Well, Gordy, what do you think of the campaign by this time?" The son, trembling, standing with his hands clasped awkwardly, says, "Well, if the strong feeling for you by the universities is any indication of your national strength, I'd say you're in." Stevenson laughs hollowly. "I hope," the son adds. "*You* hope," says Stevenson. Asked what he thinks of the campaign, Stevenson's youngest son replies, "Well, I like watching television more than being on it." Sparkman notes that he and Stevenson haven't seen each other since August 16. "Has it been that long?" asks Stevenson. "Certainly has," says Sparkman. "Sixteenth of August." Stevenson shakes his head. "Goodness."

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After a bit more small talk, Stevenson talks sense to the American people one last time before the election. He is low-key, thoughtful, realistic: "I have said what I meant, and meant what I said. I have not done as well as I would like to have done, but I have done my best." As Stevenson reaches his peroration, the sound fades down. He has run out of time.

Merchandising Eisenhower

Meeting in July, after the Democrats, the Republicans chose General Dwight D. Eisenhower in a draft about as real as Stevenson's. If the Republican delegates had been allowed to vote their souls, they would have chosen Robert A. Taft, the senator from Ohio. But Taft's isolationist record convinced the party's internationalist wing that he wasn't electable. The Eastern Establishment liked Ike, and that chorus included the powerful voices of Henry R. Luce, owner-publisher-editor of the Time Inc. magazines; John Hay Whitney, owner of the *New York Herald Tribune*; and the party's 1944 and 1948 nominee, Thomas Dewey. After getting Ike, the party leaders, for geographic, ideological, and demographic balance, named as the vice-presidential nominee Richard Nixon, the young (thirty-nine) junior senator from California, the nemesis of Alger Hiss and Communists in government.

The Eisenhower-Nixon ticket probably would have won, whatever campaign strategy it employed and whatever the Democrats did. It was time for a change. But Bruce Barton, for one, was worried. He peppered Eisenhower's staff with advice. After one early Ike speech reminded Barton of Tom Dewey's cadences, the adman wrote the General: "Beware of those boys. . . . Dewey is a three-time loser. He has never thought about the United States. All New York politicians think about is Jews, Negroes, Labor, Farmers, etc.—pressure groups. . . ." Barton also suggested that Ike use notes instead of written-out speeches; this would give the impression of "talking to people as one frank, unassuming American to his fellow Americans." Later in the campaign Barton

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held up the example of Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, who appeared as host and homily-presenter on the popular early 1950s show, *Life Is Worth Living*—"one of the most spectacular successes on television," Barton declared. "Monsignor Sheen . . . uses no manuscript; just stands up and talks, and from time to time illustrates his point by writing on the blackboard." Suppose Ike were to use a similar technique, Barton suggested, talking "to the people whose income is $5,000 a year or less. Let's write that on the blackboard, $5,000."

Barton's concerns eased a bit when both the Republican National Committee and Citizens for Eisenhower-Nixon gave their advertising accounts to BBD&O. Ike developed a strong liking for BBD&O president Bernard "Ben" Duffy, an ebullient child of Madison Avenue; the campaign's goal, Duffy once remarked, was "merchandising Eisenhower's frankness, honesty and integrity, his sincere and wholesome approach." Duffy and the General became friends. "You are telling me things I ought to have been told from the start and that nobody told me," Eisenhower supposedly told him. Unlike Dewey, Ike came to the election without a retinue of advisers; the newcomer listened to newcomers, like Duffy. Inexperience bred innovation, including a willingness to take a gamble on a new medium. The official campaign plan, meanwhile, was also urging Ike to take a gamble. Written by the Republican National Committee's director of public relations, a former journalist and PR man named Robert Humphreys, the plan emphasized the potential of television: "Both Republican candidates have warm and winning personalities. . . . They . . . would normally be welcome visitors in almost one hundred percent of the living rooms of America. Obviously the thing to do is to gain entrance for them into the homes of America by every means possible so that the warmth of their personalities can be felt." Humphreys urged the Republicans to move away from formal, televised speeches, which "by their very nature, cannot impart the real warmth of personality with which both candidates are endowed. Therefore informal, intimate television productions

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addressed directly to the individual American and his family, their problems and their hopes, are necessary to make the most of the ticket's human assets." Finally, Humphreys thought that broadcast commercials of a minute or less had a place, albeit a limited one: "The use of radio and TV station-break 'spots' during the last ten days of the campaign is a must for stimulating the voters to go to the polls and vote for the candidates." At an August 7 meeting of campaign strategists, the plan was approved.

Still, Republicans worried. In 1948 Dewey had seemed like a sure thing; might not the Democrats, victors in the past five presidential elections, manage to pull off another upset? A stereotypical gathering of Republicans—some oilmen sitting around a table in a country club not far from Watch Hill, Rhode Island, in the summer of 1952—shared their concerns and decided to give Rosser Reeves a call ("I had some oil interests at the time," Reeves modestly recalled during our interview). As Reeves remembers it, one of the oilmen, James Snowden, fretted that "Time for a Change" notwithstanding, the Democrats had an effective slogan: "You Never Had It So Good." What, Snowden wondered, could Reeves create for an alternative Republican slogan? "Ike doesn't need a slogan," Reeves says he replied. "He needs a strategy." Snowden invited Reeves to come talk to him and his friends. So, as New York admen and clients often do, they met for lunch at the Racquet Club on Park Avenue. "I said Ike ought to use spots," Reeves recalls. "These oilmen, they didn't know an advertising spot from Alpha Centauri, so I explained the whole theory. 'This is a new medium called television. It's so powerful that it's changing the whole media structure of the world.' " Spots—the strategy Dewey had rejected—could win the election. The oilmen told Reeves to work on it; the money for such a spot campaign could be found, if Reeves would put it together.

Reeves then asked a former Bates associate, Michael Levin, for help. Levin, then with Erwin, Wasey & Co., agreed to write up a campaign advertising plan. Levin closeted himself for a

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weekend with Samuel Lubell's *The Future of American Politics*, a highly respected analysis of the time, and emerged with a plan, confidently entitled "How to Insure an Eisenhower Victory in November." In its recommendations for advertising, the Levin plan closely followed Reeves's views: "It has been proven over and over in the course of radio-TV experience in this country that spots are the quickest, most effective and cheapest means of getting across a message in the shortest possible time. It is recommended that $2,000,000 be spent in three weeks on this campaign. . . . The spots themselves would be the height of simplicity. People . . . would ask the General a question. . . . The General's answer would be his complete comprehension of the problem and his determination to do something about it when elected. Thus he inspires loyalty without prematurely committing himself to any strait-jacketing answer. . . . Putting the spots on for only a three-week period gives the following advantages: (1) It gives maximum effectiveness of penetration and recall without becoming deadly to the listener and viewer. (2) It delivers this maximum just before election. (3) It occurs at too late a date for effective Democratic rebuttal."

Reeves also wrote his own memo to the Eisenhower team, laying out the "no risk" strategy of advertising time buying he had evolved: "A big advertiser . . . puts on a one-hour television show. It may cost him $75,000—for that one hour. Immediately after, another big advertiser follows it with another big expensive show. Jack Benny! Martin and Lewis! Eddie Cantor! Fred Allen! Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy! Or dozens of other big-time stars. THESE BIG ADVERTISERS SPEND MILLIONS—WITH TOP TALENT AND GLITTERING NAMES—TO BUILD A BIG AUDIENCE. But—between the two shows—comes the humble 'spot.' If you can run *your advertisement* in this 'spot,' for a very small sum *YOU GET THE AUDIENCE BUILT AT HUGE COSTS BY OTHER PEOPLE*." As much as cost efficiency the spots approach appealed to Reeves because of simplicity. As Reeves listened to the various speeches made throughout the spring and

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summer of 1952—by General Douglas MacArthur, as well as Eisenhower and Stevenson—an insight gnawed at him. "Ike made a speech in Philadelphia, and he covered thirty-two separate points. I sent a research team down the next morning. We got a thousand people to interview, as I recall it, and said, 'Did you hear Ike's speech?' Then we said, 'What did he say?' Nobody knew. Well, no advertising man would be surprised. You cannot write an advertisement that says thirty-two things about the product and expect the audience to remember. Ike should have taken one of those issues and really wrung it out."

Reeves took the Levin plan and his own memo and ideas to Walter Williams, national chairman of Citizens for Eisenhower-Nixon. Ike himself, Reeves insisted, had to appear in the spots. Williams was wary. So was Sherman Adams, manager of the campaign and Eisenhower's closest political adviser. But Reeves had some allies. One was Alfred Hollender, a friend of Ike's and a veteran broadcaster (who later headed the television department of Grey Advertising). Another was Jock Whitney, owner of the *New York Herald Tribune* and a major Republican fund raiser. These high-powered Ike boosters met with Reeves for dinner in a private room at "21," the premier Manhattan watering hole of the ad business. Hollender explained that the Citizens were "planning to raise millions of dollars and they don't know how to spend it." Reeves allowed as how he did. He got the account.

Although the Bates agency was given a piece of the GOP ad budget, Reeves did most of his work on a six-week leave. "I had to," he remembers, "because some of my clients were Democrats. Come on—I didn't want to go out of business." In a room of the St. Regis Hotel off Fifth Avenue, Reeves intensively reviewed Ike's positions and rhetoric, scrutinizing speeches, articles, and background papers. Reeves remembered the multitheme Philadelphia talk, and its lack of penetration. He winnowed points of the speech down to about a dozen major issues. But that was still too many. The Eisenhower campaign needed a single, straightforward focus, Reeves felt. So he visited the public opinion

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analyst, George Gallup, and asked him what issue was particularly troubling the American people. There were three, answered Gallup: corruption, rising taxes and inflation, and the Korean War. Three issues was still too many, Reeves grumbled. The campaign needed *one* theme; it needed USP. But Gallup stood his ground.

Reeves settled for the Gallup three of Korea, corruption, and cost of living. He was told to have the scripts written and cleared in about two weeks' time, so Ike could film them on September 11. That was less time than Reeves had hoped for —and far less time than commercial clients normally gave agencies—but he dutifully set to work. The scripts, he insists, came almost entirely from Eisenhower statements. "I did not put one single word into Eisenhower's mouth," he says. "I took those out of the speeches that he had already made. So you see I *was* an honest operator in this." Getting the scripts approved meant meeting with the clients, only instead of three or four men from Lever Brothers, commercial style, there was the entire Republican National Committee—"a real pain in the ass. It was a giant committee, and you had to meet them whenever they were passing through New York."

On September 11 Eisenhower and Reeves met for the first time at the Transfilm, Inc., studio on West 43rd Street in Manhattan. Reeves wanted Ike to do the spots without glasses, but the General's nearsightedness meant he couldn't read the cue cards. So the scripts were hand-lettered headline fashion on poster board and held close enough so that Eisenhower could read them without squinting. Twenty-two scripts had been written and approved. Reeves had thought filming that many, with delays and retakes, would take most of the day. But Eisenhower was breezing through them one after another. So Reeves commandeered a typewriter and began writing additional scripts as quickly as he could. He'd had two weeks to write his first scripts; now he churned out another twenty or so in a couple of hours. Each script was reviewed by the candidate's brother, Milton Eisenhower, read quickly by Ike, lettered on the giant cue cards, and

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filmed. Eisenhower sat fidgeting between takes, remarking at one point, "To think that an old soldier should come to this!" By the end, though, Ike had joined in the spirit of the day, writing one script himself (Reeves generously calls it the best of the lot). When Ike walked out that evening, all forty scripts had been filmed. Each was a brief response to a hypothetical question.

Now that the Eisenhower answers were in the can, the questions had to be filmed. Reeves wanted a diverse group of people. The original plan had been to send camera crews all over the country, to tape a random sampling of Americans. Someone—his name is lost to history—hit upon a money-saving idea that Reeves quickly embraced. On two afternoons Bates employees mingled with the tourists at New York's Radio City Music Hall. Those who looked like "everyday Americans" were asked to come to a film studio. There they recited questions from cue cards. The result was a selection of "people from different sections of the country—real people, in their own clothes, with wonderful native accents," Reeves later recalled. The tapes were edited, an announcer voice-over was added, and the spots were completed. The format for all of the brief spots was the same: a humble citizen, his eyes raised as if gazing at a giant, asks a question; then cut to Ike's succinct answer.

VIDEO	AUDIO
Slide: "EISENHOWER answers AMERICA," with oval photo of Eisenhower. In fine print at bottom of screen: "A POLITICAL ANNOUNCEMENT PAID FOR BY CITIZENS FOR EISENHOWER."	Announcer [VO]: "Eisenhower answers America."

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Cut to dark-haired woman.	Woman [SOF]: "The Democrats have made mistakes, but aren't their intentions good?"
Cut to Eisenhower.	Eisenhower [SOF]: "Well, if the driver of your school bus runs into a truck, hits a lamppost, drives into a ditch, you don't say his intentions are good; you get a new bus driver."

Cut from opening slide to black man in plaid shirt and sportscoat.	Man [SOF]: "General, the Democrats are telling me I've never had it so good."
Cut to Eisenhower.	Eisenhower [SOF]: "Can that be true when America is billions in debt, when prices have doubled, when taxes break our backs, and we are still fighting in Korea? It's tragic and it's time for a change."

Cut from opening to middle-aged woman, holding sack of groceries.	Woman [SOF]: "I paid twenty-four dollars for these groceries—look, for this little."
Cut to Eisenhower.	Eisenhower [SOF]: "A few years ago, those same groceries cost you ten dollars, now

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	twenty-four, next year thirty—that's what will happen unless we have a change."
Cut from opening to well-dressed couple.	Man [SOF]: "Mr. Eisenhower, are we going to have to fight another war?"
Cut to Eisenhower.	Eisenhower [SOF]: "No, not if we have a sound program for peace. And I'll add this, we won't spend hundreds of billions and still not have enough tanks and planes for Korea."
Cut from opening to balding man in suit.	Man [SOF]: "Mr. Eisenhower, do all the taxes we pay get to Washington?"
Cut to Eisenhower.	Eisenhower [SOF]: "Not when dozens of tax collectors have to be fired or quit because of graft and corruption. That's why I say, it's time for a change."
Cut from opening to elderly woman in hat.	Woman [SOF]: "You know what things cost today. High prices are just driving me crazy."
Cut to Eisenhower.	Eisenhower [SOF]: "Yes, my Mamie gets after me about the high cost of living. It's another reason why I say, it's

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time for a change. Time to
get back to an honest dollar
and an honest dollar's work."

Reeves would be the first to admit the spots were artless. "Unlike a lot of my competitors, I never tried to make *interesting* commercials . . ." he once said. "When you put a commercial on the air one night and you have twenty million people looking at the screen, how the hell can they *help* seeing what you put on?"

"This Isn't Soap Opera"

The spots were supposed to be the Eisenhower-Nixon ticket's secret weapon, but Eisenhower inadvertently mentioned them to reporters two days after the filming. Worse, Reeves began to worry that a leak had sprung in his agency, that someone was giving material to the press. In early October he grew certain: the Stevenson campaign high command distributed copies of the Levin plan to reporters. A Stevenson spokesman attacked the "high-powered hucksters of Madison Avenue" and their "super colossal, multi-million dollar production designed to sell an inadequate ticket to the American people in precisely the way they sell soap, ammoniated toothpaste, hair tonic or bubble gum. They guarantee their candidates to be 99 and 44/100 percent pure; whether or not they will float remains to be seen." Stevenson himself picked up the theme, fresh at the time, that Madison Avenue was trying to sell a candidate the way it sold soap: "I don't think the American people want politics and the presidency to become the plaything of the high-pressure men, of the ghostwriters, of the public relations men. I think they will be shocked by such contempt for the intelligence of the American people. This isn't soap opera, this isn't Ivory Soap versus Palmolive."

While the Democrats complained, the Republicans went about getting the spots on the air. The production costs of the spots,

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$60,000, had been paid for by the Eisenhower campaign committee. Money for time had to come from elsewhere. The budget for televising speeches had been set before Reeves arrived, so a separate, special finance committee was created. Local Republican organizations were also encouraged, in a special flyer printed by the Citizens Committee, to borrow the film prints and air the spots themselves. As a consequence, Reeves later said, "We have no idea how much was actually spent." Another hurdle then appeared: some TV executives refused to show the spots, arguing they were not fit for a presidential campaign. Carroll Newton of BBD&O pressured Frank Stanton at CBS and Joseph McConnell at NBC, and the networks backed down. One radio network, however, stood firm. Westinghouse president Joseph E. Baudino said the Westinghouse stations had a policy against accepting spots for political candidates; campaign issues, he said, could not be discussed adequately in one minute—again, an objection that would become familiar. The Eisenhower admen bought time slots (with the advice of executives at A.C. Nielsen, the ratings firm). Of the forty ads Reeves and Eisenhower had filmed, twenty-eight were used; they appeared in mid-October in forty states, with the heaviest schedules run in the states considered critical to the election—New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Maryland, Indiana, California, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Connecticut.

While the spots were the major innovation in the 1952 campaign, the Republicans tested a variety of other television formats. In May the Republican Congressional Committee aired a paid program called "The Case for a Republican Congress." The show presented its case dramatically, putting the Democrats on mock trial. Republican congressional leaders starred while professional actors portrayed the Democrats. The Republicans also used filmed cartoons. "Korea—The Price of Appeasement" featured a satanic Oriental brandishing a blood-covered sword. Another, "Ike for President," featured a jingle ("You like Ike! I like Ike! Everybody likes Ike!") and animation by the Disney studios. At the same

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1952: EISENHOWER VS. STEVENSON

Eisenhower Commercial

"Eisenhower answers America"

"I paid twenty-four dollars for these groceries—look, for this little"

"A few years ago those same groceries cost you ten dollars, now twenty-four, next year thirty—that's what will happen unless we have a change"

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Stevenson Commercial

"I'm excited about voting for Governor Stevenson for president. I think he is a new kind of man in American politics"

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time the Republicans pushed and hauled at the traditional, radio-age paid political speech, reshaping the form for television. BBD&O decreed that each Eisenhower speech had to be no more than twenty minutes long for a thirty-minute slot. The rest of the time would be filled with film of Ike moving through the adoring crowds. The entrances were planned, shot by shot, with Mamie Eisenhower playing a supporting role. The visible use of Mrs. Eisenhower in the campaign was calculated, not only as an element of Ike's fatherly image but also to remind voters that Stevenson was a divorced man, heretofore a major taboo in American politics. The traditional radio form also was used to carry a televised speech, late in the campaign, by Senator Joseph McCarthy. Stevenson, said McCarthy, had to answer for his "aid to the Communist cause." Twice, by accident or intent, McCarthy referred to Stevenson as "Alger" instead of "Adlai." Candidate Nixon also used Alger Hiss in his speeches. In an October 13 TV address Nixon attacked Stevenson for having been a character witness on Hiss's behalf. Nixon emphasized that he didn't want to imply that Stevenson was a fellow traveler, merely that he had been duped. "If Stevenson were to be taken in by Stalin as he was by Alger Hiss," Nixon said, "the Yalta sellout would look like a great American diplomatic triumph by comparison."

On election eve the Republicans stretched the new medium to its limits in a fast-moving show overflowing with fast cuts and on-location footage. Film clips of Korea, Alger Hiss, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg—the convicted "atomic spies"—depicted the Democratic record; clips of Eisenhower with soldiers, with his family, and with Winston Churchill suggested the Republican alternative. The show switched from city to city—including San Francisco, New York, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Seattle, Philadelphia, and Baltimore—letting Eisenhower supporters have a word, via TV, with the General. "I'm Irene Costello," said a woman standing on a San Francisco street. "I pound a typewriter, and I've been crusading plenty." A Korea veteran said, "Well, all the guys I knew out in Korea figure there's only one man for the

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job, General, and that's you." Between these segments came quick breaks to Nisei for Eisenhower-Nixon, Tykes for Ike, and various other supporters. The program ended with Ike and Mamie cutting a victory cake.

Did They Like Ike or Ike's Ads?

Just as Rosser Reeves in 1948 thought Dewey might have won with television spot advertising, so Reeves thought in 1952 that Eisenhower would have won without TV and spots. At the time Reeves urged the Republican National Committee to undertake a survey to assess the spots' impact. The committee refused; they wanted people to think Ike's charisma, not his TV, made the difference. Reeves ultimately agreed. "It was such a landslide that it didn't make a goddamn bit of difference whether we ran the spots or not," he told us. Along with many commentators, Reeves judges the TV campaign "only an interesting footnote to history." It is much more than that. The 1952 Eisenhower spot campaign first raised the major, disturbing—and continuing—questions about politics, advertising, and television. Should presidential campaigns be run by marketing principles and admen, or by political tactics and party professionals? Do thirty-second or sixty-second spots ignore issues and content in favor of image and emotion? Does the best man win, or the most telegenic performer? Can money buy enough media to buy elections? Every four years since 1952 these questions have reappeared, and each campaign since has provided enough contradictory answers to keep at least some of them alive and unresolved.

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CHECKERS

CHAPTER 4

The TV campaign of 1952 may not have played a decisive part in the Eisenhower-Nixon victory, but it did initiate a process that changed electoral politics. Truman-style whistle-stop tours were about to become history. The radio age was ending. All signs showed that longer set speeches played to the already convinced, to smaller TV audiences, to audiences more and more quick to grow restless (as *Arthur Godfrey* and *Lucy* were setting the thirty-minute standards of performance). Television had dealt a mortal blow to the traditional political speech, though it took an election or two before the older form buckled and sank practically out of sight, no longer a centerpiece of presidential campaigns, to be replaced by quick spots, short productions, and fast-paced telethons and specials. How strange and ironic, then, that perhaps the most effective piece of political advertising of our times was a traditional radio talk delivered on television toward the middle of the 1952 campaign, just as the spot was becoming king. We refer of course to Checkers.

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Richard Nixon gave his Checkers speech on national television on the evening of September 23, 1952, from the stage of Los Angeles's El Capitan Theater, which had been converted into a television studio by NBC. Over the years Checkers has taken on the dimensions of a myth, which both Nixon's detractors and Nixon himself, in his book *Six Crises* and later in his memoirs, helped construct. Some people, for example, believe that Checkers, the Nixon family cocker spaniel, actually appeared on the broadcast, hence the name. Others, their memories better—only Mrs. Nixon was present on stage with Nixon—still denigrate the candidate for his "tastelessness," trotting out as he did references to his wife Pat, daughters Tricia and Julie, family dog Checkers, family car 1950 Oldsmobile, family finances, family debts, even family closet contents (no minks, just Pat's "respectable Republican cloth coat"). Most everyone, enemies and supporters alike, agree that Checkers melodramatically saved Nixon's threatened position on the Republican ticket, when hundreds of thousands of supporting calls overloaded telephone switchboards in the greatest single demonstration of television's reach before or since. The facts about Checkers deflate much of the mythology of both critics and supporters; they make a better story about the advertising and political arts as well.

The story began on September 18 with a page one headline in the pro-Stevenson *New York Post*: "SECRET NIXON FUND!" Inside, the jump headline elaborated: "Secret Rich Men's Trust Fund Keeps Nixon in Style Far Beyond His Salary." There was enough truth in the allegation to make it worrisome, but enough missing context to make it unfair. Such funds were standard among politicians of the time, a way of doing aboveboard political work with political contributions rather than a government salary. There was nothing secret about it. Stevenson, it was later learned, had a fund too, one that was bigger than Nixon's. But the story mushroomed. Nixon later related in his *Six Crises* (1962) that a kind of ad hoc conspiracy kept the fund story alive—Democrats looking for a vote-getting issue; scandal-minded reporters who,

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if not secret Stevenson lovers, then revelers in wrongdoing; finally, and more sinister, the "they"—Communists? Communist supporters? Comsymps?—who wanted to harm "the work I was doing in investigating Communist subversion in the United States." But still later in his 1978 memoir *RN*, Nixon dropped the Communist explanation and offered a more sophisticated, and heartfelt, analysis. What really kept the fund story going, he finally acknowledged, was General Eisenhower.

The fund story broke on a Thursday, Nixon feelingly explains, but the presidential candidate didn't talk to his running mate until late Sunday night—and then Ike said he wasn't committing himself to Nixon because "in effect people will accuse me of condoning wrongdoing." In the time between Thursday and Sunday, what's more, the *New York Herald Tribune* published an editorial declaring that "the proper course of Senator Nixon in the circumstances is to make a formal offer for withdrawal from the ticket. How this offer will be acted upon will be determined by an appraisal of all the facts in the light of General Eisenhower's unsurpassed fairness of mind." Nixon got the message. "The fat"—his fat—"was in the fire," he writes in *RN*; the *Tribune* wouldn't have published the editorial unless it reflected the views of "people high in the councils of the Eisenhower campaign." The General's lieutenants wanted to dump Nixon. As Garry Wills shrewdly observed, "the Establishment was at work." Nixon had been put on the ticket for "balance"—to attract the Taftites, the westerners, the conservatives who viewed with suspicion the New York internationalist crowd, the pinched minds who didn't even like Ike. "He was there to draw the yokels," writes Wills. "If there was any doubt about his ability to do that, no one would feel compunction at his loss: Ike was too valuable a property to be risked. . . ."

Eisenhower and his advisers were letting Nixon twist slowly, slowly in the wind. But Nixon was no patsy. In his phone call with Ike on Sunday night, he pushed for an announcement "one way or the other. . . . There comes a time in matters like this

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when you've either got to fish or cut bait. . . . The great trouble here is the indecision." That is the version in *Six Crises*. In *RN*, his postpresidency memoirs, Nixon reports his words to Eisenhower this way: "There comes a time in matters like this when you either got to shit or get off the pot. . . . The great trouble here is the indecision." Ike remained noncommittal. Nixon, no yokel either, knew what to do. At thirty-nine, he was not about to commit hara-kiri. He met with advisers William Rogers, the genial lawyer, and Murray Chotiner, the political infighter (high road and low road). "Everyone present agreed," Nixon later wrote, "that somehow I had to get an opportunity to tell my story to millions rather than to the thousands who were coming out to hear me at the whistle-stops. There was only one way to do this—through a national television broadcast." Thomas Dewey called with advice. "I don't think Eisenhower should make this decision," the man who used to abhor television said. "Make the American people do it. At the conclusion of the program, ask people to wire their verdict in to you in Los Angeles." Nixon agreed. The Republican National Committee and the Senatorial and Congressional Campaign Committees purchased a half hour for $75,000 from NBC. "My only hope to win," Nixon remembers, "rested with millions of people I would never meet, sitting in groups of two or three or four in their living rooms, watching and listening to me on television." Getting their support required that the broadcast "must not be just good. It had to be a smash hit—one that really moved people, that was designed not simply to explain the complicated and dull facts about the fund to the people, but one that would inspire them to enthusiastic positive support." The story Nixon had to tell was necessarily a personal one. Eisenhower had said, "Tell them everything you can remember. Tell them about any money you have ever received." That meant a complete public accounting of, as Mrs. Nixon remonstrated to her husband, "how little we have and how much we owe"—on national television. It was, Nixon wrote, a "humiliation." No wonder, then, Nixon's histrionics during Checkers,

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his haunted, tense face, the viewers' feeling that Nixon was about to cry on camera. He was entitled. As Garry Wills writes, "No one who knows the full story can suspect Nixon of acting, or blame him for the tension he felt and conveyed—it would be like blaming a recently flayed man for 'indecent exposure.' " It is no wonder too that Nixon's anger at Eisenhower grows with each retelling of the story.

The Fighter Bloodied But Unbowed

But Nixon wasn't so ground down that he lost his bearings the night of the broadcast. His own accounts stress his sense of "kinship with Teddy Roosevelt's description of the man in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood." Nixon pictured himself as a solitary fighter, jotting down his thoughts on postcards, working through Monday afternoon and evening on his speech in a suite in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, leaving the hamburgers from room service untouched. At the studio he continues the portrait of one man fighting on alone: "I had ordered that no one was to be there during the speech except for the director and the technical crew. We arranged for reporters to watch on a monitor in a separate room." One of those reporters, however, did some poking around and wrote a somewhat different picture of the man in the arena. The reporter, James A. Kearns, Jr., worked for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (which Nixon considered blatantly pro-Stevenson). Kearns's version is that the Nixon speech was rehearsed and produced by Edward A. "Ted" Rogers, on leave from a Hollywood advertising agency and former production supervisor of *The Lone Ranger* (appropriately enough), *Beulah*, and *Mystery Theater*. According to Kearns, Rogers worked with representatives from BBD&O and Kudner (who flew to Los Angeles in the crisis to whip Nixon's script into shape). At the studio Kearns reports, "the TV experts had Nixon sit at the table, then stand next to it, and then do the same thing again and again. Under their deft prompting, the candidate practiced posing with his right hand on the table, then with his left

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hand in a trouser pocket. . . . Mrs. Nixon, nervously clasping a handkerchief, was carefully coached to keep a relaxed pose in her chair, her head turned at a certain angle, her face arched in a close-mouthed smile. The dress rehearsal, with the star going doggedly through the directed motions, continued almost to the moment of curtain time. In the last minute the coaches ducked behind an off-stage screen."

Nixon, for his part, reports the same scene: "Ted [Rogers] showed me the set. I asked him to remove a small vase of flowers because I thought it looked out of place. After a brief lighting and sound check, we were ushered into a small room at the far side of the stage." Whichever version is correct—and probably one man's brief lighting and sound check is another's careful rehearsal—Nixon is the sole source of what happened next: ". . . only three minutes before we went on the air. I was suddenly overwhelmed by despair. My voice almost broke as I said, 'I just don't think I can go through with this one.' 'Of course you can,' Pat said matter-of-factly. She took my hand, and we walked back onto the stage together."

The rest is on film, for each of us to judge. "My fellow Americans," Nixon began, "I come before you tonight as a candidate for the vice-presidency and as a man whose honesty and integrity have been questioned." Nixon quickly went through the Price Waterhouse audit of the fund, and the opinion about its legality by the law firm of Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher. This biographical first section—the first of the speech's four parts as Nixon saw it—was intended to lay to rest questions about his financial status, and Nixon listed everything he owned and every debt he owed. "Pat doesn't have a mink coat," he said. "But she does have a respectable Republican cloth coat, and I always tell her that she would look good in anything." Then Nixon talked about his dog:

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VIDEO	AUDIO
Nixon, unsmiling, rubs his face, as though this is a particularly painful admission.	Nixon [SOF]: "One other thing I probably should tell you, because if I don't they will probably be saying this about me, too. We did get something, a gift, after the nomination. A man down in Texas heard Pat on the radio mention the fact that our two youngsters would like to have a dog, and believe it or not, the day before we left on this campaign trip we got a message from Union Station in Baltimore, saying they had a package for us. We went down to get it. You know what it was? It was a little cocker spaniel dog, in a crate that he had sent all the way from Texas—black and white, spotted, and our little girl Tricia, the six-year-old, named it Checkers. And you know, the kids, like all kids, loved the dog, and I just want to say this right now, that regardless of what they say about it, we are going to keep it."

Checkers behind him, Nixon moved into his second section, his counterattack against Stevenson. The third section praised

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1952: CHECKERS

"My fellow Americans, I come before you . . . as a man whose honesty and integrity have been questioned"

"Pat doesn't have a mink coat. But she does have a respectable Republican cloth coat"

"Folks, he is a great man, and a vote for Eisenhower is a vote for what is good for America"

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Eisenhower, and the fourth asked the audience to send letters and wires to the Republican National Committee in Washington to indicate whether they thought Nixon should remain on or step down from the ticket. Thirty plus years later, the speech stands up sturdily, whether studied as masterful political rhetoric or watched as soap opera intended for the "yokels." Yet Nixon thought he had failed, that the whole effort was a disaster. Ted Rogers had crouched beside the camera in front of Nixon. Using hand signals, he cued Nixon on how much time was left. "I saw him when he held up one hand for five minutes," Nixon remembered, "and then three fingers. By that time I was so wrapped up in what I was saying that I didn't see his signal for 'ten seconds,' 'five seconds,' or 'cut.' I was still talking when time ran out, standing in front of the desk with my arms stretched out toward the camera. Suddenly I saw Ted Rogers stand up, and I realized that I had gone overtime. I couldn't believe it. I hadn't even given people the address of the Republican National Committee so that they would know where to send their telegrams. I felt almost dazed. I took a few steps forward and my shoulder grazed the side of the camera. I could hear Ted Rogers saying that they had waited until what sounded like the end of a sentence and faded the picture although I was still talking. . . . Pat embraced me, and I could only say, 'I'm sorry I had to rush at the last; I didn't give the National Committee address. I should have timed it better.' " The speech had been aimed at swamping the committee back in Washington with cards and calls—so that Eisenhower and the Eastern crowd would be forced to keep Nixon on the ticket. But Nixon, like some scrambled egghead, an Adlai Stevenson, hadn't delivered the punch line.

No matter. Over nine million sets were tuned to Nixon that night, according to Nielsen, almost half of America's television households. Astoundingly, perhaps as many as one million citizens were moved to send a letter or wire supporting Nixon—no one knew the count for certain because cards and calls went everywhere. Many viewers were further moved to send small contri-

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butions as well, enough to cover the costs of the program. Eisenhower had watched with Mamie in Cleveland. His first words were to Arthur Summerfield, the former Chevrolet auto dealer and chairman of the Republican National Committee, which had put up some of the $75,000 for the telecast. "Well, Arthur, you certainly got your money's worth tonight," Ike said. When Nixon flew to Wheeling, West Virginia, to meet—finally—with Eisenhower, the younger man reports that Ike hurried up the steps of the plane and into the cabin. "General, you didn't need to come out to the airport," said Nixon. Eisenhower, grinning, replied, "Why not? You're my boy!"

Nixon's version, however, conceals some of the General's own marshaling of strategy. Eisenhower had not commanded the victorious Allied armies on charm alone. The day of Checkers, Bruce Barton sent a note to Ben Duffy about Eisenhower's projected response to the Checkers speech. "The General must be expertly stage managed," Barton said. He suggested that Ike watch privately with Mamie, wait for fifteen minutes after the speech, and then come out with a "spontaneous" handwritten memo that would say: "I have seen many brave men perform brave duties. I have seen them march up to the cannon's mouth not knowing whether they would live or die. But I do not think that I have ever witnessed a braver act than I witnessed tonight. . . . " Barton wrote this assessment for Ike to deliver, of course, before anyone had seen the speech. The BBD&O connection apparently paid off. Immediately after Checkers, Eisenhower did indeed discard his prepared speech and come out of a private room with new notes. He declared in part: "I have seen many brave men in tough situations. I have never seen any come through in better fashion than Senator Nixon did tonight." Nixon was back on the ticket and in politics to stay, to play a major part in the next three decades of American public life. So too with television.

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THE RISE OF LIVING-ROOM POLITICS

CHAPTER 5

Not long after the 1952 election RCA, a major manufacturer of television sets, took out full-page newspaper advertisements, declaring that "television has brought their government back to the people!" True, the Eisenhower-Stevenson campaign had been televised to the nation's living rooms, but the people were not all that enamored of the new visitor. Eisenhower's inauguration, the beginning of the first Republican presidency in two decades, attracted a television audience half the size of that viewing another program aired the same week—the *I Love Lucy* episode in which Lucy Ricardo goes to the hospital to deliver Little Ricky. The experiments with political television in the 1954 congressional races did little to excite otherwise engaged voters. Some candidates produced spots half the length of "Eisenhower Answers America." Ten seconds long, the scripts sometimes made Ike's seem encyclopedic. Minnesota gubernatorial candidate Orville Freeman, for instance, used this spot in 1954:

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VIDEO	AUDIO
Block letters: "FREEMAN FOR GOVERNOR."	Sound effect: alarm clock [two seconds]
	Announcer [VO]: "Minnesota needs a wide-awake governor! Vote for Orville Freeman and bring wide-awake action to Minnesota's problems."
	Repeat alarm clock sound effect.

As with any new technique, there were bound to be errors. Thomas Stanley, candidate for governor of Virginia in 1954, bought a time slot in order to be "interviewed" by one of his campaign managers. They finished their script a minute early; as a contemporary account described it, "Stanley solved the problem by grinning apologetically and shaking his manager's hand vigorously for sixty long seconds." Still, thanks more to Lucy Ricardo than to Thomas Stanley or Orville Freeman, television entered the 1956 campaign firmly entrenched. Now there were twice as many TV sets—nearly forty million—and four times as many TV stations as in the preceding presidential year. "The choice for a candidate," wrote Walter Goodman in 1955, "is no longer *whether* to use TV, but how to use it and how much of it he can afford."

Politics Comes to Madison Avenue

In many ways 1956 was a replay of 1952. As before, Ike was hugely popular. This time clearly it was not time for a change. The Democrats did what they could under the circumstances; they argued that change was coming regardless, that a second Eisenhower administration would turn into a Nixon presidency.

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Eisenhower's health had slipped badly over the past year. In September 1955 he had suffered a serious heart attack; nine months later, he fell victim to ileitis. At sixty-five, Ike suddenly seemed an old and sick man, placing new importance on his running mate. For his part Nixon was nearly as unloved as Ike was beloved. Harold Stassen started a dump Nixon movement among moderate Republicans. When the movement failed, it remained for Stevenson and the Democrats to run against Nixon. Ike was too popular to be attacked directly; Nixon had no such shield, and Ike's health gave the Democrats their opening.

BBD&O again handled the Republican National Committee account. Carroll Newton, the time buyer from 1952, was put in charge. The National Citizens for Eisenhower Committee hired Young & Rubicam and the Ted Bates agency. A Republican party spokesman, L. Richard Guylay, minimized their actual role; they were, said Guylay, "technicians." But the Democrats saw in Madison Avenue another issue safely distant from Ike. In his acceptance speech at the Democratic convention, Adlai Stevenson returned to the theme he had used in 1952: "The men who run the Eisenhower administration evidently believe that the minds of Americans can be manipulated by shows, slogans, and the arts of advertising. This idea that you can merchandise candidates for high office like breakfast cereal—that you can gather votes like box tops—is I think the ultimate indignity to the democratic process. . . ."

Despite Stevenson's criticism the Democrats planned some merchandising of their own. The party had about $8 million set aside for advertising Stevenson as well as congressional candidates. But in 1955 when the Democrats started talking to ad agencies, no one wanted their business. By the end of the year the Democrats were getting desperate, and advertising industry leaders were shuffling their feet and glancing at one another, embarrassed. It might, they feared, look like some sort of conspiracy to keep the Democrats from the White House, to the detriment of the agencies' public image. A group of executives met to

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discuss the matter. The advertising trade association began calling members, trying to find an agency for the party. There was talk of putting together an outside task force of talented people from various agencies so that no one agency would have to work with the party, in much the same way ad agencies share public service work for TB or Easter Seals. The Democrats refused; they wouldn't accept charity from Madison Avenue. The Democrats had been cold-shouldered in part because, as *Printer's Ink* magazine explained, "big agency men don't want to alienate the Republican businessmen who head many client companies," and in part because of Madison Avenue's Republican bent.

Finally, party chairman Paul Butler found a small agency called Norman, Craig & Kummel—Democrats, at that—who were willing to do the campaign. Chester Herzog, a thirty-four-year-old account executive whose credits included Blatz Beer, headed the Democratic effort. He gathered a half-dozen talented, Democratic copywriters, on temporary leave from other firms, and set to work. Nevertheless, after all that searching the Democrats, like the Republicans, minimized the importance of the admen. Walter Craig, a former vaudeville actor and agency partner, echoed Guylay: "To most politicians and their traditional public-relations men, TV is something new and completely strange. They don't know its mechanics, or how to evaluate and use it. They need experts to lead them through its labyrinth."

The Republicans by and large planned to repeat the formula of 1952. The advertising schedule again would be concentrated close to the election. "I think our use of TV right up to the last minute of the '52 campaign helped people make up their minds," said BBD&O president Ben Duffy. The agency started buying up time segments a year early, saving preemption costs for longer segments, as well as locking up the best times before the Democrats got organized. As in 1952 many of the Republican TV productions would star Eisenhower, with one difference. In 1952 Ike had gone along reluctantly with the TV appeals, sharing the old Dewey notion that spots were "undignified." This time Ei-

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senhower announced, early in the campaign, his intention to run primarily on television; now it was the old-fashioned whistle-stopping that appeared "unseemly" for a sitting president.

BBD&O did introduce one innovation in 1956. Half-hour speeches had worked well in 1952, but even then there had been some adverse reaction from viewers, angered at the temporary disappearance of a favorite show. The day of the thirty-minute political speech was past, Guylay stated flatly; even Lincoln's second inaugural couldn't hold a prime-time audience when up against a popular sitcom. The Republican solution was a new, in-between form, the five-minute spot. "Hitchhikes," they were called—free rides on somebody else's audience, just as with Rosser Reeves's shorter spots. Run between popular programs, they would be as effective as spots in holding onto a presumably restless audience; they would be long enough to provide more information than a spot (and perhaps reduce some of the criticism of huckster brevity and simplemindedness). The admen had to convince networks and sponsors to lop five minutes out of their shows, but that could be done—if not by appeals to good government and democracy, then by threatening to preempt the entire program which candidates at the time had the right to do under FCC regulations. Finally, hitchhikes were bargains, costing around $10,000, whereas a half-hour program could cost $60,000 for air time plus $20,000 or so for preemption.

The series of Eisenhower five-minute hitchhikes was called "Your Government and You." It began October 15 with a talk by the president, who sounded like a barker promoting all the good acts ahead in the carnival:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Eisenhower addressing camera.	Eisenhower [SOF]: " . . . Your administration will try diligently through the next three

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weeks to explain its record of achievements, the problems before it, and the policies by which it proposes to solve them. You will hear your Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, tell of the spirit that impels us in achieving peace and the record we have made as a nation in our united effort for peace. You will hear your Secretary of the Treasury, George Humphrey, tell how his department has checked the galloping inflation, cut taxes, balanced the budget, and reduced the debt. You will hear your Secretary of Defense, Charles E. Wilson, tell how we have saved billions of dollars on the Armed Forces, reduced our manpower requirements, and still provided a more secure defense. You will hear your Secretary of Labor, James Mitchell, tell how employment, wages, and income have reached the highest levels in history. You will hear your Attorney General, the Secretary of our new Department of Health, Edu-

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cation and Welfare, and other Cabinet officers tell what we have done to combat monopoly, to extend Social Security for seventy million Americans, and other accomplishments of this Republican administration. I am proud of the record, and I think you will be proud of it, too. So let me ask you one thing. Whenever you can, listen to this series, and talk the facts over with your family and friends. Then make up your mind as to how *you* will vote on November 6. . . ."

The Republicans also used short thirty- and sixty-second spots again. One features Eisenhower, surrounded by the aura of the presidency:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on CU of presidential seal.	Announcer [VO]: "The President of the United States."
Cut to medium shot of Eisenhower clad in three-piece suit, standing behind desk; behind him are bookshelves and American flag.	Eisenhower [SOF]: "You decide the future of America for four years this coming election day. We in the Republican party pledge ourselves to continue our

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program of peace, security, and prosperity, that has made our party the party of the future."

Announcer [VO]: "Vote for your future. Vote Republican."

The Republicans produced a few films that required program preemption. Unlike the 1952 efforts, which were mostly straightforward speeches, these 1956 campaign films embraced television production values. "People don't like looking at one guy's face all the time," Republican party chairman Leonard Hall said. "You've got to have action." One half-hour show featured Ike talking for all of sixty seconds; the rest was devoted to film and other spokesmen. The Republicans also produced a fifteen-minute TV film for use in congressional campaigns, "These Peaceful and Prosperous Years." As described in a prospectus to Republican congressmen, the telefilm followed "an average American family going about their daily living under a Republican era of peace. . . . The family is seen at home with the housewife enjoying her modern work-saving conveniences; the father enjoying the recreational opportunities afforded by his earning capacity, and the two children, teenagers, doing the things children of this age bracket enjoy doing. . . ." The film closes with an announcer saying, "Give Ike a Republican Congress," followed by Ike and Mamie singing a duet, "God Bless America."

Similarly soporific was "The People Ask the President," aired on October 12. An announcer told viewers that the questioners are "your neighbors." Eisenhower began, as he often did at his regular news conferences, with an announcement; then he took questions from the group. One man, a New York garment worker, asked about the "big shots" who populated Ike's Cabinet ("eight millionaires and a plumber," the joke went). Ike bristled: "Now,

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I have three or four very successful businessmen in the Cabinet. My friend, the Defense Department is spending something like forty billion dollars a year of our money. Most of that goes into . . . procurement of things—tanks and planes and guns and ammunition and all of these modern weapons. Who would you rather have in charge of that, some failure that never did anything or a successful businessman?" That was the program's toughest question. Others ranged from neutral ("I wonder if you could tell us what sort of a man Vice-President Nixon is?") to fawning (from an auto worker: "Some fellows feel that the Democratic party is on their side. I happen to know that you are on their side even more so . . . and I wish, Mr. President, that you would explain and enlighten my buddies back home as to your stand on labor unions. . . ."). A black minister, perhaps unintentionally, reminded the audience about Stevenson's status as a divorced man: "My intricate problem as a pastor . . . runs throughout the nation . . . torn and broken homes. The beauty of your home, with your wife by your side helping you go forward, the union of your home, your children, your grandchildren, a real home life, is what America needs as a pattern and as a philosophy." On October 24 Ike and Mamie held a televised chat with seven "ladies," the preferred usage then. Because the program was aimed at boosting the President's share of female votes, air time was bought for the afternoon. The women asked about the draft, the economy, nuclear weapons, the farmers' plight, and Ike's childhood. The result was an informal picture of the President and his wife, chatting easily with ordinary people.

Birth of the Negative

The Republicans had the money and the air time, but the Democrats, for all their professions of distaste for Madison Avenue, proved to be more innovative in their advertising. They introduced the negative commercial as a form, creating styles that would be repeated in years to come. One innovation, a standard in subsequent campaigns, used film of the opponent to attack the

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opponent; the particular film footage employed was a further innovation, also one copied subsequently: a clip from the opponent's political advertising.

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on slide: white letters against gray background, "HOW'S THAT AGAIN, GENERAL?"	Announcer [VO]: "How's that again, General?
Cut to freeze frame of TV screen showing Ike; "1952" superimposed in white letters.	During the 1952 campaign, General Eisenhower promised a great crusade—"
Camera moves in until Ike fills screen; action begins, excerpt from 1952 "Eisenhower Answers America" spot on corruption.	Eisenhower [SOF]: "Too many politicians have sold their ideals of honesty down the Potomac. We must bring back integrity and thrift to Washington."
Freeze frame.	Announcer [VO]: "How's that again, General?"
Clip repeats.	Eisenhower [SOF]: 'Too many politicians have sold their ideals of honesty down the Potomac. We must bring back integrity and thrift to Washington."
Fade to CU of Estes Kefauver, the Democratic candidate for vice-president. Camera	Kefauver [SOF]: "This is Estes Kefauver. Let's see what happened to that promise.

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pulls back to show that he's standing beside a curtain on which is hung a series of nameplates: "ROBERTS," "TALBOTT," "STROBEL," "MANSURE," and "WENZELL." Kefauver points to the name of the man he is talking about.

"Wesley Roberts, a Republican National Chairman, sold Kansas a building it already owned for eleven thousand dollars. He got a silver tree from Mr. Eisenhower.

"Hal Talbott pressured defense plants to employ a firm which paid him a hundred and thirty thousand dollars while he was Air Force Secretary. He received the General's warm wishes and an official welcome.

"And then there are many others, like Strobel, the Public Buildings Administrator; Mansure, the General Services Administrator. Let's think it through on November 6."

Cut to slide: white letters against gray background, "Vote for ADLAI STEVENSON and ESTES KEFAUVER."

Announcer [VO]: "Vote for Stevenson and Kefauver—vote Democratic."

Another negative spot also featured Kefauver—Stevenson by and large stayed above the battle, as presidential candidates often do, leaving the fighting to their running mates. In it Kefauver compares the robust economy of 1956 with that of 1929, arguing that they share a weakness that could cause disaster: the recession in farming. Over film footage of breadlines, Kefauver says, "Are we going to learn the painful lesson of 1929 all over again?" Finally, a series of Democratic negative spots took on Richard

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Nixon. At that point in the campaign, no one would say too loudly that the President would die; it would be poor taste. The anti-Nixon spots made the point implicitly:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Still photo of Nixon in profile, shifty-looking, narrowed eyes; small on screen. Super over photo in large white letters, filling screen: "NIXON?"	Announcer [VO]: "Nervous about Nixon? "*President* Nixon?
Cut to lettering against black background: "VOTE DEMOCRATIC."	"Vote Democratic. The party for you—not just the few."

The other two spots in the series used the same script and close but different opening graphics. One begins with an imposing photo of the U.S Capitol. The other opens with a caricature of a tiny Nixon sitting in a huge chair labeled "THE PRESIDENT." The tactic of attacking a vice-presidential candidate's fitness for the presidency has similarly become a standard in the years since.

The Democrats also traveled the positive road, with Stevenson appearing one-on-one with the home viewer:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on Adlai Stevenson standing before curtain, medium shot.	Stevenson [SOF]: "I'm Adlai Stevenson, and this is what I believe—that there is only one sound formula for peace: a sturdy defense, cooperation with our friends, and intelli-

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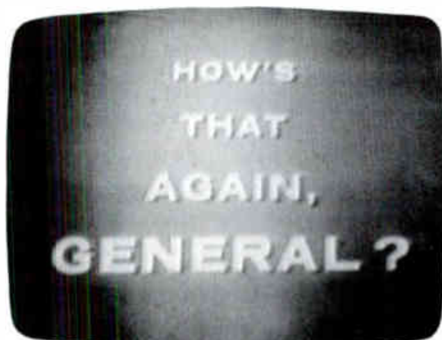
1956: EISENHOWER VS. STEVENSON



Stevenson Negative Commercial

"General Eisenhower promised a great crusade"

"We must bring back integrity and thrift to Washington"

"Let's see what happened to that promise"

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Stevenson "Man From Libertyville" Commercial

"Oh, I forgot to deliver the groceries"

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	gent action to win the hearts and minds of the uncommitted peoples. To achieve this peace, we need new leadership."
Cut to still photos of Stevenson and Kefauver.	Announcer [VO]: "Vote Democratic."

Similar spots, in a series entitled "Adlai Speaks for a New America," showed the candidate discussing science, fair employment, small business, and education.

The Democrats, like the Republicans, invested heavily in five-minute hitchhikes. These featured Stevenson, usually talking with someone else. In "Vice-Presidency" Stevenson, Kefauver, and Stevenson's son and daughter-in-law discuss the importance of the second-highest office. "Farming" shows Stevenson and Kefauver, agreeing that something must be done. "Cost of Living" features Stevenson and his son and daughter-in-law. "Education" has Stevenson talking with the Dean of Northwestern's School of Education. Finally, "Television Campaigning" stars a solitary Stevenson addressing the camera in his library. He talks about the limitations of television and promises that it won't prevent him from getting out and meeting voters. Another, "The Man from Libertyville," shows Stevenson, his son, and his daughter-in-law, carrying groceries into the house. Stevenson pauses outside the door and, grocery sack in arms, soberly discusses the cost of living and other problems, talking directly to the camera. The spot concludes with Stevenson's daughter-in-law coming out the door, taking the sack from him, and chiding, "You're a *big* help." "Oh, I forgot to deliver the groceries," Stevenson chuckles, and, turning to the camera, adds, "and made a speech instead."

The Democrats even produced a few cartoons. In one an animated ballot announces, "I am your ballot. Don't treat me lightly." The talking ballot then summarizes the issues and urges

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a Stevenson vote. Finally the Stevenson campaign commissioned some longer films. At an early stage of the Democratic effort a young filmmaker named Charles Guggenheim became involved in some primary advertising. Later his political media work would span the presidential campaigns of Robert and Edward Kennedy and George McGovern. Of the Stevenson effort, Guggenheim now recalls, "The candidate had absolutely no interest in that side of the campaign; he left it all to others." And as for those others, Guggenheim says, "No one was particularly knowledgeable about paid spots."

In a way Stevenson was right to focus his attention elsewhere. The ad campaigns became moot when real world events suddenly began to dominate the news in the last days of the campaign. Soviet tanks rolled into Hungary; Israel invaded Egypt; England and France intervened at the Suez Canal. On October 31 Eisenhower took to the airwaves to reassure the nation—a presidential speech carried free by the networks. The TV appearance boosted Ike's already high popularity, a demonstration of how international crises tend to produce "rally-'round-the-flag" effects.

On election eve both sides bought air time for televised rallies. In a speech from Boston Stevenson made the attack on Nixon explicit: "Distasteful as this matter is, I must say bluntly that every piece of scientific evidence we have, every lesson of history and experience, indicates that a Republican victory tomorrow would mean that Richard M. Nixon probably would be president of this country within the next four years." The Republicans had planned another production like that of 1952, with music and children and fast cuts. But Ike opted to remain in Washington, addressing the rally (also in Boston) by closed-circuit TV—to show that he was too busy being president to engage in politics. Later that night Eisenhower appeared again on TV, to give a quiet, contemplative election-eve talk. "You have done me a very great courtesy in allowing me to come into your living rooms this evening," he said at the end. "I thank you sincerely." Ike had more to thank voters for the next day, when he won in a

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landslide surpassed to that point only by the Roosevelt victory of 1936. The Republicans again outspent the Democrats on broadcasting, $2.9 million to $1.8 million. Both parties spent more on advertising than they had in 1952; but as we've seen, more can be less when a presidential campaign produces nothing more memorable than a talking ballot.

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KENNEDY, KENNEDY, KEN-NE-DY

CHAPTER 6

In 1960 the television advertising arts should have been decisive. Nine out of ten American homes had television sets. Eisenhower couldn't run again, and Stevenson wouldn't; so the faces would be less familiar, more in need of advertising's cosmetic touches. In fact the prevailing wisdom held that Madison Avenue, through television, would elect the next president. Vance Packard's 1957 exposé, *The Hidden Persuaders*, had included a chapter on the selling of the president, and a *Saturday Evening Post* editorial in 1959 declared that the "sinister sorcerers" of Madison Avenue had replaced the financiers of Wall Street as the villains of politics. As it turned out, however, the polispots and admen were overshadowed in 1960 by another form of political television, the Kennedy-Nixon debates.

The debates came about through an odd conjunction of circumstances. First of all, the Congress, alarmed by the rising costs of TV advertising campaigns, held hearings about the issue in the mid and late 1950s. One idea, advanced to contain costs,

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involved the provision of free broadcast time to candidates. If the equal-time rules—the infamous Section 315 of the Federal Communications Act—could be suspended, the networks would be able to give air time to serious (that is, major) presidential candidates without having to provide equal air time to the Communist and vegetarian candidates. Section 315 had been aimed at preventing discrimination of long-shot candidates and minor parties. In practice, it has enabled broadcasters to avoid "spoiling" their regular schedules, and upsetting their audiences, by providing free blocks of air time to any candidates. But in 1960 it was the broadcasters who wanted Congress to free them from the "restrictions" of 315—a turnaround of position caused in part by industry embarrassment at its scandals of the late 1950s, involving fixed quiz shows and payola. Suspension of 315 meant the networks could appear to the world in 1960 as dignified sponsors of political discourse. In their newfound role of public benefactors, ABC, CBS, and NBC in 1960 donated an estimated $4 to $5 million in air time to political candidates. Of that, the best-used time, worth some $2 million, went for the series of debates between the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates.

The Democratic nominee, John F. Kennedy, the forty-two-year-old junior senator from Massachusetts, had been a contender for the vice-presidential nomination in 1956. He was youthful, bright, handsome, wealthy, and relatively unknown; in short, a perfect candidate to use television to get the presidential nomination. In the Democratic primaries only Minnesota Senator Hubert H. Humphrey actively opposed Kennedy. Their first confrontation, in the Wisconsin primary, offered mixed results—the Roman Catholic Kennedy won but did poorly in Protestant areas. West Virginia was next. A poll four months earlier, taken by Lou Harris, had found Kennedy leading Humphrey seventy to thirty in West Virginia. Arriving in the state, Kennedy strategists found the situation was in fact much less optimistic: West Virginia voters hadn't previously realized Kennedy was Catholic. His re-

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ligion was the issue, but it was a whispered issue; neither candidate mentioned it publicly. Kennedy decided to confront it on television. His staff tried to talk him out of it, arguing that a candidate ought not mention his own negatives, and in West Virginia Kennedy's Catholicism was certainly a negative. Kennedy couldn't be dissuaded, and on May 8, 1960, he made a statewide paid television appearance, a conversation rather than a formal address. He answered questions put to him by Franklin Roosevelt, Jr., explaining that his Catholicism would not affect his handling of the presidency, and that all Americans, Catholics included, had the right to be president. According to Theodore White, Kennedy had no script; yet White remembers it as "the finest TV broadcast I have ever heard any political candidate make." The program is, as far as we can determine, lost to history; no transcript was kept and no film exists in the Kennedy Library in Boston.

Fortunately for the record, Kennedy used the same arguments in TV spots, written by his staff, subsequently aired in West Virginia, and now preserved in the library collection:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on Kennedy holding microphone in the midst of large crowd.	Kennedy [SOF]: "The question is whether I think that if I were elected president, I would be divided between two loyalties, my church and my state. There is no article of my faith that would in any way inhibit—I think it encourages—the meeting of my oath of office. And whether you vote for me or not because of my competence to

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> be president, I am sure that in this state of West Virginia, that no one believes I'd be a candidate for the presidency if I didn't think I could meet my oath of office. Now you cannot tell me the day I was born it was said I could never run for president because I wouldn't meet my oath of office. I came to the state of West Virginia, which has fewer numbers of my coreligionists than any state in the nation. I would not have come here if I didn't feel I was going to get complete opportunity to run for office as a fellow American in this state. I would not run for it in any way if I felt that I couldn't do the job. So I come here today to say that I think this is an issue" [voice drowned out by applause].

The Kennedy campaign also borrowed a tactic used by the California political consultants Whitaker & Baxter. In 1946 Whitaker & Baxter had represented Roger Lapham, the San Francisco mayor then facing a recall vote. Rather than defending Lapham's record, Whitaker & Baxter created "The Faceless Man"—a mysterious-looking, shadowy face shown on billboards and in newspaper ads and presented as someone trying to take over the city. In 1960 the Kennedy forces tried to pin on Humphrey the accusation that he was nothing but a front for the faceless bosses

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who wanted to pick the next president (later the Kennedy men would say that the bosses' vote had been destined for Lyndon Johnson, the Senate majority leader):

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on quick series of still photos of West Virginians.	Announcer [VO]: "This is you, the people of West Virginia. Are you, you, and you going to let yourself be used by the forces who,
Cut to photo of pols, their backs to camera, waving cigars.	in their smoke-filled rooms in Los Angeles,
Cut to photo of White House.	expect to handpick the next president of the United States?
Cut to photo of pols.	Well, they know they can't do it—unless
Cut to map of West Virginia. Super appears over map: white letters, "STOP KENNEDY."	here, in West Virginia, they stop Kennedy. So what do they do, these scheming politicos?
Cut to quick series of photos of voters.	They ask you, you, and you, the people of West Virginia, to walk into their trap and
Cut to slide: "Hubert" in white letters.	support Humphrey. But will
Cut to photo of pols.	they themselves support

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Cut to slide: "HUMPHREY" in white letters.	Humphrey at the convention? Of course not.
Black "X" appears over "HUMPHREY."	They'll drop Humphrey like the hot potato he is,
Cut to newspaper headline: "Hubert Can't Possibly Win Nomination."	because everybody knows Humphrey couldn't possibly win the nomination, much less the election.
Quick cuts to slides of state names, white letters against gray background, as announcer names each state.	In state after state—New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Indiana—
Cut to different still of pols in smoke-filled room.	the bosses also tried to stop Kennedy.
Cut to various shots of Kennedy with voters. Super in white letters: "KENNEDY WINS IN ALL STATES."	But the people spoke up, and Kennedy overwhelmingly won each primary. Make it an overwhelming people's vote,
Cut to smoke-filled room with super: "STOP KENNEDY."	not a bosses' vote,
Cut to film of Kennedy speaking in front of state capitol building.	here in West Virginia. May 10,
Cut to slide: map of West Virginia, with super in white letters, "VOTE KENNEDY MAY 10."	vote Kennedy!"

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Another series of spots showed Kennedy holding a microphone like a news reporter and talking with everyday Americans:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera CU on elderly man, in open-neck shirt, glasses, wearing hat, standing in front of brick wall.	Man [SOF]: "I think our problem is today that we can't produce thirty-cent eggs on four and a half and five-dollar feed. That feed is too high for the price that we're getting for our eggs. Do you think there's something that could be done to get it more economical, on a more economical basis?"
Cut to slide showing map of West Virginia, with white block letters overlaid: "YOU AND KENNEDY!"	Announcer [VO]: "John F. Kennedy goes to the people to know their problems. Here, he answers Roy Kaye, farmer of Cabell County."
Cut to medium shot of man, at left, looking up to Kennedy. Kennedy, in coat and tie, holds a microphone in one hand, and gestures with the other hand.	Kennedy [SOF]: "The farmer's income has dropped nearly fifteen percent in the last twelve months, and his cost of doing business has gone up about ten percent, the same thing you have with your feed. That gives him a total loss, in his position, of almost twenty-five percent. Now, if this continues, it's going to affect our entire

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	economy. I would say that the first and most important task, really, domestically, on the desk of the next president, will be an attempt to arrest the decline."
Cut to slide of map with white block letters overlaid: "VOTE KENNEDY MAY 10."	Announcer [VO]: "It's up to you. Vote Kennedy for president May 10."

Several spots tied Kennedy to coal, vital to the West Virginia economy. In one five-minute hitchhike Kennedy lectures a group of miners about foreign aid and Social Security. Another spot closes with an announcer saying: "Help Kennedy bring prosperity back to coal, and thus to West Virginia. Vote Kennedy May 10." In all, Kennedy, the son of one of America's richest men, outspent Humphrey four to one in the state. Humphrey tried to hold his dwindling support with a thirty-minute phone-in telethon. Unfortunately no one screened the calls; one woman told Humphrey to "git out" of West Virginia. A few minutes later an operator came on and ordered everyone off the telephone line for an emergency. Kennedy later joked that had he known the calls weren't being screened, he would have called himself—or had his brother Bobby call.

It wasn't necessary. Kennedy won West Virginia by twenty points, and Humphrey dropped out. With running mate Lyndon Johnson, Kennedy prepared to face Richard Nixon and his running mate, former Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. Nixon, concerned about the Madison Avenue connection, decided against a direct link with BBD&O. Instead, the Republicans formed their own, in-house ad agency called Campaign Associates. The staff of fifty was headed by Carroll Newton, the BBD&O vice-president who had worked on Eisenhower's 1952 and 1956 campaigns, and also included the producer Ted Rogers, from Checkers days.

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An in-house agency, the Nixon people reasoned, would attract good people from other agencies and the networks, rather than having to rely on any one agency. Campaign Associates rented offices on Vanderbilt Avenue; Nixon had explicitly prohibited a Madison Avenue location.

Nixon Answers America

Campaign Associates might just as well have been located in the Aleutian Islands. They were the same talented people who had helped with Ike's effective spots, but, with rare exceptions, Nixon ignored them. His TV advisers, for instance, wanted to make two long-form programs. One would be called "Khrushchev As I Have Seen Him," featuring Nixon talking about the Soviet leader. Khrushchev would be visually characterized "in the melodramatic image of an international villain," filmmaker Gene Wyckoff proposed, while "in juxtaposition, Nixon would be characterized as the American who best understands what peace demands." The film would emphasize Nixon's experience, underscore his opposition to Communism, and cast in good light his Tricky Dicky image—you've *got* to be a street fighter to deal with the toughs of the world. Campaign Associates also wanted to do a film "You and Your Family," with Nixon talking informally from his home about the circumstances facing everyday families such as his. This would show Nixon's human side. It would remind some viewers of the Checkers speech, and Nixon's strength in facing adversity. And it would implicitly raise the point that Kennedy's privileged background had kept him removed from the concerns of the common American. Nixon turned down the Wyckoff proposal, feeling it was more important to continue his personal campaigning, and fulfill his pledge, ill-considered, to visit all fifty states before election day. While Nixon was unwilling to appear in such formats, his running mate Lodge proved difficult to work with and unconvincing on camera.

Out of necessity, Wyckoff turned to existing still photographs of the candidates, and a new style of political advertising was

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born. An animation camera created a sense of motion by a combination of zooming and panning actions. Within two weeks Wyckoff completed two five-minute hitchhikes, "Meet Richard Nixon" and "Meet Mr. Lodge." The latter had a voice-over by President Eisenhower. The technique, Wyckoff later declared, "was extraordinarily suitable for conveying an impression of heroic image, perhaps because each still photograph in itself is a slightly unreal impression, a moment frozen from life, that makes it easier for viewers to accept and be moved by an illusion of the candidate's heroic dimension." Ruth Jones, a talented time buyer on loan from J. Walter Thompson, convinced Carroll Newton to let the Wyckoff heroic image films run in some already purchased daytime slots. Response was good, and shortly thereafter the hitchhikes began running in prime time as well.

The campaign also ran shorter spots, mostly with Nixon talking straight at the camera. In some he took questions asked by an announcer offscreen, a kind of Nixon Answers America format, but much tougher than the Eisenhower replies:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on medium shot of Nixon, sitting ramrod straight on edge of a desk, hands folded neatly in lap. Plain background.	Announcer [VO]: "Mr. Nixon, what is the truth about our defenses? How strong should they be?"
Camera moves in slowly as he speaks, to CU.	Nixon [SOF]: "Well, they must be strong enough to keep us out of war, powerful enough to make the Communists in the Soviet Union and Red China understand that America will not tolerate being pushed around, that we

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	can if necessary retaliate with such speed and devastation to make the risk too great for the Communists to start a war anywhere in the world. We have this kind of strength now, and we are getting stronger every day. We must never let the Communists think we are weak. This is both foolish and dangerous. And so I say, let's not tear America down. Let us speak up for America."
Fade to side-by-side still photos of Nixon and Lodge, underneath black letters on white background: "NIXON AND LODGE." Below pictures: "They understand what peace demands."	Announcer [VO]: "Vote for Nixon and Lodge November 8. They understand what peace demands."

Nixon made no paid TV appearances in the three-month period July 25 to October 25. Then in the final twelve days of the campaign, Campaign Associates saturated the air: a Nixon rally; an Eisenhower speech; a program featuring Nixon, Lodge, and Eisenhower; a Nixon fifteen-minute national "fireside chat" each weeknight of the final week. A heavy spot schedule continued, and local party organizations bought time on their own. On the afternoon before the election a four-hour telethon, "Dial Dick Nixon," was broadcast on ABC, preempting all regular programming. Questions were phoned in from across the country and relayed to the candidate by Hollywood's Ginger Rogers and Lloyd Nolan. The telecast, as Theodore White observed, showed

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1960: NIXON VS. KENNEDY

Kennedy Anti-Humphrey Commercial, West Virginia Primary

"Are you, you, and you going to let yourself be used?"

Hubert Can't Possibly Win Nomination

"Everybody knows Humphrey couldn't possibly win"

"Make it an overwhelming people's vote, not a bosses' vote"

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Kennedy Religious Issue Commercial

"You cannot tell me the day I was born it was said I could never run for president"

Kennedy as "Interviewer"

"The farmer's income has dropped nearly fifteen percent"

Nixon Answers America

"We must never let the Communists think we are weak"

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Nixon "at his best (talking of peace) and at his worst (discussing the high cost of living with Ginger Rogers, who said she too had to live on a salary)." Later that night before the election, speeches by Nixon, Lodge, Ike, and Dewey were aired. All in all, the Republicans spent around half a million dollars on election eve. The final effort, White believes, "contributed mightily to the last Nixon surge."

"Viva Kennedy"

The Democrats aired fewer half-hour speeches than the Republicans, but one Kennedy speech is still remembered for the way the candidate handled the nagging questions about his Catholicism. On September 7 a group of Protestant leaders, headed by Norman Vincent Peale, charged that a Catholic president would be under "extreme pressure" from the Vatican in making policy decisions. Once again Kennedy met the Catholic issue head-on—and also once again contrary to the wishes of some advisers—in an address to Protestant ministers in Houston. Evenly, he said: "I do not speak for my church on public matters—and the church does not speak for me."

One sixty-second Kennedy spot got less favorable press notices. "Senator John F. Kennedy visits Mr. and Mrs. McNamara," the voice-over begins. Kennedy is sitting on a porch with an elderly couple. Mrs. McNamara, wearing a hat and broach, is smiling; her husband scowls. Kennedy says, "What I think is the serious problem for Mr. McNamara and Mrs. McNamara, he's retired, he's living on Social Security, then because he had an accident he incurred a debt of over six hundred dollars to pay for his medical bills. The average Social Security check is only around seventy-eight dollars a month, and whatever savings they had would have to be spent to pay for his bills." Kennedy says he supports Social Security assistance for medical bills, to help unfortunates like the McNamaras. The wife continues to smile, the husband scowls, and the spot ends; the McNamaras haven't said a word. Later the reason for the husband's scowl came out: he

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had told Kennedy that they didn't need any federal program—the couple had gotten Blue Cross coverage. Kennedy, according to subsequent press accounts, had told the McNamaras to keep that fact to themselves.

Several positive Kennedy spots feature the candidate addressing the camera directly. He deals with medical care, automation, and full employment. But when the tougher spots get going, the candidate gets out of the picture, and surrogates take over:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on news footage of foreign demonstrators throwing rocks at cars, waving banners, shouting angrily at camera. Cut to medium shot of Kennedy shaking hands with crowd of supporters; camera pans down to outstretched hands; then cut to CU of Kennedy.	Announcer [VO]: "Do you believe that America's world prestige is at an all-time high? Then vote Nixon. But if you believe that America's world prestige has gone downhill in these eight Republican years, that new leadership is needed to make America first again, then vote for the man who faces up to these facts and will do something to correct them. Vote Kennedy for president."

In another spot the Democrats turned to film footage to make a point, as had the Stevenson campaign four years earlier. This time the target was Nixon's self-proclaimed strong suit, his experience:

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VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on still of Nixon.	Announcer [VO]: "Every Republican politician wants you to believe that Richard Nixon is, quote, experienced. They even want you to believe that he has actually been making decisions in the White House—but listen to the man who should know best, the President of the United States. A reporter recently asked President Eisenhower this question about Mr. Nixon's experience."
Cut to press conference film: Eisenhower, standing, arms folded, listening to question.	Reporter [SOF]: "I just wondered if you could give us an example of a major idea of his that you had adopted in that role, as the, as the decider and final—" Eisenhower [SOF, after long pause]: "If you give me a week, I might think of one. I don't remember." [Laughter]
Cut to different footage of Eisenhower.	Announcer [VO]: "At the same press conference, President Eisenhower said:"
	Eisenhower [SOF]: "No one can make a decision except me."

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	Announcer [VO]: "And as for any major ideas from Mr. Nixon—"
Cut to first footage of Eisenhower.	Eisenhower [SOF]: "If you give me a week, I might think of one. I don't remember."
Cut to film of Kennedy smiling, in midst of large crowd. Then cut to slide: photo of Kennedy, with white letters on black background: "VOTE for JOHN F. KENNEDY for President."	Announcer [VO]: "President Eisenhower could not remember. But the voters *will* remember. For real leadership in the sixties, help elect Senator John F. Kennedy president."

The Democrats also used Eleanor Roosevelt comparing Kennedy favorably to Franklin Roosevelt. "He is a man with a sense of history. That I am well familiar with, because my husband had a sense of history. He wanted to leave a good record for the future. I think John F. Kennedy wants to leave a good record." Adlai Stevenson does his Kennedy endorsement sitting at a desk: "Under his leadership, we will win the fight for human rights." Finally, Jacqueline Kennedy praises her husband in slow, meticulous Spanish in a spot used in cities with large Hispanic populations. The production is minimal; the sixty-second spot shows Mrs. Kennedy standing in a nondescript room, wearing a short-sleeved dress, unchanging half smile on her lips while the camera keeps her framed in a simple head-and-shoulders shot. The lack of artifice enhances the message; the viewer's eyes stay on the speaker as she builds to her punch line, "Viva Kennedy."

The Great Debates

The 1960 election turned out to be so close that spots, in English or Spanish, may have made the difference; with so narrow a

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margin—a swing of a few thousand votes in Illinois and Texas—nearly anything that reached large groups of people could have been decisive. An individual man's or woman's voting choices, we understand, result from a whole range of interior forces: race, class, religion, images of the past, visions of the future, hopes, fears, information, ignorance. In any other election spots might have been critical. But in 1960 only one set of television images really mattered. The Kennedy-Nixon debates were the main media force in the campaign, providing a common gauge against which voters could measure their inner feelings. The gauge wasn't as "objective" as it seemed. But the candidates sensed its importance. At first, the Nixon staff quietly opposed the various proposals to open the way to debates by repealing Section 315, in the belief that the lesser-known Kennedy would have more to gain from such side-by-side appearances. Candidate Nixon himself said privately he would never debate Kennedy. Then, at a news conference after the Republican convention, Nixon suddenly announced he would accept an invitation to debate. The reversal amazed his senior staff; press aide Herbert Klein later speculated that Nixon "did not want his manhood sullied by appearing as if he were afraid to debate his opponent face-to-face, and he was confident that he could win such an encounter." Nixon's self-proclaimed strength was foreign policy—he had traveled widely in the Eisenhower administration—and so he felt that that would be his best debate topic. Nixon also believed that the TV audience would increase as the debates went on. So his side pushed for foreign policy to be the final of the four scheduled debates.

Nixon miscalculated. The first debate, held in Chicago on the evening of September 26 at the WBBM TV studios, had the largest audience by a slight margin, and the largest impact on the audience by far. Nixon came off poorly in how he looked, the result of a combination of loss of weight, exhaustion, an infected knee, unflattering lighting, and badly applied Lazy Shave makeup. But as far as what he said was concerned, Nixon came

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out ahead. People who heard the debates on radio generally told opinion surveyors that they felt Nixon had won, whereas those who had seen them on TV said that Kennedy was the winner. Nixon did better visually in subsequent debates. He drank milk shakes to gain weight, so that his shirt collars no longer hung loose about his neck; he tried to go after Kennedy more sharply. But the impression made in the first debate of the cool, elegant Kennedy and the hot, ill-at-ease Nixon remained strong. Marshall McLuhan, the communications theorist, suggested the encounter had been a kind of television Western: Nixon looked like the slick, shady railway lawyer about to bilk the townspeople, while Kennedy was the shy young sheriff ready to thwart the scheme. Nothing in the 1960 state of the art of political jingles, still photos, and sixty-second spots could match that encounter for pure theater. Just so voters didn't forget, the Kennedy campaign produced a spot from the debate footage, called "Historic Moment." It features a calm, confident Kennedy framing the election in Cold War terms: "The question before us all—it faces all Republicans and all Democrats—is, Can freedom in the next generation conquer, or are the Communists going to be successful? That's the great issue."

Nixon would later complain that, in the campaign as a whole, he wasn't as rested as Kennedy, or as suntanned, or as well served by courtiers. In his memoirs Nixon also went so far as to make the un-Republican claim that money kept him from using more TV in 1960: "television time costs money," he wrote, "and our campaign had run short. We could afford only one telethon, which we scheduled for the day before the election." He also complained (in *Six Crises*) that he had been too conscientious in 1960, spending "too much time . . . on substance and too little time on appearance: I paid too much attention to what I was going to say and too little to how I would look." He seemed to be saying, I only looked like the crooked railroad lawyer. This is revisionist history. Nixon's problems were broader than money, TV images, even Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley's legion of

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phantom voters on election day. Nixon tried to manage his own campaign, and he did it poorly. He rarely consulted, and often overruled, his staff. Even on minor advice—not to face the camera so intently—he ignored his media advisers. "He reduced us all to clerks," one adviser complained when it was over.

In victory Kennedy took a long view, offering a courtier of the press, Rowland Evans, a lofty paean to the new communications arts: "Television gives people a chance to look at their candidate close up and close to the bone," Kennedy told Evans. "For the first time since the Greek city-states practiced their form of democracy, it brings us within reach of that ideal where every voter has a chance to measure the candidate himself." Perhaps, but it is an ideal that often remains just beyond our grasp. Unquestionably, though, the 1960 campaign demonstrated that television had arrived as a significant force in American political life. It was not just the near total penetration of TV sets or the new campaign techniques of visual and aural presentation practiced by skilled hands like the filmmaker Gene Wyckoff. More important were the qualitative changes in social routines brought about by the presence of television; almost all American households not only had television but Americans—young and old, rich and poor, urban, suburban, and rural, black and white—were watching on the average more than two hours each day. These watchers were coming to depend on TV for much of their information about national affairs, as well as for their entertainment. Communications theorists such as McLuhan began speculating, sometimes overimaginatively, about how television was changing not just leisure time or news-consuming habits but the broader society and culture. Kennedy was hailed as the "first television president," a title he himself thought was appropriate. Political advertising, it also became fashionable to say, was now too important to be left to the politicians, or for that matter, to the advertising agencies. In 1964 a cadre of new communications specialists began to arrive in force to take over a significant part of the work of the political campaign. Accompanying some of them was a new style of advertising.

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THE NEW ADVERTISING: SOFT SELL ARRIVES

CHAPTER 7

During the Eisenhower fifties the nation had slumbered, basking in the radiant warmth of the genial President. For the voting classes it was a time of getting and getting on. Manufacturers bent to the task of satisfying pent-up consumer demands of the World War II and Korean War years. People married, moved into homes with washers and dryers, backyards and barbecues, and had children, several of them. Just about everyone bought a television set, and by the early 1960s there were homes with two TVs, and sometimes a third for the children of the baby boom. Advertising and communications arts prospered along with corporate America. And Rosser Reeves reached for fame by publishing his USP ideas in a book with the no-nonsense title *Reality in Advertising*. It eventually sold 800,000 copies and was translated into over a dozen languages. But Reeves and Madison Avenue also paid some dues for their successes—they were targets of criticism for the loud, hammering huckster spots, and their "manipulative methods" were exposed by Vance Packard and

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others. But the critics were years behind the newest development. The latest "reality in advertising" was emotion, which when employed in the political messages of the 1964 campaign—and in all subsequent campaigns—struck many people as much more manipulative than the transparent artifices of "Eisenhower Answers America."

Hard-sell advertising had used brain-pounding repetition to make its unique selling proposition. Soft-sell, emotional advertising, also known as the new advertising, depended on affect, on how the viewer felt about what he or she was seeing and hearing. Emotion, obviously, was hardly new to advertising. Decades before TV, for example, the 1848 Rogers Brothers Silverplate Company had appealed to the fear of being unpopular; in one of its 1910 print ads the Foster family—Dad, Mom, and daughters Mildred and Joan—were seen hanging around the house and moping because they didn't get invitations to parties. Why weren't the Fosters asked out? Because, the ad explained in its hard-edged way, they didn't have a complete silver set, and couldn't give parties themselves. In the years that followed, makers of toothpastes, mouthwashes, deodorants, soaps, shampoos, facial cleaners, and other personal products appealed to similar fears and hopes using gentler techniques. Later emotion-based advertising extended to the act of buying a soft drink—McCann-Erickson's Mean Joe Greene spot—and to the use of long-distance telephone services when in the late 1970s the N W Ayer agency created the AT&T "Reach Out and Touch Someone" campaign. It told people that they didn't need a "real reason" to call long distance, that wanting to say "I love you" or "I'm thinking of you" was enough. Another series of AT&T television commercials used a pop standard called "Feelings" as the spots showed family members and good friends calling one another on the telephone. Nobody was told to call, call, call, on the phone, phone, phone, now, now, now! The commercials were intended to make people feel like calling. One of the premier admen of the new era, William Bernbach, a founder of Doyle Dane Bernbach, explained

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the basis for the emotional appeals of the new advertising shortly before he died in 1983: "It is fashionable to talk about *changing* man," Bernbach said. "A communicator must be concerned with *unchanging* man—what compulsions drive him, what instincts dominate his every action, even though his language too often camouflages what *really* motivates him. For if you know these things about a man, you can touch him at the core of his being."

Appeals to "the core of being" are now so smooth and familiar in spot advertising that we seldom consciously remark on them. Bill Bernbach, Ned Doyle, and Maxwell Dane, who helped engineer that change, had formed DDB in 1949 with an investment of $1,200. By 1983 DDB had become the tenth largest advertising agency in the world, with annual billings of more than a billion dollars. As much as any single agency DDB helped bring about the new advertising of the late 1950s and 1960s. DDB's trademarks were bold headlines, short copy, and taut layouts, all with a message of humor and humanity. The agency's greatest creative hits came within a few years of one another. For Levy's Jewish-style rye bread, DDB ads showed a big picture of, among others, a young black boy and an older Chinese man, each holding a slice of the product. "You don't have to be Jewish to love Levy's," read the prominent headline. For Avis rental cars, perennially number two to the bigger Hertz company, DDB's ad pledged: "We Try Harder." For the Volkswagen automobile, a direct descendant of the Nazi army vehicle, DDB had to go against history—the year was 1959, and many people still vividly remembered Hitler and the war—and the tradition of the then-dominant Detroit models which stressed size, power, and ornamentation. "Think Small," proclaimed the headline of the DDB ads, with a photo of the little beetle-shaped car centered on white space. The trade paper *Advertising Age* designated the Volkswagen ads the best campaign of the half-century.

While emotion-based ads were challengers of hard sell, the advertising agencies were themselves changing rapidly, not only in the styles of advertising but also in the kinds of people engaged

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in agency work. Advertising's old-line, Republican, WASP image began to fade, geographically, socially, and ethnically. Men of Irish, Jewish, Italian, and Greek ancestry rose to prominence. Women advanced to executive jobs. Agencies in Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas, and San Francisco flourished. Many newcomers, particularly in the creative ranks of writers and art directors, were Democrats, liberal Democrats at that. One measure of how much the advertising business had changed was a 1971 memo written by Nixon campaign aide—and later memorable actor in Watergate—Jeb Stuart Magruder, complaining about how hard it was to find "conservative copywriters." The older stereotype was partly fiction; advertising in practice was never as homogeneous as the stories portrayed it. But social changes took place at the same time that new blood came into advertising during the 1960s, in newer agencies such as Doyle Dane Bernbach, as well as Papert, Koenig, Lois, and Della Femina, Travisano & Partners. Indeed, it was no accident that the USP hard-sell doctrines were being challenged by soft-sell and no-sell ads; the new breed of advertising men and women nurtured the new advertising.

The ads of the hammer away school of persuasion did not fade away in the 1960s; too many people were convinced of their usefulness if not their aesthetic qualities. But they did modulate a bit, and because political candidates were always somewhat uncomfortable with hard-sell commercials, the subtler emotion-based styles of the new advertising were soon being adapted to the strategies of electoral campaigns. Among the earliest, and most electric, examples of emotion-based advertising in politics appeared in 1964, when Doyle Dane Bernbach recruited a New York recording specialist named Tony Schwartz to work on media for the Lyndon Johnson reelection campaign.

The Wizard of West 56th Street

In the ranks of the new media specialists, Schwartz stands apart. Schwartz has never worked a day of his life on the staff of

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an ad agency, has never rung a single doorbell on behalf of a candidate for public office. Yet in 1964 he created, together with Doyle Dane Bernbach, what most people consider the single most memorable political commercial ever seen on television, the Daisy spot.

Schwartz has lived, worked, and made radio-television commercials since 1961 in his studio-home in a brownstone on West 56th Street near 10th Avenue, in a neighborhood of bars and bodegas well off Madison Avenue. Hundreds of seekers of public office—presidential candidates, senators, congressmen, and governors, who regard Schwartz as a modern magician of the media—have visited him there over the last two decades. Schwartz says he suffers from agoraphobia and has great difficulty in traveling; only rarely does he leave his high-ceilinged studio, with its cork lining for soundproofing and its broadcast-quality TV cameras, editing tables, and wall shelves holding thousands of tapes. The setting makes the magician image apt. Like some sorcerer of sound and sight, Schwartz sits in his cavelike quarters, surrounded by the instruments of his craft.

Schwartz was among the first of a new group of media specialists who became involved in political advertising in the years after Eisenhower. These men (few women have been centrally engaged as yet) either had no experience in advertising agencies or else had served short apprenticeships before breaking away from the business. Schwartz's training and ideas reflect that nontraditional background of the new breed. He had been an artist/draftsman working for the Navy Department during World War II and then found work after the war as an art director at the Graphics Institute in midtown New York. A self-described gadget nut since birth, Schwartz walked into a record store off Fifth Avenue one day in the early 1950s and bought a Webcor wire recorder selling for the then-princely sum of $139.95. (The Webcor still sits in his studio today, along with what seems like every Ampex, Magnacorder, and other audio machine built since.) Immediately, Schwartz says, he got hooked on sound. New York in the early

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1950s was the place where many folksingers performed, relatively well-known singers like Burl Ives, Josh White, and Pete Seeger, as well as struggling newcomers. Schwartz began by recording songs off the radio, and then called up the singers—many of them too poor to afford air check disks—and offered to play back their recordings for study. Then Schwartz began wandering around his neighborhood and recording the sounds of Midtown West and of children playing street games. These sounds became part of his first two records, *New York 19* (his 1950s, pre-zip-code postal zone) and *One, Two, Three, Zing, Zing, Zing*, a record of children's games. An art director at the Wexton agency, co-owned by a cousin of Schwartz's, heard the latter. The director asked Schwartz if he would be interested in doing free-lance commercials with children in them for Wexton. "He told me that they had never used children before in commercials, but only women imitating children," Schwartz recalls. Schwartz agreed. "The first commercial I did was for Johnson's Baby Powder. It was a huge success and that put me in a new business. Instantly I got orders for commercials from Ivory Snow, Ivory Flakes, Hoffmann's soda. I became a specialist in children's recordings; I was typecast. But I kept recording in terms of my own interests."

One of those interests was in what Schwartz calls "the world of numbers." This led, circuitously, with false starts and lurching progress—as frequently happens in imaginative endeavors—to the one simple, direct execution of the Daisy spot for Lyndon Johnson. As Schwartz remembers: "I wanted to do a record essay on numbers without any narration, just the world of numbers. I saw a book that IBM put out, called *The World of Numbers*, and I thought, I would love to do a record to go with that. . . . The most complex use of numbers was the countdown on the atom bomb or a rocket blast-off. The simplest use of numbers was a child counting from one to ten. I had previously done a free-lance commercial with a child, my nephew, who was four years old, for Doyle Dane Bernbach and Polaroid. They had a Polaroid

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camera where it was, 'One, two, three, four, count to ten and open the door,' the procedure for taking a picture. I used that counting from that commercial with my nephew, and I started fooling around with the atomic bomb countdown." Schwartz took the result, a short radio essay cross dissolving from the countdown to the child, to IBM's ad agency, Ogilvy, Benson & Mather (now Ogilvy & Mather). They paid him a standard fee of $500 for his submission but rejected the idea. Eventually, in mid-1962, he played the essay on a radio program he did for WNYC, the city-owned, commercial-free station, to show "the need for a real United Nations and peace."

Meanwhile, on his WNYC program, Schwartz was developing his ideas of broadcasting as a medium of feelings, ideas later published in his two books, *The Responsive Chord* (1973) and *Media: The Second God* (1981). Advertising has power, Schwartz concluded, when people feel that the ad "is putting them in touch with reality," when they feel the ad "strikes a responsive chord with the reality the listener or viewer experienced." A startling demonstration of these responsive chord feelings—and of the ways Schwartz used media to evoke them—occurred in 1962 when Schwartz made a series of radio spots for American Airlines. Schwartz's idea was that each city has not only its visual signature—for example, New York's Empire State Building or San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge or Washington's Capitol dome—but also its sound signature. Doyle Dane Bernbach, American Airlines' agency, was sold on the idea that these sounds would make listeners want to get up and go to the city, traveling of course by American Airlines. For the American Airlines city of San Francisco, the signature sound was obviously trolley cars and foghorns off the Bay. Schwartz, with his agoraphobia, had never been to San Francisco. He did, however, know a New York street person named Moondog, a shambling, grimy character with long hair, sandals, and a sackcloth robe, who carried bells, drums, cooking utensils, and his other life's possessions on his back as he wandered down Sixth Avenue. One foggy spring day Schwartz

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heard the sounds of the Hudson River foghorns, got in touch with Moondog, and invited him to the studio. Moondog played his bells, while Schwartz mixed their tinkle with the bellow of the foghorns recorded by a rooftop microphone. The result was a San Francisco sound—trolley bells against foghorns—that conformed to what listeners already expected and felt about San Francisco. "It was a beautiful series," Schwartz recalls with genuine fondness. Both the agency and the client were also pleased, as the airline's business boomed. Later Schwartz received calls from Young & Rubicam and Benton & Bowles, with each agency asking him to submit work for airline clients.

Reaching the responsive chord in people, Schwartz argued, meant that hard-sell advertising was obsolete. Schwartz dismissed Rosser Reeves and USP as "a kind of gentleman's agreement preventing any two companies from making the same product claim in an advertisement"—that is, the boys in the locker room of the right club getting together and dividing up the market. Reeves, the hard-sell man, had argued that television with its great reach was enhancing the power of USP. Schwartz, the soft-sell man, was now arguing that with television, USP was no longer needed. Specific product claims, he maintained, couldn't match the quality of feelings that spots can produce when emotions are addressed. The Lyndon Johnson advertising campaign of 1964 became a practical demonstration of Schwartz's ideas of persuasion.

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DAISY AND THE DIRTY PICTURES IN THE PUBLIC MIND

CHAPTER 8

From the start in the 1964 presidential campaign, the Democrats had the power of incumbency, and a unity achieved following the assassination of the youthful, attractive Kennedy, plus the issues of prosperity and peace (although 16,000 U.S. advisers had taken the first few steps into the Big Muddy of Vietnam). From the start, too, the Democrats made certain they would keep their advantages. Congress debated suspending the FCC's equal-time provisions again, to permit televised debates, but the administration managed to stop the effort. Lyndon Baines Johnson looked unbeatable, though perhaps a well-run GOP advertising strategy might have made inroads into Johnson's strength, while a poorly run Democratic ad campaign—comparable, say, to those used on behalf of the uninterested Adlai Stevenson—might have dissipated Johnson's support. In 1964 it proved to be the other way around; the Republican ad campaign was in disarray, while Lyndon Johnson and his key aides took a very close interest in television advertising. "We were all new at this in 1964," Bill

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Moyers, Johnson's press secretary, recalled for us, "and we were willing to experiment to get our messages across."

Rockefeller's Ways

Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona and Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York were the leading contenders for the Republican nomination. Each seemingly tried to hand the nomination to the other. Goldwater tended to make outrageous Wild West statements. Rockefeller, for his part, had divorced his wife in 1961 and married a worker in his campaign, and the new wife, in order to marry Rockefeller, had divorced her husband and given up custody of her four children—near-scandalous behavior for a woman in that era. Among the other possibilities, Richard Nixon seemed out of it. He had run for governor of California in 1962, lost, and then shot himself in the foot with a morning-after news conference in which he bitterly told reporters, "You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore because, gentlemen, this is my last press conference." And then there was Henry Cabot Lodge, Nixon's running mate in 1960, who as the year began was ambassador to South Vietnam. Some party leaders felt that Lodge might be able to bring peace, or something like it, to Vietnam and then descend heroically, Ike-like, to accept his party's nomination. A draft Lodge movement began, led by Paul Grindle, a Boston-based direct-mail specialist. From Gene Wyckoff, the filmmaker who had worked for Nixon in 1960, Grindle got a copy of a campaign film narrated in part by Eisenhower. Grindle hired a film editor to recut and "update" the 1960 film, and some skillful editing made it sound as if Ike liked Lodge for 1964. Goldwater later would protest that "a blast of trumpets" at just the right moment drowned out a key word—"vice" in vice-president—in Eisenhower's 1960 remarks. As a result, Goldwater said, most viewers "believed Ike was advocating the nomination and election of Henry Cabot Lodge in 1964." The edited film was used thirty-nine times on New Hampshire's one commercial TV station during the state's first-in-the-nation

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primary. On March 10 in New Hampshire, Lodge received 33,007 votes, to Goldwater's 20,692 and Rockefeller's 19,504.

Wyckoff recalls how he sat by the phone, waiting for the Lodge campaign to call for his services. "If you keep Lodge out of the country, it would be worth a try," he planned to advise. "As long as television viewers only see him as we want them to see him, he might appear to be much more preferable to Rockefeller or Goldwater." The Lodge campaign never called, but the Rockefeller campaign did. Wyckoff shrugged, signed on, and set to work in time for the Oregon primary. Seeing Rockefeller on TV, Wyckoff reasoned, voters were reminded of the divorce, so he conceived an alternative strategy to keep the candidate off the screen and artfully create "a fresh Rockefeller image via impressionistic television material." The new image would push out "the prevailing moral-libertine impression" through a film called "Rockefeller's Way." Like those Wyckoff created for Nixon and Lodge four years earlier, it was made up of still photos. One series of stills showed the governor playing with children; the background music, a patriotic cornet arrangement, slips into the nursery tune "This Old Man" as Rockefeller hugs a blonde youngster.

At the same time, another Rockefeller media worker, Dennis Kane, filmed short takes showing everyday Oregonians talking freely, without scripts, about their faith in Rockefeller. Wyckoff combined the best of these into a five-minute hitchhike, "The People Speak." It was in some respects intentionally unpolished. One woman, filmed pushing a shopping cart in a grocery store, said supportive things about Rockefeller, then got impatient. "I'm not going to talk any longer," she said, and laughed. "I need a Coca-Cola." Wyckoff left that in. For the last two weeks before the primary, "The People Speak" played daily on every TV station in Oregon. Rockefeller surged in Oregon as Lodge slipped, though as much because of the ambassador's continued absence as anything else. As the Rockefeller slogan put it, "He Cared Enough to Come." Meanwhile Lodge's spot, with its tricky, im-

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plied Eisenhower endorsement, was killed after Ike protested. On May 15 Oregonians gave Rockefeller 94,190 votes, Lodge 79,169, and Goldwater 50,105, and Rockefeller and Goldwater moved on to California to face off. (California primary rules prohibited write-ins; that, plus the Oregon result, ended the Lodge campaign.)

The Rockefeller forces hired Spencer-Roberts, a newly formed Republican political consulting firm in California. The Spencer in the title is Stuart Spencer, an Arizonan who came to Southern California as a small child in the late 1920s, which makes him practically an original settler in on-the-move Los Angeles. Like Tony Schwartz, Spencer never set foot in an advertising agency before he became a media specialist. His training was in politics, first as a Young Republican at junior college in Los Angeles and later as a volunteer worker for the Los Angeles County Republican Committee. He found he liked politics so much he quit his job as director of Parks and Recreation for the town of Alhambra to work full time with the county committee, and he hasn't looked back since. Among the clients he has worked for in twenty years as a media manager are Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford, and—perhaps his favorite—Nelson Rockefeller, whose portrait hung next to the desk when Spencer, now fifty, was interviewed for this book in the summer of 1983. The Rockefeller strategy, Spencer recalls, was not just to ignore Rockefeller's messy divorce but to concentrate on making Goldwater the issue: "Instead of defending Rockefeller's right to a love life, we just attacked Barry Goldwater. 'He's crazy, you can't trust him. What's he gonna do with the hydrogen bomb?' We got everybody thinking about all those scary things instead of the divorce." Spencer-Roberts spent $120,000—money, for Rockefeller, was no problem—on a mailing to all two million registered Republicans in the state. Entitled "Who Do You Want in the Room with the H Bomb?" it was a collection of Goldwater's more incendiary quotations.

The Rockefeller advertising campaign also ran against Goldwater's supporters, on the principle that, as Wyckoff put it, the

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campaign needed "a first-class villain to make a first-class hero in image-candidate terms." The villain he had in mind was the extremist—John Birchers and other reactionaries who were then a vocal force in California politics. Wyckoff knew that those Republicans would vote for Goldwater regardless of what Rockefeller did. Many Republican moderates, he felt, wouldn't vote at all—unless they were scared into it. The result was a half-hour program characterizing the extremists as the villains against whom Nelson Rockefeller was crusading in California. Wyckoff found several people who'd been threatened by the extremists. Some had received late-night phone calls and anonymous hate mail; one had seen his house firebombed. They were the film's "witnesses," interviewed by Dave Garroway, a popular TV personality and the first host of the *Today* show. Rockefeller filmed a three-minute opening, explaining that he felt it his duty to reveal the goals and tactics of this "incredible fringe on the American political scene." Nowhere in the film is Barry Goldwater mentioned. Instead, it builds on the feelings thought to exist in the audience—that Goldwater, the "ultra conservative" candidate, was supported by the extremists. "Extremists" was shown privately, for state leaders and Rockefeller advisers, and that was as far as it got. Some advisers believed Rockefeller, still leading in the polls, had the primary in his pocket, so why risk anything; some were embarrassed by the film, not wanting the Eastern Establishment–western conservative split aired so publicly. Others opposed the film because they had not been consulted on its production—the typical sort of organizational posturing seen over and over in campaigns. The film was shelved.

As it turned out, the election wasn't in Rockefeller's pocket. On the Saturday before the primary, as Stu Spencer puts it, "nature did us in": the new Mrs. Rockefeller gave birth to a baby boy. "It reopened the wounds of being a woman-chaser, of adultery, all the goddamn questions we had fuzzed over by accusing Goldwater of being a madman," says Spencer. At the same time that the reopened morality issue pushed voters away

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from Rockefeller, Goldwater tried to pull them to himself with a heavy, last-minute advertising schedule (which in part showed the happy, and intact, Goldwater family). On June 2 Goldwater won California with 1.12 million votes, to Rockefeller's 1.05 million. Wyckoff blamed the shelving of "Extremists" which, he believed, might have increased the turnout of moderate voters. Not so, insists Spencer; the film was "too raunchy—it would have backfired." Spencer blames the loss on the baby, and says he had urged the campaign to keep the birth secret. "My attitude was, if a Rockefeller can't hide a kid for three days, then he ain't a Rockefeller." Spencer admits that Rockefeller could not have won the nomination even with a California victory. "We knew that at the time, sure," says Spencer. "Maybe it's my athletic background. If I'm going through football season and we're zero and six with two games left, I still want to win those two."

In fact, though, California gave Goldwater victory. During the time he had been compiling a mixed record in the high-visibility primaries, he had been methodically gathering delegates in the less-publicized conventions and caucuses. But the primary fights succeeded only in making the convention, held in San Francisco, more bitter than it would otherwise have been. When Rockefeller rose to speak, the boos from the Goldwater forces practically drowned him out. Rockefeller returned the compliment by attacking extremism in politics and comparing extremists' tactics to those of the Communists and the Nazis. "Is it any wonder," Goldwater later wrote, "the voters were learning to fear a Goldwater presidency?" A vigorous campaign might have helped, but Goldwater continued to stumble. The campaign briefly hired Leo Burnett Co. of Chicago, then dumped the agency in favor of Erwin, Wasey, Ruthrauff & Ryan, of New York, whose past clients included Gulf, Tuborg beer, and Carnation milk (and, before the firm's merger, Adlai Stevenson).

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"Peace, Little Girl"

Johnson, to no one's surprise, was renominated, and named Hubert Humphrey to be his running mate. The Democrats began and ended the campaign with the advertising help of Bill Bernbach of Doyle Dane Bernbach, the agency identified with the new advertising campaigns of Volkswagen and Avis. Johnson's White House assistants, Walter Jenkins, Jack Valenti, and Richard Goodwin, as well as Bill Moyers, all worked with the ad agency. Borrowing from Rockefeller, Spencer, and Wyckoff, their strategy was to attack Goldwater and put him on the defensive from the start. Then the campaign would switch to more positive advertising, praising Johnson's program. Positive ads were ultimately done—though they were few and, generally, forgettable. 1964 was the year of Daisy.

John Kennedy once said that victory has a hundred fathers, while defeat is an orphan. Bill Bernbach and DDB, the White House, and the Democratic National Committee have at times claimed the paternity of Daisy. They all deserve some credit (or blame), though the one individual most responsible creatively is Tony Schwartz. As Schwartz recalls it, in the summer of 1964 he got a call from Aaron Ehrlich, a DDB producer with whom Schwartz had collaborated for the American Airlines' "sounds of the cities" series. "We have a special product here we'd like you to work on," the executive said. "But we can't tell you what it is." He asked Schwartz to come over to DDB's offices in Midtown Manhattan. The agoraphobic Schwartz asked what floor they would be meeting on. "I have difficulty going to high floors," he said when he heard the answer. "But if you have a place on a lower floor, I'll come see you." Ehrlich said they could use a room on the seventh floor.

At the meeting Ehrlich held up a picture of Lyndon Johnson. "Would you work for this product?" he asked Schwartz. "Sure," Schwartz said. The agency men gave Schwartz some ideas to think about, among them an outline of a five-minute spot, beginning with voice-overs of an American missile countdown—

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ten, nine, eight—and a nuclear bomb going off; then a Russian countdown—desyat, devyat, vosem—and a nuclear explosion; then, quick switches back and forth between the English and Russian language countdowns and explosions. DDB asked Schwartz to do a one-minute version of the spot. "I have the perfect thing for you," Schwartz replied, and pulled out the *World of Numbers* tape he had done for IBM, the one that the company and its agency had rejected. "I showed it to Ehrlich and the DDB people and said, 'You have a little child pulling the petals off a daisy. The camera goes in on the center of the daisy, and that becomes the explosion when it detonates.' They thought it was fantastic, and I went and listened to all the recent tapes of Johnson's Rose Garden speeches to find the right sound symbol. I found a quote that didn't make much sense on paper, but that worked emotionally on the listener when cut to the right length." Schwartz added Johnson's quote to his script and, he says, "They flipped for it." DDB chose a little girl and filmed her picking petals off the daisy and counting while walking along the Henry Hudson Parkway north of New York City (the camera, in DDB's execution of Schwartz's idea, moved in on the pupil of her eye rather than the center of the flower). Thus was born Daisy, or, to give the spot the title DDB used, "Peace, Little Girl":

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on little girl in field, picking petals off a daisy.	Little girl [SOF]: "One, two, three, four, five, seven, six, six, eight, nine, nine—"
Girl looks up, startled; freeze frame on girl; move into ECU of her eye, until screen is black.	Man's voice, very loud as if heard over a loudspeaker at a test site: "Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one—"

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Cut to atom bomb exploding. Move into CU of explosion.	Sound of explosion.
	Johnson [VO]: "These are the stakes—to make a world in which all of God's children can live, or to go into the dark. We must either love each other, or we must die."
Cut to white letters on black background: "Vote for President Johnson on November 3."	Announcer [VO]: "Vote for President Johnson on November 3. The stakes are too high for you to stay home."

The Daisy spot ran only once, on CBS's *Monday Night at the Movies* on the night of September 7. According to Bill Moyers, the White House switchboard "lit up with calls protesting it, and Johnson called me and said, 'Jesus Christ, what in the world happened?' and I said, 'You got your point across, that's what.' He thought a minute and said, 'Well, I guess we did.' So Johnson was very pleased with it." Lyndon Johnson pronounced himself satisfied with Daisy because it had accomplished the purpose he had in mind. As Moyers remembers, Johnson worried that "Goldwater the radical was becoming Goldwater the respectable as the campaign progressed, and Johnson wanted to remind people of the earlier Goldwater, the man who talked about lobbing nuclear bombs in the men's room of the Kremlin." Moyers said he transmitted those instructions to Bill Bernbach. As for using the spot on Goldwater and the bomb only once, Moyers says that was the plan all along. "We had a variety of other messages we wanted to get out, about other Goldwater radical stands—for example, Social Security." Also, says Moyers, "given the White House's inexperience in this brand new game," the thinking was that ads shouldn't be repeated too often for the sake of the viewer.

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1964: JOHNSON VS. GOLDWATER

Johnson "Daisy" Commercial

"One, two, three, four"

"Seven, six, six, eight, nine, nine"

Sound of explosion

"These are the stakes—to make a world in which all God's children can live"

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"Ten, nine, eight, seven"

"Three, two, one"

"Or to go into the dark.
We must love each other,
or we must die"

"Vote for President Johnson on November 3. The stakes are too high for you to stay home"

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If the thought that some people, upon second or third viewing, might regard Daisy as a low blow never occurred to the White House innocents, it did enter the minds of the angered Goldwater campaign staff. Perhaps 50 million people were watching NBC; those who hadn't seen Daisy quickly heard about it because of outraged Republican protests. Senator Everett Dirksen complained to the National Association of Broadcasters that Daisy violated "your widely heralded code of ethics." Republican National Committee chairman Dean Burch filed a formal complaint with the Fair Campaign Practices Committee, charging that Daisy constituted "libel against the Republican nominee." Burch said the GOP had received 1,300 calls of protest, including one from a Virginia woman who said her four-year-old daughter went to bed in tears after seeing it. Burch added: "This horror-type commercial is designed to arouse basic emotions and has no place in this campaign." Goldwater himself called Daisy "weird television advertising." Later, in his memoirs, he wrote: "Every time I saw that hideous Johnson TV commercial with the little girl, it saddened me to realize that all involved—the reporter, the spot writer, the producers, the advertising agency, and the candidate who was then incumbent President of the United States—valued political victory more than personal honesty." Moyers, now a correspondent with CBS News, acknowledges: "It was good advertising and bad politics."

More than a decade later Schwartz met and talked to F. Clifton White, Barry Goldwater's campaign aide, about the Daisy spot. White recalled how "very intelligent people would say to me: 'We just cannot use atomic weapons.' And I would then say to them, 'Well, now, do you know what the Senator said?' 'Yeah, he said he would use atomic weapons.' And I'd say, 'No, he didn't say he was going to use an atomic bomb. He did say that one of the weapons we *could* use in Vietnam was a tactical nuclear weapon for defoliating the forests. A tactical nuclear weapon is like a small bomb, not a big one. . . . Its purpose is to defoliate, to take the leaves off, so that we could see them down there.'

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But all the time I'm going through this explanation, the person is standing there, nodding his head, and saying, 'Yeah, but we can't drop the bomb, Clif.' It was so totally emotional. . . ."

Schwartz values White's assessment because it matches so closely his own ideas about inner feelings in advertising messages. As he observes in *The Responsive Chord*, "the best political commercials are similar to Rorschach patterns. They do not tell the viewer anything. They surface his feelings and provide a context for him to express those feelings." Daisy is the prime example, playing "on the underlying public feeling that Goldwater spoke for the use of tactical atomic weapons, whereas Johnson was against the use of any nuclear weapons. When people hear 'atomic weapons,' they don't hear the word 'tactical.' " Goldwater's name was never mentioned, but the spot made people think, "Whose finger do I want on the trigger?" Interestingly, Daisy still confuses people. Talking to us, Rosser Reeves misremembered it as showing a mushroom cloud coming from behind Goldwater's head. One reason for the confusion may be that a few days later a second Democratic spot ran, almost as harsh and naming Goldwater specifically:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on CU of little girl, blond, oblivious to camera, licking ice cream cone.	Woman announcer [VO]: "Do you know what people used to do? They used to explode atomic bombs in the air. Now, children should have lots of vitamin A and calcium, but they shouldn't have any strontium 90 or cesium 137. These things come from atomic bombs, and they're radioactive. They can make

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	you die. Do you know what people finally did? They got together and signed a nuclear test ban treaty, and then the radioactive poisons started to go away. But now, there is a man who wants to be president of the United States, and he doesn't like this treaty. He's fought against it. He even voted against it. He wants to go on testing more bombs. His name is Barry Goldwater, and if he's elected, they might start testing all over again.
Cut to slide: white letters against black background, "VOTE FOR PRESIDENT JOHNSON ON NOVEMBER 3."	Vote for President Johnson on November 3. The stakes are too high for you to stay home."

Like Daisy, the spot was shown just once; unlike Daisy, Doyle Dane Bernbach was completely responsible for the idea. It too was criticized. Another spot, based on the crosscut idea Ehrlich showed Schwartz, eventually was broadcast as well. After the countdowns and explosions the scene switches to shafts of sunlight shining through cumulous clouds; John F. Kennedy's voice, as if from beyond the grave, explains the need for a test ban treaty. Finally, it cuts to Johnson, discussing "the stark reality of nuclear power." It too never mentions Goldwater by name, though Johnson refers to "those who" oppose the test ban treaty. A similar DDB spot takes on Goldwater explicitly:

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VIDEO	AUDIO
Black screen, then atomic blast. Cut to second blast. Cut to third blast.	Announcer [VO]: "On October 24, 1963, Barry Goldwater said of the nuclear bomb, 'merely another weapon.'
Blast fills screen.	*Merely another weapon?*
Fade to slide: white letters against black background, "Vote for President Johnson on Nov. 3."	Vote for President Johnson. The stakes are too high for you to stay home."

In case this spot didn't make the point clear, DDB also did "Hot Line":

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on ECU of telephone. Like a motel room phone, it has no dial, and it has a red light (which is flashing) on the lower right-hand corner. In the center is a round white card—where the room number would normally be—labeled "WHITE HOUSE."	Sound of phone buzzing. Announcer [VO, over buzzing]: "This particular phone only rings in a serious crisis. Leave it in the hands of a man who has proven himself responsible.
Cut to slide: white letters against black background, "VOTE FOR PRESIDENT JOHNSON ON NOVEMBER 3."	Vote for President Johnson on November 3. The stakes are too high for you to stay home."

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In its simple construction "Hot Line" belongs to the same minimalist style of DDB's "Think Small" campaign for Volkswagen.

The Democrats also produced a thirty-minute program on nuclear weapons policies, independent of the DDB emotion-based campaign. Aired on election eve on ABC, the program was sponsored by Scientists, Engineers, and Physicians for Johnson-Humphrey, and produced by David Garth—a young New Yorker who had been involved in the Draft Stevenson movement in 1960. The title, remembers Garth, was "Sorry, Senator Goldwater, We Just Can't Risk It," and its overall intellectual tone was set by the appearance of such academics as Jerome Wiesner of MIT and Herbert York of the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Looking back on the DDB advertising effort, it seems that the overkill in 1964 was Johnson's, not Goldwater's. One spot quoted Goldwater as wishing the country could "saw off the Eastern Seaboard and let it float out into the Atlantic," followed by sounds of a saw on wood, and then a heavy object floating out to sea. Just as DDB's advertising sought to portray Goldwater as separating an alien East from the rest of America, so too did it try to separate Goldwater from his own party. Johnson himself declares that "the opposition" represents "not a conservative philosophy, not a Republican philosophy; it is a radically different philosophy." Another spot shows posters of the other GOP candidates earlier in the year, with the voice-over quoting their remarks against Goldwater. "If you're a Republican with serious doubts about Barry Goldwater," the voice-over concludes, "you're in good company." Still another, "Confessions of a Republican," shows an earnest, well-dressed man sitting in a chair, talking to the camera—seemingly spontaneously, stopping and starting, gesturing, stuttering. He is, he says, a Republican, but he has his doubts. "Men with strange ideas" are working for Goldwater; "weird groups" are supporting him. During the three-minute spot the man is seen struggling toward his decision, which he reaches at the end: "I think my party made a bad mistake in

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San Francisco—and I'm going to have to vote against that mistake." One of the harshest spots focused on one "weird group" behind Goldwater. To film of white-sheeted Klansmen and burning crosses, the spot quotes Robert Cleal of the Alabama Ku Klux Klan as saying, "The majority of people in Alabama hate niggerism, Catholicism, Judaism. . . ." The announcer goes on to quote another Cleal remark: "I like Barry Goldwater. He needs our help." The most heavily aired DDB spot was tame by comparison, but it focused on an issue of specific importance to millions of voters:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on two hands and open wallet. Hands take from wallet a stack of photos, IDs, and credit cards. On top is a photo of a young boy. Hands go through cards until Social Security card; they put the others down and quickly rip the Social Security card in two, and drop it on the table. Hands disappear. Camera moves in to CU of torn card.	Announcer [VO]: "On at least seven occasions, Senator Barry Goldwater said that he would change the present Social Security system. But even his running mate William Miller admits that Senator Goldwater's voluntary plan would destroy your Social Security. President Johnson
Fade to slide: white letters against black background, "Vote for President Johnson on Nov. 3."	is working to strengthen Social Security. Vote for him on November 3."

With all this advertising the early White House fear of the rehabilitation of Goldwater was replaced with a new worry. Johnson's lead in the polls became so commanding that the Democrats feared many Johnson voters would complacently stay home on

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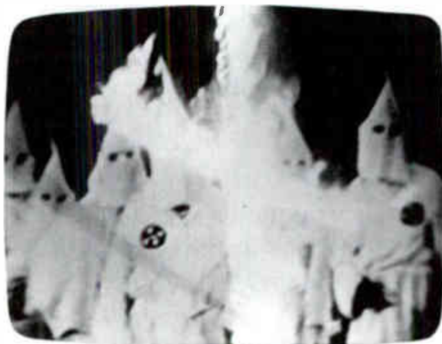
1964: JOHNSON VS. GOLDWATER

Johnson "Ice Cream" Commercial

"Now, children . . . shouldn't have any strontium 90"



Johnson "KKK" Spot

"I like Barry Goldwater. He needs our help"

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Goldwater "Conversation at Gettysburg" Spot

"Well, Barry, in my mind, this is actual tommyrot"

Goldwater Talking Head Commercial

"We need a clear and resolute policy, one which is based on peace through strength"

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election day. The paid media began to urge people to vote. One fifteen-second spot consisted of footage of lightning, rain pouring down on streets, and people bending to keep hold of wind-whipped umbrellas. "If it should rain on November 3," says the announcer, "please get wet—go to the polls and vote for President Johnson."

A deluge did come on election day, sweeping the Republican ticket away. The name of Goldwater's running mate became a trivia question in the years to come. The Democrats had done many things right in their campaign, and right things broke for them. But Goldwater also shared blame for his debacle. Over the years he had made a series of unwise statements; some were ambiguous, lending themselves to chilling interpretations. For example, he did remark that American missiles were so accurate that it would be possible to "lob one into the men's room of the Kremlin"; but he did not actually propose to do so. His campaign slogan, "In Your Heart, You Know He's Right, " was turned on him: "In Your Heart, You Know He Might." By October polls found that voters, by a five to one margin, felt Goldwater was likelier than Johnson to start a nuclear war. "My candidate had been branded a bomb-dropper—and I couldn't figure out how to lick it," said Denison Kitchel, Goldwater's personal aide. "And the advertising people, people who could sell anything, toothpaste or soap or automobiles—when it came to a political question like this, they couldn't offer anything either."

Enter Ronald Reagan

They did try. On September 22, for instance, the campaign aired a half-hour program called "Conversation at Gettysburg" (a sixty-second excerpt was also run as a spot). The program was a chat between Ike and Goldwater. The candidate says, "Our opponents are referring to us as warmongers," and he asks Eisenhower his opinion. "Well, Barry, in my mind, this is actual tommyrot." Goldwater had hoped, by confronting the nuclear bomber image head-on, to minimize it—much as Kennedy had done with his

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Catholicism in 1960. But the Goldwater-Eisenhower show lacked the confrontational nature of Kennedy facing the ministers; it came off instead as a tedious conversation between two men who agreed with each other. Johnson, who liked to carry opinion poll results in his pocket to show reporters, began carrying TV ratings that showed the Ike-Goldwater conversation attracted far fewer viewers than the competing programs, *Petticoat Junction* and *Peyton Place*.

In a spot called "Imprudent" Goldwater also tried to draw the Ike mantle about himself:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on medium shot of Goldwater sitting at edge of desk, reminiscent of Nixon's 1960 ads. He chuckles while the announcer speaks.	Announcer [VO]: "Mr. Goldwater, what's this about your being called imprudent and impulsive?"
	Goldwater [SOF]: "Well, you know, it seems to me that the really impulsive and imprudent president is the one who is so indecisive that he has no policy at all—
Cut to CU.	with the result that potential aggressors are tempted to move because they think that we lack the will to defend freedom.
Cut to original medium shot. Goldwater stands and walks behind desk, sits in chair, and	"Now there was nothing impulsive or imprudent about Dwight Eisenhower when he

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puts on glasses while continuing to talk.	moved with firmness and clear purpose in Lebanon and the Formosa Straits. Compare these Eisenhower policies with the appalling actions of this administration—in Laos and the Bay of Pigs, in Berlin and the Congo.
Cut to CU.	"We need a clear and resolute policy, one which is based on peace through strength. Only when we have such a policy will we reclaim our rightful role as the leader of the free world."
Freeze frame. Letters appear, superimposed across bottom of screen: "In Your Heart . . . You Know He's Right."	Announcer [VO]: "In your heart, you know he's right.
Then cut to white letters against gray background: "VOTE FOR BARRY GOLDWATER."	Vote for Barry Goldwater."

Misjudgments proliferated in the Goldwater campaign. When the former actor and GE spokesman Ronald Reagan came forward, offering to make a nationwide TV speech for Goldwater, the campaign strategists turned him down cold. They said they didn't like what Reagan proposed to say. Several of Reagan's wealthy California friends, however, footed the bill for Reagan to give the speech in a statewide hookup with a fund-raising trailer at the end. That raised enough money to televise the speech nationally, without any help from the Goldwater campaign. Still Goldwater's advisers objected. Finally, Reagan called Gold-

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water and asked him to look at the speech before making a final decision. Goldwater didn't call back, which the Californians took to indicate assent. The speech, called "A Time for Choosing," was aired October 27 on NBC, and those Republican loyalists who heard its surefire applause lines found themselves wishing Reagan were their presidential nominee. It included touches of the later Reagan style, such as anecdotes about the Great Society gone awry—it seems a woman with six children planned to divorce her husband, a laborer who earned $250 a month, because she would be eligible for $350 per month on welfare. The speech closes with a peroration that borrowed cadences from Thomas Jefferson, Franklin Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Reagan, addressing camera.	Reagan [SOF]: "You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We can preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or we can sentence them to take the first step into a thousand years of darkness. If we fail, at least let our children, and our children's children, say of us we justified our brief moment here. We did all that could be done."

The Goldwater campaign preempted the comedy review *That Was The Week That Was* five times in the six weeks before the elections, to air "Conversation at Gettysburg" and other half-hour GOP productions. (The Republicans wanted the sixth week too, but the Democrats had bought a one-minute spot during the program and refused to relinquish it.) Goldwater's appearances

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probably hurt *That Was The Week That Was* more than they hurt Johnson; during that preemption period the competing *Peyton Place* pulled ahead in the Tuesday night ratings, where it remained after the election.

To be sure, the Republican campaigners tried their own televised rough stuff. In a memo to the candidate, Clifton White proposed a half-hour film that would depict the nation's moral decay under Johnson. Goldwater gave him the go-ahead, and $45,000 was spent compiling the film. Its stark footage included news coverage of urban riots, a woman in a topless swimsuit, and a Lincoln Continental speeding down a dirt road with beer cans flying from the windows. (This last was a visual reference to stories about how Johnson drove his big limo down on his Pedernales ranch.) The film, called "Choice," was sent to NBC for prescreening. Robert Kintner, the network president, demanded that certain shots, including the topless woman, be deleted. Kintner called "Choice" an "appallingly tasteless production," and other previewers considered it racist. But some members of the Republican National Committee praised it highly; one Republican leader said it was "the greatest political film" he had ever seen. Goldwater himself finally viewed "Choice" and told White, "I'm not going to be made out as a racist. You can't show it." From this, campaign strategist White concluded that his candidate had in effect given up, with the election still a month away. Still, the Goldwater campaign managed to produce a spot to make the point "Choice" had been intended to make:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on series of shots of city park, bustling, well kept. Children playing ball; people walking; picnic tables.	Announcer [VO]: "What has happened to America? We have had the good sense to create lovely parks—
Cut to park at night, empty.	but we're afraid to use them after dark.

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Cut to exterior, large museum. People walk by.	We build libraries and galleries to hold the world's greatest treasury of art—
Cut to seedy newsstand.	and we permit the world's greatest collection of smut to be freely available everywhere.
Cut to U.S. Capitol; cut to cartoon of man, labeled "Bobby Baker," reaching through open top of Capitol.	The highest echelons of government are embroiled in scandals—
Cut to medium shot of heavyset, shifty man, chewing gum and looking away from camera, identified in super as "Billie Sol Estes."	that are cynically swept under the rug."
Cut to medium shot of Goldwater, standing, hands clasped. He addresses the camera.	Goldwater [SOF]: "The national morality, by example and by persuasion, should begin at the White House, and have the good influence to reach out to every corner of the land. Now this is not the case today because our country has lacked leadership that treats public office as a public trust. I pledge that Bill Miller and I will restore to America a dedication to principle and to conscience among its public servants."

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Frame freezes. Super appears in white letters: "IN YOUR HEART . . . YOU KNOW HE'S RIGHT." Then cut to slide: white letters against gray background, "VOTE FOR BARRY GOLDWATER."	Announcer [VO]: "In your heart, you know he's right. Vote for Barry Goldwater."

In its production values the morality spot was unusual, for Goldwater's campaign ran relatively few spots, and nearly all of them consisted solely of Goldwater's talking head. Most of the money went into longer speeches. Goldwater spent a million dollars on network time in the campaign's final month. The Democrats, however, also staged a similar final-month drive—and theirs, consisting largely of spots, reached a greater audience. In all, the two campaigns spent $11.1 million on broadcast advertising: the Democrats $4.7 million; the Republicans $6.4 million. Yet the largest audience for any political broadcast of 1964 was less than a quarter the size of that for the first Nixon-Kennedy debate.

Perhaps because the race seemed over from the start, the level of interest had sagged early. Just as Stevenson had used a radio-age technique at the beginning of the television era, Goldwater had followed outmoded advertising tactics at the moment the art was changing. Schwartz suggests that Goldwater should have switched to the new styles rather than fought them. He says, "Goldwater could have defused Daisy by saying, 'I think that the danger of total nuclear war should be the theme of the campaign this year, and I'd like to pay half the cost of running this commercial.' If he had, the commercial would not have been perceived as being against him. He would have changed the feelings and assumptions stored within us. Instead, it was like the woman who goes to the psychiatrist and is shown a Rorschach

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pattern and says, 'Doctor, I didn't come here to be shown dirty pictures!' The Daisy commercial evoked Mr. Goldwater's pro-bomb statements. They were the dirty pictures in the public's mind."

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HIGH-TECH POLITICS

CHAPTER 9

Toward the end of the 1960s when American servicemen died by the hundreds each week in Vietnam, when inner cities burned and elite campuses rioted, politics seemed too important to be left to politicians, and movements for reform and change—outsiders pushing to get inside—took hold within the two-party system. The Democrats in recent decades had proclaimed themselves the party of the people, and "the people" tried to make real the rhetoric. Reformers—younger, more female and more black and brown than traditional party workers—were able to capture the Democratic party apparatus temporarily in 1972. Even the Republican party, bastion of conservative ways, was shaken by upheavals between East and West, the Yankee and Cowboy wings. These struggles for control within each party played out in the presidential primaries and general elections of 1968, 1972, 1976, and 1980; they help explain a good part of the dynamics of national electoral politics over the past sixteen

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years, and no discussion of media campaigning can be complete without them.

The reformers' efforts intended to open up the parties' presidential nominating process, for example, have led to a straight-line increase in the number of important primary contests from three in 1964 to twelve in 1972 to thirty-five in 1980. These primaries replaced the "bad" state party conventions and caucuses—a move widely hailed as bringing more democracy to the process. It also brought more paid advertising and more television marketing of candidates. When there were six or eight primaries, Raymond Price, a veteran of two Nixon presidential campaigns, explained to us, it was possible for the candidate to spend two or three weeks campaigning in each state, meeting voters and exploring issues. Now, with thirty or forty primaries, candidates can spend at most a few days in each state and must rely on heavy TV advertising to make their points. The retail personal politicking of the past has more and more been pushed aside by wholesale television marketing.

In the 1960s few of the reformers envisioned making campaigns more dependent on advertising and marketing. Communications technology was rapidly growing more complex and more pervasive while promising more flexibility. Color television became standard in the 1960s, increasing the appeal of television's entertainments. The old style recording system of sound on film (sound narration put down on the same piece of film that was recording the picture) was replaced by the more flexible double-chain method (sound and sight recorded separately and then mixed and synchronized). Cheaper, easier-to-edit videotape and lighter, more portable video cameras began displacing film stock and cumbersome film cameras. Zoom lenses increased the range of shots available to camera people. Electronic equipment opened up new possibilities for generating words and graphics on the screen. Directors could electronically split screens; frames could be squeezed, zoomed, rotated, and exploded on and off the picture tube. While several of these developments grew out of

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work in television news organizations, all were soon adapted to the needs of making TV commercials. This technology became an important part of the new advertising.

The arrival of this sophisticated new technology helped change communications messages, just as the influx of new people and the arrival of more clever selling styles were making major contributions. But perhaps the most critical shift in the communications arts came in the way that advertisers began to regard the audience for their products and services. In the first five decades of the century, advertising tended to treat the market as a mass—Bruce Barton's undifferentiated Americans. Albert Lasker of Lord & Thomas, one of the few Jews to make it to the top of the agency business in the old days, suggested to his staff in the 1920s that advertising was a part of an acculturation process that was "making a homogeneous people" out of a nation of immigrants. By the end of the 1960s, however, advertisers began to prize people for their special characteristics, and Bruce Barton's despised special interest groups began to be courted. Thanks to computers and survey research, the ratings services like Nielsen and Arbitron no longer just informed advertisers how many people were watching their programs; now they told viewership by age, sex, region (and eventually, zip code and neighborhood—which revealed clues to income and education). The buying of advertising spot time came to resemble a political transaction—we offer a romantic movie, we get younger women who purchase cosmetics; we offer the network news, we get older homeowners who vote.

Among the chief tools of demographics marketing was the public opinion poll. Gallup, Roper, and others had scientifically charted the electoral races of major candidates since 1936. The candidates themselves started investing time and money in their own private polling operations in the 1960s, another development that nudged the old-line party leaders farther from the center of campaign management. Polling became a big business, using elaborate attitudinal surveys, pretesting of campaign themes and

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commercials, and focus groups. In the 1968 Hubert Humphrey campaign the development of an advertising strategy was hampered when Humphrey couldn't find $10,000 to pay for a public opinion survey already taken (the pollster refused to turn over his data without getting his money). Today surveys can cost up to $30,000 for one national sampling, and no respectable campaign organization would proceed without having assured itself of regular—and in the case of Ronald Reagan in the 1980 campaign, daily—samplings of public opinion.

These developments in television production, in marketing methods, and in survey polls created the high-technology political communications of today. High-tech politics has had two profound consequences for electoral campaigns. First, high tech makes politics more expensive. By the time the democratic reforms of the 1960s had taken hold in the 1970s and 1980s, campaign dollars had to be ample enough to stretch across dozens of primaries while paying for the expensive new tools of the trade. The price of reaching a thousand people by television, known as the CPM, or cost per thousand, became a standard measurement of television expenditures. For example, during the Nelson Rockefeller years as "permanent" governor of New York—he served four terms between 1958 and 1974—the CPM figure for reaching a thousand New Yorkers with television messages was estimated by his staff to be $100, or about ten cents a household. This CPM could be counted, from one point of view, as a bargain—how else could the candidate visit so many people? But given the vast number of TV households in a megastate, perhaps 10 million in New York during the 1960s, this meant that at least $1 million (in 1960s dollars) had to be allocated to achieve just one hit, or time that each voter theoretically sees one commercial, and most candidates want five or six or more hits. By the 1970s, with candidates using television as if they were Rockefellers, no one could afford *not* to do it, and the CPM became an onerous, if common, burden—because everyone isn't a Rockefeller.

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The second consequence of high-tech politics was to ensure the dominant position within campaigns of the new media specialists. Old-line political operatives and advisers had jealously, and by and large successfully, protected their authority when the first wave of advertising agency people came in during the 1950s. The struggles between the political people and the agency people were often bitter. Their differences extended beyond the normal grabbing for power present in every campaign; there was a kind of clash of different cultures and styles of work. Ad people complained that the political people were disorganized: "Fifteen people in a room shouting thirty different things," a Doyle Dane Bernbach account man would characterize the campaign strategy meetings for Hubert Humphrey in 1968. The political people in turn complained that the admen were at once arrogant and ignorant: "They didn't know the issues, and they didn't want to get too involved," a Humphrey man said of DDB. By the end of the 1960s the struggle was for practical purposes resolved when the new media specialists came to power, the ad agencies all but dropped out, and the political people reconciled themselves to sharing authority in the campaign.

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THE NEW NIXON AND THE OLD HUMPHREY

CHAPTER 10

Early in 1968 Lyndon Johnson decided he wouldn't run again, Richard Nixon decided he would, and the first high-tech presidential race was on. The men who would make that race go, however, were still in the stands, at that time not much more than spectators. Roger Ailes, then twenty-seven, was the executive producer of the *Mike Douglas Show.* Joseph Napolitan, a Democrat from Massachusetts, had worked with Larry O'Brien for John Kennedy; later, by Napolitan's own account, he had played "a late and insignificant role" in Robert Kennedy's 1964 senate race in New York. Robert Squier, born in 1934, a graduate of the University of Minnesota, was working as an assistant to the president of National Educational Television in New York. By November each of these men would be in the middle of the presidential race.

Nixon, after his "last press conference" performance in 1962, moved to the enemy East and went into law to make some money. He got a new tailor, taught himself the social graces of

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a downtown New York lawyer, earned big dollars—and missed the old days. Soon Nixon began laying the groundwork for a second try at the White House. He hired two speechwriters: in 1966 Patrick Buchanan, a conservative writer for the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, and in 1967 Raymond K. Price, Jr., a Yale graduate and former editorial page editor of the *New York Herald Tribune*. And Nixon tried to generate loyalty from Republican office-holders, by campaigning hard for them in the 1966 midterm elections. His potential competitors for party leader were out of commission; Ike was too sick and Goldwater too unpopular. But there was a possible new challenger arising in, of all places, Nixon's home state.

Ronald Reagan had moved from B movies to PR in the late 1950s, delivering free-enterprise speeches on General Electric's behalf. His televised speech for Barry Goldwater in 1964 had gotten Reagan started in his political career, and in his first try for public office, Reagan in 1966 did what Nixon had failed to do—he beat Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, the incumbent California governor. Soon Reagan and his advisers were talking about taking a run for the Republican presidential nomination. Greg Snazelle, a TV spot producer, and John Mercer, vice-president of a San Francisco ad agency, Meltzer, Aron & Lemen, had worked for Reagan in 1966. Their spots, appealing to liberals, were run in northern California. In late 1967 their first assignment was to produce a half-hour film biography of Reagan. One sequence showed a series of victorious California gubernatorial candidates: Pat Brown, victorious in 1958 over Bill Knowland; Brown again, victorious in 1962 over Richard Nixon; and, finally, Ronald Reagan, victorious in 1966 over Brown. It was like the children's game, rock-scissors-paper—Brown beats Knowland and Nixon; Reagan beats Brown; clearly, Reagan beats Nixon. The bio, called "Ronald Reagan: Citizen Governor," depicted Reagan as a public speaker, labor organizer, hard-working governor, successful candidate (but not as a Hollywood actor).

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The Man in the Arena

From the outset it was clear that Nixon's would be a TV campaign. In June of 1967 he received a memo from H. R. "Bob" Haldeman, a former executive of the J. Walter Thompson agency in Los Angeles, who was chief advance man in Nixon's 1960 presidential campaign and manager of his 1962 California campaign. "The time has come for political campaigning—its techniques and strategies—to move out of the dark ages and into the brave new world of the omnipresent eye," Haldeman declared. A candidate could personally be seen by perhaps a few hundred thousand voters, Haldeman argued, while on TV he could reach millions. Furthermore the nonstop pace of personal campaigning leaves the candidate "punchy. . . . He has no time to think, to study his opponent's strategy and statements, to develop his own strategy and statements. No wonder the almost inevitable campaign dialogue borders so near the idiot level." Television could help the candidate avoid that; it could also help the candidate minimize contact with the snapping news hounds of the press. Haldeman urged Nixon to move into the "brave new world" and make strong use of more effective television formats.

Other voices offered similar counsel. In the fall of 1967 Nixon appeared on the *Mike Douglas Show*, a then-popular celebrity interview program originating at KYW-TV, the Westinghouse station in Philadelphia. The executive producer of the show, brash and all of twenty-seven years old, was Roger Ailes. Ailes had reason to be confident; in the three years he worked for Douglas, he helped lead the show to its highest ratings and highest number of outlets. But he was growing tired of doing live TV day after day and was thinking of a change. Private citizen Richard Nixon, Ailes recalled during an interview with us, "appeared as a guest on the show, and he was put in my office to avoid waiting with the other guests—I think we had a stripper, or snake charmer, or somebody else on that day, and everybody said, gee, you can't put Nixon in there." Nixon was accompanied by his aide, and later White House assistant, Dwight

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Chapin. The men talked about TV: "Nixon said it's too bad a guy has to rely on a gimmick to get elected, meaning TV. I got into an argument with him. I told him TV wasn't a gimmick, that it's the most powerful means of communication ever devised by man, that nobody would ever be elected to major office again without presenting himself reasonably well on TV, that as in anything else success requires a working knowledge of the media and a specialist to help get the candidates through—because otherwise they just are not aware. This got his attention more than anything else." Ailes says he is quite sure he wasn't looking for a job and wasn't looking to go into politics; mostly he felt cocky enough to argue with the former vice-president. Later Chapin would tell Ailes that was one of the things that Nixon really liked about him. A few days later Ailes got a call from Nixon's New York office suggesting he come to New York and meet with the media group that was being formed for the Nixon campaign.

In September Nixon's law partner Leonard Garment arranged for Harry Treleaven to do the campaign spot advertisements. A former vice-president of J. Walter Thompson in New York, Treleaven had run the 1966 congressional campaign of George Bush in Texas. Bush had spent 80 percent of his Texas-sized budget on advertising and won, becoming the first Republican to represent Houston. With Ailes and Treleaven in place, the fall was a time of memos and meetings. In one memo Treleaven recorded his thoughts on Nixon's primary campaign ad strategy: "Cuteness, obliqueness, way-outness, slickness—any obvious gimmicks that say 'Madison Avenue at work here' should be avoided. They could, indeed, result in a public backlash that would hurt our candidate. Imaginative approaches, contemporary techniques—yes. But we must beware of 'overactivity,' and make sure that the basic seriousness of our purpose shows plainly in everything we do." Pat Buchanan, whose background was in newspapers, worried about the prying nature of television cameras, particularly in the hands of TV reporters, and responded by memo: "We

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don't need TV to prove we are the most experienced, most qualified and most able; we don't need TV to get ourselves known; we don't need it to demonstrate we have the looks and the glibness. Do we need the damn thing at all and do we want it? Yes. But only to do the job we want it to do. We want it controlled."

The divergent voices were pulled together after a meeting arranged by Frank Shakespeare, a smooth, self-assured broadcast executive on leave from the business and sales side of the CBS television network. Shakespeare had a group of Nixon advisers visit the CBS library to look at whatever film of Nixon existed in its archives. Ray Price recalls, "We wanted to see how he came across on TV. After several hours of viewing we found the more spontaneous he was, the better." This translated into television encounters between Nixon and citizen questioners—a kind of press conference, without the hostile press. Nixon, writing about his Checkers speech, had used the Theodore Roosevelt "man in the arena" quote about the doughty, bloodied figure. Nixon saw himself as that fighter; so did his media advisers. That was the real Nixon—why not accept it and build positively on it? The "Man in the Arena" tag stuck for the new format, and Roger Ailes was put in charge of producing and directing the programs.

Nixon wasn't the only man in the arena. California Governor Reagan tentatively pecked away at Nixon from the Republican right, while New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller bore in stealthily from the left. Rockefeller tried to earn his party's presidential nomination without entering any primaries. The strategy required moving the national poll figures and convincing the party that Nixon's nomination would be disastrous. The campaign brought together the ad team that had won Rockefeller's re-election in 1966 in New York, some fifty people including Myron McDonald, a marketing man, and Dr. Herta Herzog, a sociologist. To influence the national public-opinion polls, Rockefeller planned a series of sixty-second spots in thirty key markets. It would

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begin in mid-June and reach its peak ten days before the convention opened—when the last poll interviews by the Gallup organization would be taking place. Never one to think small, Rockefeller set aside $4.5 million: $2 million for TV spots, $1 million for network TV, and $1.5 million for newspaper inserts. That left only the question of what to say. The Rockefeller group had in hand research from a February poll, listing twenty-one problems from most to least important in the eyes of the voters. It was, by and large, a conservative list, with "Vietnam" first and "Rebuilding the cities" last. Rockefeller's ad people, however, confounded the conservative political strategy implicit in this research by doing a spot about racial justice:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on slum street, night.	Rockefeller [VO]: "Three thousand black men are among those brave Americans who have died so far in Vietnam. One hundred thousand black men will come home from Vietnam. What will they make of America, these men who risk their lives for the American dream, and come home to find the American slumber? What will they make of the slums where, too often, jobs are as rare as hope? This is Nelson Rockefeller, and I say they deserve more than this. I say they deserve an equal chance. They deserve decent housing, decent jobs, and the school-

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	ing and training to fill these jobs. To those who cry, 'We can't afford it,' I say, 'We can't afford *not* to do it.' To those who cry, 'Law and order,' I say, 'To keep law and order, there must be—
Black man suddenly appears from shadows and approaches camera.	justice and opportunity.' "

The ad created consternation among some Republicans. Viewers couldn't really tell who was coming toward them, went one complaint, or what his intentions were. But the ad people justified their liberal efforts as designed to move nationwide public opinion polls, regardless of their impact on Republican sensibilities. The result of the campaign, in any event, was ambiguous. The Harris poll showed Rockefeller gaining; Gallup didn't. One or the other poll was simply wrong. At the convention the delegates voted Gallup, and Nixon.

Television Joins the Party

On the Democratic side, first Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota and then Robert Kennedy, the junior senator from New York and brother of the fallen John Kennedy, challenged the sitting president. Johnson then amazed everyone by deciding not to run for reelection. In retrospect Johnson's decision shouldn't have been as surprising as it was: for months the President couldn't move around the country without attracting crowds of anti-Vietnam War demonstrators; how was he to campaign beyond friendly Air Force bases and the Rose Garden? McCarthy's effort was more moral quest than political campaign. He relied on volunteers, including ad agency people who refunded the usual commission on media buying, making more time buys possible.

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Kennedy chose the "new wave" agency of Papert, Koenig, Lois, and PKL in turn engaged the filmmaker Charles Guggenheim to produce spots. Guggenheim, an intense, private man, began his media career as a messenger at CBS Radio in New York in 1948, and then got into television working for the packager of *$64,000 Question*. Over the next ten years he established himself as a distinguished documentary maker. His work *Nine from Little Rock*, about a group of black students who integrated Central High School of Little Rock, Arkansas, with the help of Army troops, won an Academy Award in 1964.

The leading Democratic candidate, Vice-President Humphrey, signed on Doyle Dane Bernbach, Johnson's agency in 1964. Bill Bernbach put twenty-nine-year-old Arie L. Kopelman in charge of the Humphrey account. Kopelman had come to DDB in 1964, after working for the package goods giant, Procter & Gamble. He had never been involved in a political campaign before. "The whole thing was very exciting," Kopelman told us. "I was single, could put in the hours, didn't mind doing any travel necessary. The only problem was, I really didn't know a lot about Humphrey." Kopelman from the start was less excited by the political men around Humphrey, particularly Fred Harris, the forceful Oklahoma senator, who, Kopelman recalls, "just overwhelmed everyone. He was the only person I'd ever met, to that point, who wore a belt and suspenders at the same time." The political people, for their part, didn't like the fact that several DDB people were volunteering for McCarthy on the side. Kopelman tried to minimize the situation, arguing that it wasn't as if employees were "working on Volkswagen here during the day and working for Renault at home at night." Humphrey's strategy was to bypass the primaries, leaving Kennedy and McCarthy to battle it out state by state. The impoverished McCarthy campaign did little TV advertising, but money was no problem for Kennedy. Guggenheim made one spot that virtually gave Kennedy credit for averting nuclear disaster. In it Roger Hilsman, one of President Kennedy's advisers, recalls the Cuban Missile Crisis. Robert Ken-

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nedy, Hilsman says, "brought more wisdom to that table than any other. . . . I think that Robert Kennedy deserves more credit than any other of President Kennedy's advisers for the fact that we're here, alive, today." With Guggenheim's spots running heavily, Kennedy won the Nebraska primary but lost in Oregon. In the final match in California, Kennedy took forty-six percent of the vote to McCarthy's forty-two percent. Leaving the Los Angeles ballroom where he had made his victory speech, Kennedy was fatally shot.

All of Guggenheim's work, his spots and his documentaries, were as if preparation for *Robert Kennedy Remembered*, his tribute shown at the 1968 Democratic party convention just a few weeks after the assassination. The Chicago convention was chaotic: city police clubbing longhairs; protesters on Michigan Avenue, chanting "Ho—Ho—Ho/Ho Chi Minh's/Going to win," demonstrations and bitterness on the floor (including Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley yelling "Fuck you!" at Connecticut Senator Abe Ribicoff on national television)—Theodore White as retold by Nelson Algren. Guggenheim made the documentary in less than a month, working twelve to fourteen hours a day, six days a week, in order, he once said, "to put the importance of Robert Kennedy's life upon the conscience of the convention." He did the film in black and white, using techniques that would become standard in the life-style commercials of the next decade: Kennedy campaigning, Kennedy playing with his children, Kennedy confronting critics in Japan, Kennedy walking on the beach, with brother Edward Kennedy's eulogy as the closing voice-over. On the convention floor when it was over, some people cried, others applauded the empty screen, and still others waved signs ("We miss you, Bobby") and chanted ("We want Bobby"). "Even dead and on film," Norman Mailer would write, "he was better and more moving than anything which has happened in their convention." (The film later earned Guggenheim his second Oscar.)

When Humphrey won the nomination, the *Chicago Daily News* ran a banner on page one: "HUMPHREY IN A SHAMBLES."

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With George Wallace of Alabama running as third-party candidate, threatening to splinter the Democrats' "Solid South," Nixon's election appeared certain. Nixon certainly had the better-run, better-financed campaign. When his nomination seemed assured, campaign manager John Mitchell instructed the admen to get to work on the general election strategy. They planned to spend over $11 million—this at a time when the Democrats weren't sure they'd be able to spend more than $2 million. Nixon's advisers were supremely confident, so much so that when a Philadelphia newspaper writer named Joe McGinniss presented himself to Harry Treleaven and the others as someone who wanted to listen in on the media campaign and write about it, McGinniss got permission. "He represented himself as wanting to do a scholarly work," Ray Price says now. "He was actually viciously anti-Nixon." Roger Ailes, for his part, thought it was "queer" that the Nixon people agreed to let McGinniss listen in, but he also thought, "Hell, that's their problem." McGinniss played fly on the wall in the Nixon camp, his seemingly unaided total recall—"I never saw him with a tape recorder," Ailes says—later resulting in *The Selling of the President 1968*. The book makes the case that an amoral band of media men repackaged the mean, gutter-fighter Nixon into the admirable, principled New Nixon and cynically sold him, like cigarettes or soap, to the public. It proved to be convincing to late 1960s readers, who made it a best-seller.

The book's quotes were lively. "Let's face it, a lot of people think Nixon is dull," Ailes was quoted as saying. "Think he's a bore, a pain in the ass. They look at him as the kind of kid who always carried a book bag. Who was forty-two years old the day he was born. They figure other kids got footballs for Christmas, Nixon got a briefcase and he loved it. He'd always have his homework done and he'd never let you copy. Now you put him on television, you've got a problem right away. He's a funny-looking guy. He looks like somebody hung him in a closet overnight and he jumps out in the morning with his suit all bunched

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up and starts running around saying, 'I want to be President.' I mean this is how he strikes some people." Treleaven was reported to say about the candidate: "There were certain things people just would not buy about the guy. For instance, he loves to walk on the beach, but we couldn't send a camera out to film him picking up seashells. That would not have been credible." Nixon himself is heard, sappily saying: "We're going to build this whole campaign around television. You fellows just tell me what you want me to do and I'll do it."

Later the Nixon people would say that McGinniss had not misquoted but had selectively quoted to reinforce the McGinniss point of view. Ailes says now: "My mother didn't even know I swore until she read McGinniss. She was furious. I asked McGinniss whether I actually swore that much. He said, 'Well, you swore some,' but he admitted to me that he cleaned up other people's language around me because he needed a character who stood out more by being this loud, foulmouthed hot dog. So everybody else said 'gee whiz'; I said 'goddamn' and 'fuck.' Of course that freaked a lot of people, including the Nixon White House."

Organizations of all sorts take care not to admit flies on the wall to their meetings, the more so since *The Selling of the President.* Nixon felt that the press had persecuted him because of Alger Hiss, that the press had nearly gotten him kicked off Ike's ticket in 1952, that the press had been taken in by the Kennedy aura in 1960, and that the press had treated him unfairly in 1962—yet Nixon, the great press antagonist, had allowed an agent of the enemy inside his command post. It was the only big mistake he made in handling the press, for mainly reporters were excluded. The Nixon campaign in fact broke with almost all past campaign practices to become a paid-media campaign, conducted largely over television. When Nixon did his "Man in the Arena" program before live audiences, not even a press pool was permitted to enter the studio. Reporters were held in a separate room, watching TV monitors just like the folks at home. A Nixon

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speechwriter, Richard Whalen, later explained that "what was traditionally the main business of campaigning, the speeches and public appearances that the writing press covered, steadily became less important than the unseen media enterprise. Edited film clips and commercials showing [Nixon] at his best were beamed to the audience that mattered—the millions of television viewers who ignored the dull political news in the papers." It was inevitable, then, that as the media campaign became the entire campaign, the key advisers would take it over. Nixon's nominal ad agency, Fuller & Smith & Ross, never played a major role; it implemented decisions made by the Nixon organization. FSR executives became errand boys; their advice, when they offered it, was frequently rejected, sometimes condescendingly.

Treleaven meanwhile planned to construct spots with still photos rather than film. He had used stills in ads for Pan Am during his days at J. Walter Thompson, and he believed that they could evoke reactions in part independent of the accompanying voice-over. Nixon was well enough known that there was no reason to show film footage of him—film anyway might remind people of the kid with the book bag. Treleaven wanted to hire the photographer David Douglas Duncan to shoot the stills. Duncan, busy, suggested Eugene Jones, a documentary maker who had also spent eight years as a producer on NBC's *Today* show. He had not done commercials before, but he impressed Treleaven and was hired. The Jones spots, like Gene Wyckoff's work in 1960 and 1964, employ juxtaposed still photos and an announcer's voice to make their points. Dramatic music, seldom used in political spots before 1968, becomes a major part of the production:

VIDEO	AUDIO
Camera up on white letters against black background: "A POLITICAL BROADCAST."	

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Video	Audio
Cut to photo of large crowd, facing camera. Camera pulls back.	Music up: first drum, then trumpet, and other instruments. Quick, busy sound.
Cut to different view of crowd. Camera pulls back.	Announcer [VO]: "The man who is president speaks for America.
Cut to crowd seen from above. Camera pulls back.	What kind of a man do you want speaking for you?
Cut to quick montage of faces, in CU, different nationalities; then different, recognizable world cities (London, Paris, Moscow, etc.).	The peoples of the world will be listening.
	[Music changes to soft vibraphone notes; French horn, mournful, comes in.]
Cut to montage of different world leaders (Brezhnev, Mao, Castro, de Gaulle, etc.).	[Music takes on martial sound.] The man who speaks for us must have the respect of all the world.
Cut to ECU of black telephone, shot from behind and below; then camera moves quickly to ECU of white telephone, next to it.	[Music quicker, softer; strings.] Think about it.
Cut to medium shot of reporters holding notebooks, looking up expectantly; then	Who's the one man who can speak for America—

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1968: NIXON VS. HUMPHREY

Nixon Still Photos Commercial

"The man who speaks for us must have the respect of all the world"

"Who's the one man who can speak for America—"

"Anytime, anywhere? Nixon's the one"

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to a dozen microphones, sticking up into the air.	
Cut to ECU, presidential seal. Fade to White House, with Washington Monument in background. Camera pulls back.	anywhere, anytime? [Music becomes discordant.] Nixon's the one." [Music stops.]
Cut to white letters against black background: "THIS TIME VOTE LIKE YOUR WHOLE WORLD DEPENDED ON IT."	
Cut to small white letters against black background: "NIXON." Letters come toward camera fast, until they fill the screen.	

Jones also produced one spot with film rather than stills, though it too lacks any footage of Nixon:

VIDEO	AUDIO
White letters over black background: "A Political Broadcast."	
Fade to city street, night. Reflection of shoes appears on the pavement, pan up to reveal middle-aged woman walking along empty street.	Sound of footsteps.

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She has red hair, white gloves, and a blue collar beneath her coat. She holds her hands together, apparently clasping her purse.	Announcer [VO]: "Crimes of violence in the United States have almost doubled in recent years. Today a violent crime is committed almost every sixty seconds. A robbery every two and a half minutes. A mugging every six minutes. A murder every forty-three minutes.
Camera follows her as she passes several barred storefronts. Then she passes the camera; it follows her from the rear. She is completely alone throughout sequence. No other pedestrians or vehicles.	And it will get worse unless we take the offensive. Freedom from fear is a basic right of every American. We must restore it."
Fade to blue background, with white letters: "THIS TIME VOTE LIKE YOUR WHOLE WORLD DEPENDED ON IT." Cut to second super: "NIXON." Camera zooms in until it fills the screen.	

Ailes's energies meanwhile were going into the "Man in the Arena" programs. Reporters had criticized the first programs because they were edited before they were shown—which naturally made the arena seem a bit less threatening to Nixon. Sensitive to charges of manipulation, the campaign was being pushed to go live, and Ailes, passionately committed to live television, was pleased. He had, by his count, produced some 2,000 ninety-minute *Mike Douglas Shows* since the early 1960s. Live TV

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was Ailes's life, and the "Man in the Arena" idea strongly appealed to him—"Nixon performing without a net," he termed it when we interviewed him in his company's offices just off the Broadway theater district in New York City. The "Man in the Arena" format was also something Ailes believed Hubert Humphrey couldn't do: "Having studied tapes of Humphrey I knew that as soon as the first person asked a question, Humphrey would talk for seventeen minutes. He was totally unable to edit his time."

Like Tony Schwartz, Ailes had concluded that "people watch TV emotionally," and that view shaped his work. The camera should come in close on the candidate, the candidate should be strongly lighted; picture selection should stand in for the human eye—a rear camera, placed behind the man in the arena, could show how the arena looked to the man. It sounds elementary now, but no one had done political advertising in exactly that way until Ailes. Before the Nixon campaign, Ailes explained, candidates were filmed in their commercials three-quarters front, from chest to a point twenty or thirty inches above their heads, "Eisenhower Answers America" fashion. "I changed this style. I insisted on close-ups. I felt that's what TV did better than anything else because people want to feel something from TV." Ailes, as he tells it, belonged then to the golden gut school of TV. He possessed, he said, an invaluable working knowledge of television gained through all those live shows molding the common clay of Mike Douglas, "a sense of what will work and won't work, of what's good and what's bad, a kind of sixth sense of what the audience perceives as real and what they perceive as phony." (The instincts he employed on behalf of Nixon haven't left him; on his office wall at Ailes Communications is a plaque noting that *Hot L Baltimore*, the Lanford Wilson play that Ailes coproduced with Kermit Bloomgarden, won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best American Play of 1972–73. On another corridor wall are memorabilia from recent political campaigns managed by Ailes, including a poster for Lew Lehrman,

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the millionaire businessman who almost won the New York governorship in 1982 in his first political campaign.)

The brass guts of some other Nixon advisers, however, were telling them to protect Nixon from live TV—and from himself. They remembered the first Nixon-Kennedy debate in 1960 and the "last press conference" of 1962, and they wanted a controlled format. Harry Treleaven took a middle ground: Nixon, he advised, "should be presented in some kind of 'situation' rather than cold in a studio. The situation should look unstaged, even if it's not." At first, then, the "Man in the Arena" programs were done on film and the citizen questioners prescreened—just how rigorously is still a matter of sharp disagreement between Nixon's men and his critics. When the Nixon programs went live, each ran an hour long and was shown by region, rather than nationally. By creating regional groupings of stations, the campaign could tailor its approach more specifically—another Nixon media innovation. A successful football coach of the time, Bud Wilkinson of Oklahoma, served as the host, assuring the audiences that "the gloves are really coming off this time." Generally, though, the questions were soft. Questioners could not follow up, if dissatisfied with Nixon's answer, and that usually let the candidate escape the rare tough question. Because the programs were shown regionally, Nixon could hone his answers to the most-asked questions, and use them over and over, word for word.

Dead End for Madison Avenue

The major issues of the 1968 campaign were Vietnam and law and order. Humphrey was tied to the LBJ record on both counts; nevertheless, in the Gallup and Harris polls taken in June and July, Humphrey was beating Nixon by five to seven points. By September, though, Nixon was leading by as much as fifteen points. Joe Napolitan of the Humphrey campaign later explained this swing by pointing out that Nixon was nominated at an orderly convention in Miami, that Nixon went on the air with well-produced advertising, and that Humphrey was nominated

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at the riotous Chicago convention (which cost the Democrats at least the law and order vote). Napolitan acknowledged to us that the Humphrey organization perpetuated the Chicago shambles: while Nixon had media professionals running his ad campaign, the Humphrey campaign, six weeks before the election, changed agencies and strategies entirely. Finally, Nixon had money; Humphrey didn't. Of the contrasts the last was to have the greatest impact. The Humphrey organization entered the general election in the red. In the preconvention days, Humphrey had to spend some $700,000 on TV spots to hold his delegates to him; the Democratic National Committee was another $400,000 in debt.

Doyle Dane Bernbach had the Humphrey advertising account initially, with Arie L. Kopelman in charge. Kopelman had a fifty-seven-person staff on the account at the time of the convention. He and fifteen members of the staff flew to Chicago to work out ad strategy with Humphrey and his managers. Kopelman had already drawn up a production timetable for spots with shooting to start no later than August 30. He had also worked on a computer simulation program to discover the value of repeating a specific commercial in a specific market after a certain number of days. He presented a four-page memo to the Humphrey people on August 22, and followed that with a fourteen-page "Media Recommendation: 1968 Presidential Election" two weeks later. There were also sixteen pages of "Media Data Supplements," breaking down state by state totals of TV homes and the cost of reaching them over a seven-week period. Some twenty states with large electoral votes were to be singled out for heavy spot coverage, and this group was further divided into three subgroups. The key concept was "weighting"—giving extra attention to critical markets; the key phrases were "GRP level" (for gross rating points, or the number of people watching network spots or local spots per week), "seven-week reach," and "seven-week frequency." "If Humphrey had followed this plan, he would have been president," Kopelman, now executive vice-president of DDB, flatly declared as he placed the bundle of memoranda

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in our hands. "No one before had ever done such a full-scale analysis of political advertising. It was a plan for winning the share-of-mind competition."

Clever and innovative as DDB may have been in the business of consumer persuasion, it made a major error in selling its plan to the Democratic leadership. Kopelman put the figure $7 million, the cost of the ad campaign, in the second paragraph of his covering memo. "They saw that number and didn't even read the rest," he says. "They said that they could not afford it, and that was it. They had no understanding of how a weighted advertising campaign works." To Kopelman, it was a simple matter of logic. In 1964 Johnson had spent $4.7 million on broadcast advertising when he was the incumbent president against weak opposition. Obviously Humphrey had to do more. Also, Kopelman's memo predicted, Nixon would spend upwards of $10 million (the Nixon campaign actually spent $12.6 million).

The Humphrey people, as might be expected, have a different version of what happened. To them, it was DDB that didn't understand political campaigns. Joe Napolitan had come to work two weeks before the convention for Larry O'Brien, the Kennedy man who first had worked for Johnson's presumed reelection campaign, then for Robert Kennedy's, and finally for Humphrey's as campaign manager. Napolitan's assignment was to supervise media; however, a media plan written by Orville Freeman, the Secretary of Agriculture (and alarm clock candidate of 1954) who was angling to replace O'Brien, already existed. Like the DDB plans, Freeman's called for a big-budget ad campaign. Protecting their turf, the O'Brien forces drew up their own plan, and in a preemptive strike, got Humphrey to approve it prior to his acceptance speech. When Bill Bernbach presented his storyboards at the meeting in Chicago, the O'Brien missiles turned on him. The first storyboard showed an elephant's head, labeled "GOP." The elephant walks backward and finally disappears. The voice-over delivers a litany of statistics on the GOP's failures; the spot closes with the initials "HHH" filling the screen. The O'Brien-

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