Bush Versus Kerry:
A Case Study of the 2004 Presidential Election

A Senior Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

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Introduction

Having been first elected following the infamous Florida recount in 2000, George W. Bush had governed with an assertive style, ordering troops into battle, pushing for tax cuts, and permitting deficit spending. Heading into the 2004 election, the nation was still looking back on the September 11\textsuperscript{th} terrorist attacks and was currently embroiled in two wars: one against the Taliban in Afghanistan and another against a growing insurgency in Iraq. The incumbent’s popularity, having reached astronomical levels following September 11, 2001, had fallen back to human levels and there was a general sense that he was vulnerable; just how vulnerable remained a big question.

The Democrats eventually chose Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts as their nominee with hopes of competing against the wartime President with someone possessing excellent combat credentials. The campaign would be hard fought, setting records for fundraising, spending, and votes cast. When the dust settled, George W. Bush was once again the victor.

In this paper, a number of explanations are offered as to why the particular results occurred. It is difficult to point to one single event, cause, or action and say, “This is why Bush won,” or, “This is why Kerry lost.” Instead, the truth probably lies in a combination of these theories, with some being more significant than others. It is important to understand these events, as well as the errors committed by the political actors. As future campaigns and elections play out, candidates, parties, and voters will look at future elections as a byproduct of past ones, and understanding these elections will help individuals gain a better understanding of the political process in general.
The Democratic Primaries

John Kerry’s campaign got off with what could at best be described as a shaky start. After announcing his candidacy on NBC’s Meet the Press in December of 2002, he joined what would become a crowded field of ten candidates for the Democratic nomination (though Florida Sen. Bob Graham and former Illinois Sen. Carol Mosley Braun dropped out before the Iowa caucuses).

By the fall of 2003, Kerry’s campaign was seen by most observers as hopelessly adrift. His message was unclear, as was his stance on Iraq. As the weeks spent in Iowa and New Hampshire wore on, Kerry could not even step out of the shadow of his fellow New Englander, former Vermont Governor Howard Dean.

Dean first appeared on the radar as a serious candidate when, in February 2003, he addressed the winter meeting of the Democratic National Committee and declared, “I am Howard Dean. And I am here to represent the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party.” The New Yorker’s Mark Singer described the speech as “the pivotal moment in the campaign – the transition from ‘Dean who’ to ‘Dean whoa.’” After that statement Dean embarked on his “Sleepless Summer” tour, which helped cement his status as perhaps the clearest anti-Bush and anti-war candidate.

However, the groundwork that allowed for Dean to become the early frontrunner was set up in advance of the DNC speech. In 2002, the last year of his governorship, Dean sent out his long time aide Kate O’Connor to travel the country and talk up his vision for America. A small political office was set up in Montpelier, which was moved to Burlington after Dean’s term of office expired in January 2003 and he began campaigning full-time. Even though practically the entire campaign was contained in a
1,000 square foot office with only seven full-time employees and $157,000, big things started happening for Dean (Singer).

He quickly became a media celebrity as he brought crowds to their feet with sharp anti-Bush and anti-special interest rhetoric. As his popularity rose, his staff members were anointed political geniuses. His campaign manager Joe Trippi was a frequent guest on political talk shows and was even profiled on the front page of the *New York Times* (Wilgoren). Dean attracted the endorsements of several labor organizations, minority and women’s groups, and several party officials, including the 2000 nominee, Al Gore. In addition, Dean’s message touched a nerve with the under-30 age group, as evidenced by the vast army of college students that Dean was able to use as volunteers on the ground in Iowa and New Hampshire. By the fall of 2003, Dean had already been on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* and was enjoying healthy leads in the polls (Brower 4).

What separated Dean from the pack of contenders and made him most look like the probable nominee was his fundraising pace. Dean may go down in history as the first candidate to truly harness the power of the internet. Joe Trippi regularly bragged about how successfully the campaign was using the internet to raise money and build an online political community (Marx 43). By January 1, 2004, Dean had already raised over $41 million and had decided to forego federal matching funds, which allowed him to raise even more (CNN).

However, there were serious flaws with the candidacy of Howard Dean. It was suggested by some that Dean’s personality was not well suited for a national campaign. He exposed his short temper when answering hostile questions from voters and often “shot from the hip” at his opponents while giving interviews. The largest factor,
however, in Dean’s eventual demise was that he became the frontrunner so early. In Iowa and New Hampshire, debates occurred on an almost weekly basis, and Dean became the target of the other candidates almost as much as President Bush. In Boston, Kerry criticized Dean for “having been endorsed more often by the NRA than the NEA.” He drew fire from John Edwards for his remark that he “wanted to be the candidate for guys with Confederate flags in their pickup trucks” (Marx 43). Al Gore’s endorsement of Dean only cemented his frontrunner status. As Joe Trippi wrote of the endorsement, “It turned out to be the beginning of the end for us, the moment our insurgent campaign ended and our short, uncomfortable stint as the front runner began – with a target squarely between Howard’s shoulder blades” (Trippi 175). The constant attacks by the other candidates were bound to take their toll on Dean’s image sooner or later.

At the same time Howard Dean was falling, John Kerry was rising quickly. His return to prominence began in November 2003 when internal campaign strife led to the firing of Kerry’s original campaign manager Jim Jordan. Mary Beth Cahill, a former chief of staff to Sen. Ted Kennedy, replaced him. Though Jim Jordan was a longtime aide to Kerry, the candidate was upset with several of Jordan’s decisions and his overall management of the campaign (Healy). In addition to the staff shake up, Kerry arranged a $6.4 million mortgage on his home in Boston’s Beacon Hill neighborhood and loaned the money to the campaign to send a signal that he had not given up on the race (Healy). Despite this quick influx of cash, a December 3rd American Research Group poll had Dean leading Kerry 45% to 13% (Appleman). However, things were just starting to turn around for Kerry.
Kerry had several factors going for him. Kerry’s speaking style, which was heavily criticized during and after the general election, may have helped considerably in Iowa. Though some would describe his stiff demeanor as boring, he certainly came off as presidential. This appearance, combined with his detailed knowledge of foreign policy, made the Massachusetts Senator appear to be more electable than the somewhat unpredictable Howard Dean.

Dean’s fall continued when he remarked on December 15th, one day after Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was captured, that the capture “had not made America safer” (Marx 45). While the merits of that statement can be debated with the privilege of hindsight, it was at the time, a puzzling thing to say and helped cement the impression that Dean was “out of touch” with the mood of the nation.

Dean’s campaign decided on a heavily “front-end” approach to the primaries. They planned to use their frontrunner status to win Iowa and New Hampshire, and figured the momentum from those wins would carry them through to the nomination. As a result, Dean invested an enormous amount of time and resources in Iowa. He spent 76 days in Iowa, fulfilled his pledge to visit all 99 of Iowa’s counties, and had legions of “Deaniacs” flood the state prior to the caucuses (Marx 45). Dean’s volunteers were very visible because of the orange knit caps that they would wear (Brower 8). In *The Rise and Fall of Howard Dean*, Claude Marx argues that these volunteers may have played a roll in Dean’s eventual loss in Iowa because many Iowans “bitterly resented being approached en masse by out-of-staters.” He writes, “Many of Dean’s orange hat-wearing volunteers had long hair and body piercings. This image clashed sharply with the state’s reputation as a haven for the values depicted in Norman Rockwell paintings” (Marx 45).
Marx also criticized Dean’s reliance on direct mail as the primary way to advertise. He claims that some homes received up to 14 pieces of mail prior to the caucus. John Edward’s Iowa co-chair Rob Tully remarked, “When they get so much [mail], they begin thinking, ‘something must be wrong with this guy’” (Marx). Perhaps this is an example of the downside of campaign advertising.

Meanwhile, Kerry and Edwards were gaining ground quickly on the original leaders, Dean and Gephardt. A Des Moines Register poll on January 17th showed that Kerry and Edwards had leapfrogged past Dean and Gephardt, with Kerry first at 26%. Interestingly, there were only eight points separating Kerry from the fourth-placed Gephardt (Roos). Two days later, the results of the caucus matched the results of that poll, with Kerry receiving 38%, Edwards running second at 32%, and Howard Dean registering a distant third at 18% (Hechtkopf). John Kerry had successfully become the anti-Dean. Kerry campaign officials even attempted to capitalize on Dean’s disappointing third place finish by handing out signs that read, “Dated Dean, Married Kerry,” which was an attempt to invite ex-“Deaniacs” into the Kerry fold (Broder).

Weeks of attacks between Dean and Gephardt allowed the Kerry/Edwards surge. As they spent the time tearing each other down, Kerry and Edwards were building themselves up. Many attributed Kerry’s final surge to strategist Michael Whouley, who led his ground game. Whouley had previously led Michael Dukakis and Al Gore to success in Iowa and Kerry called him “magical” (Johnson). Kerry was also aided by his military background. With war still raging in Iraq and Afghanistan, many felt that the Democrats needed a candidate with a strong military background in order to defeat Bush. Kerry was a highly decorated Vietnam veteran and was seen as a potentially strong
challenger in that respect. An emotional and unplanned reunion occurred when Kerry’s Vietnam crewmate Jim Rassman, who hadn’t spoken to Kerry since 1969, appeared in Iowa saying that Kerry had saved his life and now he saw that his former officer needed his help (Brower 9). This reunion was a publicist’s dream come true and certainly helped create Kerry’s image.

The day after the caucus, Gephardt dropped out of the race and would soon endorse Kerry; however, the media’s attention was focused on Howard Dean’s post-caucus speech, a.k.a. “The Dean Scream.” What began as an attempt to comfort his supporters led to a pop culture phenomenon as Dean ended the speech with a long listing of several upcoming primary states followed by shouting “Yeeeaarrrggghhh!” To those present, nothing much was seen as out of the ordinary. Claude Marx, who covered the Dean campaign, wrote, “Though his voice was a bit hoarse, Dean retained the charismatic tone that has been the hallmark of his campaign speeches” (Marx). The national media obviously did not see things this way. The speech was replayed and analyzed thousands of times in the media and on the internet. The clips of the speech made Dean appear to be unstable and angry. Practically every news story on Howard Dean leading up to the New Hampshire primary referenced the scream, and the bad press seemed to doom his campaign.

As the focus moved to New Hampshire, Kerry was enjoying a huge amount of momentum. His campaign reported that they received $500,000 in donations in the thirty-six hours following the Iowa victory. In addition, his organization was boosted by over fifty ex-Gephardt staffers who joined the campaign after their candidate bowed out of the race (Connolly.) It was suddenly presumed by many that Kerry was the only
challenger who could defeat Howard Dean. However, there were huge differences between Iowa and New Hampshire. For one, New Hampshire is the neighbor of Dean’s home state of Vermont and many were unsure as to how this would affect the race. Second, unlike the Iowa caucuses, New Hampshire has an open primary, meaning independents, and even Republicans, can vote. Finally, unlike in Iowa, retired General Wesley Clark and Sen. Joseph Lieberman would also be actively campaigning. Clark was the former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO and commanded NATO’s forces in the Kosovo conflict. He had never before sought office and was running as a moderate Democrat with strong military credentials. Sen. Lieberman of Connecticut had been on the Democratic ticket in 2000 as Al Gore’s running mate.

These differences were not enough to derail Kerry. He won the state convincingly with 39% of the vote. Howard Dean was second with 26%, and Clark and Edwards each received about 12% (Balz). New Hampshire, even more than the “Dean Scream,” marked the end of Howard Dean’s chances of winning the nomination. Because he had run such a front-heavy campaign, investing massive amounts of resources in the early contests, his twin defeats put him too far behind to catch up to Kerry and Edwards. By the end of January, he had already spent $42.5 of his $47.6 million, and donations were dropping off significantly (CNN). After another third place finish in Wisconsin on February 17th, Dean suspended his campaign (Johnson).

Kerry continued to roll through the primaries, winning every state except for three (South Carolina went to Edwards, Oklahoma to Clark, and Vermont to Dean). On March 2, 2004, Super Tuesday, Kerry officially clinched the nomination and the real election essentially began.
DNC Chairman Terry McAuliffe had engineered the frontloading of the primary calendar so that the party's nominee could be selected as early as possible (Armas). This arrangement would give the Democrats plenty of time to rally behind the candidate and raise more money. However, McAuliffe may have underestimated the downside to that strategy. By anointing Kerry as the eventual nominee in early March, the party opened Kerry up to a full summer of attacks from the Bush campaign. To many, this became obvious the day after Super Tuesday, when President Bush officially kicked off his reelection campaign with a fundraising dinner in California, at which he mentioned his challenger by name for the first time (Hechtkopf).

**Summer News Events**

In order to understand any major election, one has to become familiar with the context in which that election took place, especially with outside events that may have helped sway voters' opinions and attitudes. The first of these events occurred in February when the Massachusetts State Supreme Court overturned that state's marriage laws on the grounds that they discriminated against homosexual couples. In addition, the court ruled that civil unions were not an acceptable alternative to marriage and mandated that the state rewrite their marriage laws to include rights for same-sex couples (Hechtkopf). This ruling sent shockwaves through conservative circles and energized Bush's Evangelical Christian base. The potential of the courts mandating same-sex marriage on the federal level led the President to propose a constitutional amendment to define marriage as something only between a man and a woman.
Kerry took a stand against this amendment; he explained that while he was personally opposed to same-sex marriage, he considered the amendment political grandstanding and an attempt by Republicans to use this wedge issue to divide the country. Bush’s supporters claimed that the President was acting on his own convictions and was protecting the values of the nation. It is easy to see that on this issue, Bush was the clear winner. Not only did polls indicate that the nation was overwhelmingly against legalizing same-sex marriage, but the fear of it happening energized his social conservative base.

Eleven states even featured constitutional bans of same-sex marriage on the ballot in November, including Ohio, which turned out to be the most crucial of the battleground states. This led many pundits to jump to the conclusion that Bush triumphed in Ohio as a direct result of the ballot initiative. However, many disagree with this assessment. Russell Muirhead contends that the ballot initiatives “do not appear to have boosted relative conservative turnout in those states above the overall national increase to any substantial extent. In states with gay-marriage referendums, the share of Republican voters increased 5.16% between 2000 and 2004, compared to a national increase of 4.76%. However, the proportion of citizens voting Democratic in those states rose by 3.88%, while the national average was only 2.98% (Muirhead 230). It is much more likely that social issues such as same-sex marriage helped the Bush-Cheney campaign in the areas like grassroots support and organization rather than being the difference maker of the election.
How Supporters and Opponents of Rights for Same-Sex Couples Voted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>% of Electorate</th>
<th>% for Bush</th>
<th>% for Kerry</th>
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<tr>
<td>Legally Married</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Unions</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Legal Recognition</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>29</td>
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(Source: Sabato 116)

If the same-sex marriage debate helped energize Bush's base but was never a deciding factor of the election, the same could also be said about Kerry and the 9/11 Commission. The blue ribbon panel was put in the media spotlight when the White House's former counterterrorism chief, Richard Clarke, took the stand to testify about the claims he made in his book, *Against All Enemies*. On March 24th and told the commission that he did not think that terrorism was a top priority for the administration before September 11, 2001. "I believe the Bush administration in the first eight months considered terrorism an important issue but not an urgent issue," Clarke told the 10-member panel, "There was a process underway to address al Qaeda. But although I continued to say it was an urgent problem, I don't think it was ever treated that way." He went on to say, "To the loved ones of the victims of 9/11, to them who are here in the room, to those who are watching on television, your government failed you. Those entrusted with protecting you failed you. And I failed you" (Eggen, Pincus). This explosive testimony, whether accurate or not, seemed to put a huge dent in the armor of the President on matters of terrorism. George W. Bush was previously seen as an infallible leader on national security issues, but Clarke's accusations put doubt into the heads of many.
To counter this momentum, the White House sent National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice to the commission to testify. She presented the President’s case that they did all they could before the attacks. However, controversy once again swelled when, after she said that the White House never received any specific intelligence warning of an attack, she was asked the title of the August 6, 2001 Presidential Daily Briefing. She testified that the title of the document was “Bin Laden Determined to Attack within the United States” (Eggen, Pincus).

On July 22\textsuperscript{nd}, the bi-partisan 9/11 Commission released its final report. The Washington Post wrote that the “567-page final report said the U.S. government was utterly unprepared on Sept. 11, 2001 to protect the American people from al Qaeda terrorists who outwitted and outmaneuvered a bureaucracy that had never seriously addressed them as a threat and had never fathomed the possibility of such a calamitous assault on U.S. soil” (Hechtkopf). This report, though it did not place specific blame on anyone, further harmed the President’s standing on terror in the election.

Similar to the social conservatives rallying around same-sex marriage as a premier issue, many of Kerry’s supporters saw this report as a condemnation of Bush’s handling of terrorism. However, their outrage never fully spread to the majority of the general public. In fact, 86\% of voters who listed terrorism as the most important issue of the election and 87\% of those who called leadership the most important quality of a candidate voted to reelect the President (Sabato 112).

Another disaster for the administration followed two weeks later when the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal broke on April 29\textsuperscript{th}. The scandal revolved around digital photographs taken by American soldiers in Abu Ghraib prison, a former torture chamber
of Sadam Hussein, but now an American-run prison for Iraqi detainees. The pictures, which were leaked to the press, showed prisoners being forced to stand on boxes for long amounts of time with electrical wires strapped to their bodies, prisoners being threatened with dogs, prisoners stripped naked and piled in a heaps to demean them, as well as other signs of physical and psychological abuse. In many photos, soldiers can be seen laughing and even posing with the prisoners (Milbank). The Red Cross disclosed that it had previously noted abuse at American-run Iraqi prisons, and a classified report by Major General Antonio Taguba had described “sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses against prisoners” (Ceaser and Busch 112). Though the President condemned the photographs, John Kerry used these photos to call for Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s resignation. Kerry did not stop there and claimed that the problem was a result of faulty leadership and that “the chain of command goes all the way up to the Oval Office” (Balz, Romano). With the Abu Ghraib dominated the May headlines, the President’s approval dropped in the polls below 50 percent and he lost his head-to-head lead over John Kerry (Ceaser and Busch 113).

Selecting a Vice President

In early July, speculation began to heat up about whom John Kerry would select to run as his Vice President. Rumors had flown earlier that Kerry might have asked fellow Sen. John McCain, a Republican, to create the first-ever Presidential ticket consisting of a Democrat and a Republican. *Newsweek* reported that Kerry had badly wanted McCain as his VP, asking him “a half-dozen times,” including an offer in March to expand the role of the Vice President to include the Defense Department and overall
control of foreign policy. McCain flatly turned down this proposal stating, “You’re out of your mind. I don’t know if it is constitutional, and it certainly won’t sell” (Thomas 80). The rumors were put to rest when McCain told Tim Russert on Meet the Press that he was not interested in the job and was endorsing the President (Saler).

Kerry personally appointed Jim Johnson, who was a former advisor to Vice President Walter Mondale, to head up the VP selection process. Sources close to the campaign generally agreed that the field of contenders had narrowed to three: Rep. Dick Gephardt of Missouri, Gov. Tom Vilsack of Iowa, and Sen. John Edwards of South Carolina, who was also the runner-up to Kerry in the primaries (Bash). With the McCain speculation dead, Edwards called his advisors to his home in March to let them know that he planned a “full-fledged campaign” for the job. He traveled to across the country stumping for Kerry and it paid off (Thomas 82).

Kerry was scheduled to make the highly secretive announcement about selecting Edwards on the morning of July 6th. However, by the time the announcement was made, he had already sent an email to all of his supporters on his mailing list informing them of his choice (Porteus). This was an interesting act. By doing so, he fed his supporters “inside information” and probably charged them up about the campaign. Even if they did not open the email until after the announcement, many probably felt good about receiving it anyway. If was becoming very obvious that both candidates were going to try to exploit the internet to its full potential.

Kerry’s selection of Edwards was interesting on a number of fronts. On the positive side, Edwards was able to connect to voters through his plain-spoken style and humble background as the son of a mill worker, something that Kerry struggled to do
throughout the entire campaign (Ceaser and Busch 115). However, there were plenty of negative aspects that Edwards brought to the campaign as well. Edwards had only five years of governmental experience, making it tough to convince voters to trust him with the nation in a time of war. In addition, the selection of Edwards did not help move any particular state or constituency into Kerry's column. From the beginning, it was obvious that Edward's home state of North Carolina would go to Bush, along with much of the South. Many have suggested that it would have been wiser for Kerry to select a Westerner, like New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, or a Midwesterner such as former Rep. Dick Gephardt of Missouri or Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsak.

**Defining the Challenger**

The Bush-Cheney campaign’s greatest success may have been in how they successfully defined the challenger. Almost immediately after it became apparent that John Kerry was going to win the Democratic nomination, both sides set out to create a public image of John Kerry fashioned to their liking. The President’s campaign used a two-pronged strategy to attack and discredit Kerry. First, they wanted to portray the Senator as unacceptably liberal. Second, they wanted to depict Kerry as a spineless politician who would say anything to get elected, including repeatedly changing his position on issues (Cook 287). Most Presidential elections are considered referendums on the incumbent – if most voters think that the President is doing a good job, he will be reelected. However, using this two-pronged strategy, the Bush campaign successfully turned the 2004 election into a referendum on the challenger. The election was not about
whether or not Bush should get another term, it was about whether Kerry could be trusted to handle the war in Iraq, the War on Terrorism, and national security.

Defining Kerry as extremely liberal was made easier by the fact that he hailed from Massachusetts, the home state of Ted Kennedy and Michael Dukakis. The campaign also used the National Journal’s vote rankings to charge that Kerry was the single most liberal member of the U.S. Senate, often saying that he was more liberal than polarizing figures like Ted Kennedy or Hillary Clinton. These charges were misleading, however. Instead of taking into account Kerry’s 19-year voting record, the National Journal only examined the votes taken in 2003. During much of 2003, Kerry was almost constantly on the campaign trail, so he only returned to Washington to vote on a few key bills. A more even-handed ranking of Kerry’s ideology, using his lifetime National Journal rankings, placed him as the 11th most liberal senator; there is no doubt that Kerry is liberal, but there is a huge symbolic difference between being number one and number 11 (Cook 288). Nevertheless, this strategy was successfully orchestrated by the Bush campaign to portray Kerry as unacceptably liberal, especially in the South, Southwest, and Midwestern states.

The second prong of their attempt to define Kerry was to portray him as a “flip-flopper,” someone who would shamelessly change his position to fit the political situation. The greatest gift that Kerry gave the Bush campaign in this respect was concerning his defense of a vote against $87 billion in funding for the Iraq war. The vote took place during the primaries when Howard Dean was successfully attacking both Kerry and Edwards for their votes to authorize the war. In an attempt to distance themselves from the war, both Kerry and Edwards voted against the sure to pass bill.
This opened themselves up to charges by Republicans of not supporting the troops. When defending his actions in a speech, Kerry made the mistake of saying, “I actually voted for the $87 billion dollars before I voted against it,” referring to his support for an original version of the bill before allegedly excessive spending measures were amended on to it (Annenberg Political Fact Check). Instead of clearly explaining his position, this slip of the tongue became “the gift that kept on giving [for the Bush campaign],” as Karl Rove said after the election (Cook 289). The Republicans were able to use this quote as evidence of Kerry’s “flip-flops” on issues and also helped to portray him as aloof and unsure of his most basic values.

Charlie Cook said that this two-pronged strategy was vital to the success of the President’s reelection campaign. “Kerry was plagued with the worst of both worlds,” he wrote, “He was portrayed as a flip-flopper, which robbed him of any credit for having principled views, while being tagged as a hopeless liberal who would be unable to deal with changing conditions and situations. It is very hard to win an election carrying these dual burdens” (Cook 289). This strategy held back Kerry’s momentum essentially from Super Tuesday onward, and as a result, the election became a referendum on the challenger, instead of a referendum on the incumbent.

The Conventions

Well in advance of the election, when planning the Democratic National Convention, party chairman Terry McAuliffe faced a difficult decision as to when the party should hold its convention. There is a gentleman’s agreement between the two parties to allow the incumbent party to hold their convention last. However, election law
also dictated that each of the candidates were bound to spending only the $75 million in public grant money from the time of their acceptance of the nomination through Election Day (Toner 196). The Bush campaign shrewdly scheduled their convention for the last week of August, only one day after the conclusion of the Olympics. This posed a problem for Democrats because by forcing the Democrats to hold their convention well before the two-week long Olympic Games, the Democratic nominee would be forced to budget his $75 million over the course of 13 weeks, compared to Bush's eight weeks (Todd 27). For a brief time, McAuliffe actually threatened to hold the Democratic National Convention the same week as the Republicans’, but that plan fell through after several party leaders felt that an early influx of cash for the nominee might create momentum.

The Democrats decided on Boston as the host city, which coincidentally turned out to be the hometown of the nominee. Many political analysts charge that John Kerry “wasted” his convention by not capitalizing on the nationwide coverage of the event. The convention was very militaristic in tone, with a theme of “Stronger at Home, Respected in the World” (Brower 16). Analyst Charlie Cook wrote that Kerry “squandered” his convention, which is one of the few times in an election where Americans actually pay close attention to the campaigns. Cook went on to say:

The Kerry high command’s strategic decision to have an upbeat, positive convention that extolled Kerry’s leadership and valor in Vietnam rather than shine the spotlight on President Bush and his actions on the economy and jobs, health care, and drug costs was a colossal blunder.

Adding to the sense that the moment was wasted was the fact that the most electrifying speaker of the convention turned out to be Illinois Senate candidate Barak Obama. Many
considered Obama’s impassioned speech calling for American unity to be the highlight of the four-day event, yet most Americans never saw it because ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX decided not to broadcast the convention’s second day.

When Kerry accepted the Democratic nomination on the final day, the campaign focused even more sharply on Kerry’s military record. Former Senator Max Cleland, a triple-amputee Vietnam veteran, introduced Kerry. In addition, before starting his acceptance speech by saying that he is “reporting for duty,” he appeared on stage with his former crew from his swift boat in Vietnam (Watson). Instead of going out of his way to attack the President, as Charlie Cook noted, he relied on a positive and optimistic theme of “America Can Do Better.”

In past elections, the candidates always received a bounce in the polls after the convention as a result of all the positive media coverage. Controversy has surrounded what kind of bounce Kerry received from his convention. The first poll that came out, by Gallup, showed that Kerry actually lost one percentage point in the poll. However, an ABC News/Washington Post poll showed that Kerry received a four-point bounce (Balz, Morin). Whatever the resulting bounce amounted to, it was definitely disappointing for the Kerry campaign, who were expecting somewhere around ten points, which would have been consistent with previous elections. One theory that may explain the lack of a bounce contends that by late July, the electorate was already very polarized and relatively few undecided voters remained. By the time the election even began, most voters already had decided whether or not they approved of President Bush and if they were planning on voting for him.
The Republican National Convention took place over a month after the Democrats' at Madison Square Garden, in New York City. The location of the event was purposely set in New York, allowing imagery of the President's leadership after 9/11 to become a motif. The theme of the convention was "A Safer World, A More Hopeful America" (Brower 19). The same pundits who claim that Kerry wasted his convention also argue that President Bush capitalized on his convention opportunity. Charlie Cook called the convention "brilliantly designed and executed." They overcame every need with precision: when trying to show how 9/11 changed the world without appearing opportunistic, they used former New York Mayor Rudi Giuliani. To reiterate the case for the war in Iraq, they used Sen. John McCain, with his credible military background. To reinforce the President's economic policy, they brought up successful immigrant Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to talk about self-reliance. Finally, to attack and discredit Kerry, they used retiring Democratic Sen. Zell Miller of Georgia as the keynote speaker (Cook 295). Miller, a conservative Democrat, delivered a fiery attack on Kerry's 19-year Senate voting record, listing numerous examples of when Kerry voted to cut funding for the armed forces. The highlight of his speech was when he asked, "This is the man who wants to be the Commander-in-Chief of our U.S. Armed Force? Armed with what? Spitballs?" (Newsday).

When the President took the stage on the final night, his speech consisted of mostly a laundry list of issues, sounding more like a State of the Union address than a campaign speech. However, Brooke Brower says that just as Kerry's "reporting for duty" line embodied the military tone of his campaign, Bush's closing paragraph symbolized his campaign's theme. Bush closed by saying, "My fellow Americans, for as
long as our country stands, people will look to the resurrection of New York City and they will say: Here buildings fell, and here a nation rose” (Brower 21). It was clear that the President had successfully turned 9/11 and his leadership after the tragedy into a salient campaign issue and was planning on playing that card until November.

In the first Gallup poll taken after the Republican convention, Bush’s lead widened from two points to seven points, for a bounce of five points (Page). However, the discussion of each candidate’s bounce was rendered meaningless by September, as the race tightened and the polls stabilized.

**Fundraising**

The 2004 election was the first Presidential election after the passage of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform law. The two main components of the legislation were that the national political parties were barred from raising and spending any soft money and that the individual contribution limit to presidential candidates was raised from $1,000 to $2,000 (Toner 189). With the ban on soft money on the parties, the spending migrated to a number of “527 groups,” which got their name from Section 527 of the federal tax code which shield’s their activities from taxation. These groups could raise an unlimited amount of money for attacking and promoting candidates and partisan get-out-the-vote activities as long as their activities did not contain “explicit advocacy” and the groups did not coordinate their operations with any candidate or party (Toner 191).

Democrats relied more heavily on the 527s, as Democratic-oriented groups spent 65% of the $409 million total spent by the 527s (Carney). The largest Democratic 527
was Americans Coming Together (ACT), which spearheaded voter registration and GOTV activities. They reportedly spent $76 million during the election cycle, compared to the Media Fund’s $55 million and the Moven.org Voter Fund’s $21 million. The largest Republican 527 was the Progress for America Voter Fund (PFA), which spent $35 million. The most well-known 527 may have been the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, which spent $20 million attacking Kerry’s war record (Toner 192).

Interestingly, much of the money raised by the 527s was donated by a small number of donors. Vice Chairman of the FEC Michael Toner said that the top 15 contributors to 527s gave $125 million, almost 25% of the total funding for all the 527s combined. He also said that six of the top ten donors were billionaires on Forbes Magazine’s list of the richest Americans. Reports indicate that $8 out of every $10 collected by Democratic 527s came from donors who gave at least $250,000 each. For Republicans, that statistic was $9 out of every $10.

Both candidates individually raised unprecedented sums of money, which led them to decline federal matching funds during the primaries so they would not be limited to how much they could raise or spend. During the primaries, Bush raised $270 million compared to Kerry’s $235 million; if they had accepted the federal matching funds, they would have been limited to spending only about $90 million of it (Toner 196).

Michael Toner says that the most surprising development of the 2004 election cycle was that for the first time in decades the DNC out raised the RNC, $391.2 million to $384.3 million. He accredits the DNC’s success to their efforts to collect low-dollar donations through the internet and direct mail. In 2000, the DNC received only $58.8 million from individuals in amounts of $200 or less, while in 2004 they raked in almost
triple that sum, $165.2 million. The RNC also reported an increase in low-dollar contributions, but not to the extent of the DNC.

The role of the internet in elections greatly increased in 2004, and is likely to continue to expand in the future. To show this, by the time Kerry delivered his concession speech, a transcript of the address had already been sent to the 2.7 million subscribers on his campaign’s email list. Another transcript was posted on johnkerry.com, which was visited by 20 million adult Americans (Cornfield 208). At almost the same time, RNC Chairman Ed Gillespie sent a post election thank you letter to the 7 million subscribers on the GOP’s lists (Cornfield 210). The internet was a boom financially as well. For example, one-third of the emails sent on behalf of the Kerry campaign solicited for contributions (Nielsen). Kerry and the DNC were able to collect a record $122 million in contributions through the internet (Cornfield 208-210). Such statistics would seem impossible to politicians a few years previous, but will probably be routine in the future.

Advertising

The 2004 Presidential election was the most expensive in history, with $2.2 billion spent by the candidates, the parties, and independent groups. The spending was relatively even, with Bush outspending Kerry by only $60 million, $1.14 billion to $1.08 billion (Edsall and Grimaldi). An estimated $1.6 billion was spent on advertisements alone, more than doubling the estimates for the 2000 election (Memmott and Drinkard).

Bush began airing televised ads early in the year, just two days after the Super Tuesday primaries, after it became clear that Kerry was a shoe-in for the nomination.
The President’s first ad buy included three positive spots which showed his strength, leadership, and optimism, including one with an image of a flag-draped body being pulled from the World Trade Center rubble by a fireman. However, by the end of the month, his ads were attacking Kerry, in an attempt to define the challenger before he could get a chance to do it himself. A spot titled “100 Days” claimed that Kerry would raise taxes $900 billion in his first 100 days in office. Another implied that Kerry supported a fifty-cent per gallon gasoline tax, and that “the average family would pay $657 more a year” because of it (Freedman 167). Perhaps the most well-known of the President’s ads featured a tape of Kerry windsurfing while a narrator said:

Which direction would John Kerry lead? Kerry voted for the Iraq war, opposed it, supported it and now opposes it again. He bragged about voting for the $87 billion to support our troops before he voted against it. He voted for education reform and now opposes it. He claims he’s against increasing Medicare premiums, but voted five times to do so...John Kerry. Whichever way the wind blows (Freedman 167).

That ad was successful on two levels. First, it helped to define Kerry as a flip-flopper with no concrete opinions on any topic. This was a vital part of the campaign’s two-pronged attempt to define the challenger. Secondly, the fact that Kerry was windsurfing during the ad, helped make Kerry look like as a blue-blooded aristocrat. Windsurfing is not exactly the sport of the common man, and this ad helped accentuate Kerry’s class difference with the common voter while at the same time not focusing any attention on the President’s own privileged background.

As a result of the President coming out swinging, Kerry was forced to start his own advertising on the defensive, putting out commercials that said he has never called for a $900 billion tax increase. By the end of May, Kerry was releasing positive
biographical ads that highlighted his decorated service in Vietnam, as well as attack ads that focused on the President’s handling of Iraq, health care, and the economy (Freedman 167).

The National Annenberg Election Study attempted to find out how much the populace believed several ads that they concluded to be false or misleading. They interviewed people in 18 battleground states and found that 61% believed that the President “favors sending American jobs overseas,” and that 56% believed that Kerry had “voted for higher taxes 350 times,” even though both of the statements used in the aired ads were false. The study found that both Democrats and Republicans were much more likely to believe the claims made by their own candidate. This study suggests that negative ads, though disliked by the public, generally work, regardless of the facts behind them.

The Swift Boat Veterans for Truth

The most significant advertisement of the campaign, perhaps even the most significant in the history of Presidential elections, was released on August 5th by a 527-group calling themselves the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth. The ad was called “Any Questions?” and directly challenged Kerry’s military record. The script of the ad was as follows:

John Edwards: If you have any questions about what John Kerry is made of, just spend 3 minutes with the men who served under him.”
Narrator: Here’s what those men think of John Kerry.
Al French: I served with John Kerry.
Bob Elder: I served with John Kerry.
George Elliot: John Kerry had not been honest about what happened in Vietnam.
Al French: He’s lying about his record.
Louis Leston: I know John Kerry is lying about his first Purple Heart because I treated him for that injury.
Van O’Dell: John Kerry lied to get his Bronze Star. I know, I was there, I saw what happened.
Jack Chenoweth: His account of what happened and what actually happened are the difference between night and day.
Admiral Hoffman: John Kerry has not been honest.
Adrian Lonsdale: And he lacks the capacity to lead.
Larry Thurlow: When the chips were down, you could not count on John Kerry.
Bob Elder: John Kerry is no war hero.
Grant Hibbard: He betrayed all his shipmates. He lied before the Senate.
Shelton White: John Kerry betrayed the men and women he served with in Vietnam.
Joe Ponder: He dishonored his country. He most certainly did.
Bob Hidreth: I served with John Kerry. (Off camera:) John Kerry cannot be trusted. (Annenberg Political Fact Check)

The initial impact of the ad was small – it only was played in a few markets and the ad buy was only $550,000. However, the controversial nature of the ad sparked a firestorm of attention. The ad was replayed over and over on news programs and talk radio (Freedman 169). The National Annenberg Election Study commissioned a poll only two weeks after the ad’s initial broadcast and found that 33% of respondents had seen the ad and another 24% had heard about it. Even among those who claimed to never watch cable news, 22% reported having seen the ad. An additional survey found that 46% of viewers found the ad’s claims very or somewhat believable and by August 19th, 30% of Americans did not believe that Kerry earned all of his war medals.

Perhaps the most baffling aspect of this affair was that it took John Kerry so long to respond to the ads. The Annenberg Political Fact Check had debunked every claim made in the ad. It was exposed that the group’s seed money came from a wealthy Texas Republican with connections to Karl Rove. Two officials in the Bush campaign were forced to resign because of their associations with the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth
(Ceaser and Busch 119). And yet, John Kerry was silent on the issue for a full two weeks. It was not until August 19th that Kerry responded to the ads, flatly denying their accusations, and accusing the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth of being a front for the Bush campaign (Freedman 170). Kerry’s advisors apparently told him that it would be best to ignore the group’s claims and hope that the controversy would just go away (Romano). This of course did not happen, and instead Kerry’s silence made the charges seem even more believable. Even when Kerry did respond, calling the group a front for the Bush campaign merely extended the controversy. The Bush campaign publicly denied this accusation, and the story was kept in the news even longer.

By making his military record a main plank of his candidacy, the Kerry campaign was foolish to think that his service and his antiwar activism after his discharge would not come under scrutiny. In the 2000 Republican primaries, Bush-friendly groups attacked John McCain’s distinguished military service (Kennedy) and in the 2002 Georgia Senate race, Republicans funded a commercial that pictured Sen. Max Cleland, a triple-amputee from Vietnam, juxtaposed with pictures of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, suggesting that he was unpatriotic (Stone). Yet, when the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth released their ad, the Kerry campaign seemed shocked into silence that the opposition would stoop so low, yet they really should have been expecting it. The fact that they were not immediately prepared to disprove the allegations, may have been a symptom of larger problems within the Kerry campaign.

Dr. Paul Freedman of the University of Virginia studied the effects of the Swift Boat ads and could not definitively say that they made a clear difference in the race between Bush and Kerry. However, he did conclude that the Swift Boat ads ruined the
month of August for Kerry, kept him "bogged down during a critical period," and prevented him from gaining "any upward movement in the polls." This left Bush well positioned to go into the Republican National Convention with the momentum that he enjoyed until the first debate (Freedman 175).

The Debates

If the conventional wisdom said that Bush benefited most from the nominating conventions, it was certainly Kerry who benefited from the debates. John Kerry entered the first of the three debates trailing the President 52%-39% according to a CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll. After that debate, the Bush lead vanished to a 49%-49% dead heat (CNN).

The campaigns appointed groups of representatives to hammer out a contract to set up the debates. Former Secretary of State James Baker headed the Bush-Cheney campaign's team of negotiators, while the Kerry-Edwards team was led by Democratic lawyer Vernon Jordan. The result was a 32-page set of rules that regulated practically every minute detail of the events (Thomas 146). Both sides allegedly made concessions; Bush agreed to three debates instead of the two that he was hoping for, and Kerry allowed the first debate to be focused on foreign policy, a perceived strong suit of the President's (Ceaser and Busch 128).

The first debate was held on September 30th. Kerry appeared to be on the offensive for the entire ninety minutes, forcing the President to defend in policies toward Iraq, Afghanistan, and homeland security; he attacked Bush for failing to capture Osama bin Laden, the cost of the Iraq war, and lax port security. Significantly, the television
broadcasters explicitly broke the debate rule prohibiting "reaction shots" of the candidates when the other is speaking and frequently showed split-screens of the two (Thomas 142). These reactions shots displayed the President at his worst, often appearing agitated, grimacing, and becoming visibly upset as Kerry attacked his record. Evan Thomas of Newsweek wrote that while Bush had been "as whiny and wriggly as a spoiled child," Kerry had been, "Cool and calm. Dignified. Presidential" (Thomas 148).

The day of the debate, President Bush had been touring hurricane-damaged areas in Florida while Senator Kerry took the day off to rest and prepare. This may have been a contributing factor to the debate's result as it was written, "Bush looked tired, while Kerry looked confident and vibrant...Kerry appeared in command, while Bush seemed more unsure of himself and often appeared to be repeating his talking points" (Ceaser and Busch 128).

Practically every online instant poll and focus group agreed that Kerry had decisively "won" the debate. The Gallup poll released a few days later showing that the Bush lead had vanished backed these results. The polls also indicated that Kerry had cut Bush's advantage on national security issues in half and seemed to be gaining credibility on the issues of terrorism and national security (Ceaser and Busch 129). A substantial number of Americans had watched the debate, 62 million, surpassing the viewership of the first Bush-Gore debate by 35% (Thomas 146).

The lone opening Kerry gave the President's campaign during the first debate was, when answering a question on preemptive war, he said that any military action should pass a "global test" (Ceaser and Busch 129). The Bush campaign seized this quote, put it
in an ad, and tried to show Kerry off as a man who would allow foreign interests dictate military policy.

One campaign trick that was employed by Kerry's people was in the "post-debate spin." It is a widely held belief among Democrats that Al Gore actually won the first debate with President Bush in 2000, but the response by Republicans calling-in to talk radio and voting in online polls helped shift the national media, and therefore the national opinion, against Gore. Those who believe this point to the fact that Gore actually won the "instant polls" taken immediately after the debate, but was seen as the loser in polls taken days later (Kuhn). Paul Kuhn of CBS wrote that this year, the Democrats were ready to fight back. DNC Chairman Terry McAuliffe wrote an email to the party faithful, explicitly asking them to vote in online polls as soon as the debate ended and to write local newspapers and call radio talk shows. Specific web addresses were given in the email to make it easier on the voter. As a result, though traditional polls still showed Kerry as the clear winner of the first debate, he was running on average 20-points higher in the online polls (Kuhn).

On October 5th, John Edwards and Vice President Dick Cheney squared off in the Vice Presidential debate, which was seen as evenly matched, and in the long run proved to be inconsequential. A small amount of controversy was stirred when Cheney, in an attempt to highlight Edwards's absenteeism in the Senate, claimed to have never met Edwards before the debate. This claim was proven false when the Kerry campaign sent pictures of the two together to reporters the next morning (Harris).

The second presidential debate took place at Washington University in St. Louis on October 8th. The format was "town-hall style," in which the Gallup organization
selected “soft Kerry” and “soft Bush” voters to submit questions to ask the candidates. Moderator Bob Schieffer selected from the resulting pool of questions which ones would be asked (Ceaser and Busch 130). The format of this particular debate played into the President’s hands, as he was generally seen as more of a “man of the people” than the blue-blooded Kerry.

Neither candidate could claim a total victory in the second debate, though both sides tried to in the post-debate spin. Ceaser and Busch wrote that “both men gave reasoned answers...Kerry was eloquent but aloof, while Bush offered answers that had a more human touch and that were also better calibrated to reach out to Catholic swing voters and values voters in the Midwestern battleground states.” Evan Thomas wrote that most of those in the press corps believed that Bush “eked out a tie,” while the polls showed Kerry with a very slight victory (CNN).

The third and final debate took place on October 13th in Tempe, Arizona. Going into the debate, it appeared that Kerry had the momentum and the advantage. The format was the same as the first debate and was focused on domestic issues, which was not the President’s strongest area. While polls indicated that Kerry had won the debate by a margin of 52%-39%, Kerry opened himself up to attack when responding to a question as to whether or not he believed that homosexuality was a personal choice. When trying to respond that his belief that homosexuality was probably not a choice, he invoked Mary Cheney, the Vice President’s gay daughter, as an example.

This set off a firestorm of controversy. Republican pollster Ed Goeas said that the answer scored “huge negatives” with his group of five Democrats and five Republicans (Liss). Even Kerry campaign officials Tad Devine and Bob Shurm grimaced when they
heard the remark (Thomas 163). Many thought that Kerry had brought up Mary Cheney’s sexual orientation as a political maneuver to either suggest hypocrisy on the part of the Cheneys for supporting Bush in spite of his call for a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage; another theory said that Kerry wanted to remind social conservatives that the Vice President had a gay daughter (Ceaser and Busch 131). Kerry’s campaign manager Mary Beth Cahill did not help matters when she declared after the debate that Mary Cheney was “fair game” because she was out of the closet and a gay activist (Thomas 164). The main result of this controversy was that it kept the attention focused on Kerry’s remark, rather than the fact that President of the United States failed to win a single debate against his challenger, in spite of the fact that he had never previously lost a debate (Lakely). By making it seem as if Kerry was just a politician who would say anything to get elected, the Bush campaign was once again able to put the focus on the challenger, rather the incumbent. In what should have been Kerry’s moment in the sun, he was instead put on the defensive once again.

The Battleground States

At the start of the election season, analysts projected that there would be nine competitive blue states, that is states that were won by Al Gore in 2000, Michigan, Washington, Maine, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Oregon, Wisconsin, and New Mexico. They also figured that there would be seven competitive red state, which were won by Bush in 2000, Nevada, New Hampshire, West Virginia, Missouri, Arizona, Ohio, and Florida. Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Virginia, were thought of as long shots
for Kerry (Wire reports). Already before the race had even begun, Kerry had a very limited playing field in which to pick off electoral votes from Bush.

William Saletan claims that at the start of the general election, Kerry had 10 states locked up and hoped to compete in 20 more. By late September, he gave up on seven of the 20. By Election Day, he could only count on 13 states worth 186 electoral votes and was only competing seriously in 10 others, worth another 126 electoral votes. Contrasting this to Bush, the President had locked up 27 states worth 226 electoral votes, and only had to take one-third of the remaining contested electoral votes to win. He achieved this by winning Florida and Ohio (Saletan 273).

Since much of the South was seen as untouchable for Kerry, the electoral map caused a big problem for his campaign. Steve Elmendorf, Kerry’s deputy campaign manager said that Bush’s strong position in the red states allowed him to keep pressure on Kerry in states which would normally lean Democratic, “We were working from a pretty small map here. [Bush] was pressuring us much more in places where Gore had won than we were pressuring him where he had won” (Bumiller). This caused Kerry to scramble just to secure the blue states, while still having to try to pick off a few red ones at the same time. Since Bush did not have to worry about losing most Southern states, he could focus more on turning the blue states red.

As a result, the field of battleground states rather quickly narrowed, as Kerry was forced to give up on the long shots. Instead, his red state strategy was focused the states of Ohio, Florida, New Hampshire, West Virginia, and Nevada (McManus 140). Kerry had basically given up on the other states that Gore had lost in 2000. This allowed the
President to focus even more of his resources on important blue states like Pennsylvania, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Michigan, while still defending Ohio and Florida.

During the campaign, the state of Ohio received the most visits by both candidates, with Kerry visiting 29 times and Bush visiting 20 times. For Kerry, the next most-visited states were Florida (28), Pennsylvania (22), and Wisconsin (21). Bush visited Pennsylvania the next most frequently (19), followed by Florida (18) and Iowa (14) (Washington Post). These numbers show that both campaigns viewed Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania as the "big three" swing states that could determine the outcome of the election. Conventional wisdom would hold that whichever candidate won two of those three states would win the race.

The narrow playing field greatly hurt Kerry during the election. However, it is difficult to see him choosing any other options. The blame for this situation probably lies with the Democratic Party. After Al Gore's performance in 2000 exposed the Democrats' regional problems by not winning a single Southern state, the Democrats should have spent the four post-Clinton years expanding their party structure in those areas, instead of ceding entire parts of the country to Republicans. Though it is debatable as to whether or not do so would have helped Kerry, it certainly would not have hurt, and may have even benefited other Democrats running for lower office.

**Getting Out the Vote**

With both candidates running neck and neck in the polls as Election Day drew near, the focus fell on the get out the vote (GOTV) methods of both campaigns. The Kerry campaign was relying on the efforts of 527 groups to bring voters to the polls.
These groups, led by Americans Coming Together (ACT), had pledged to send thousands of canvassers into the battleground states to go door-to-door to get out the Democratic vote. ACT opened up 86 field offices with a staff of over 4000 in various battleground states. ACT promised on their website to “fund 12 million phone calls to targeted voters” and to “hand deliver 11 million pieces of literature to targeted doorsteps” in the three weeks prior to Election Day. On Election Day itself, the group pledged to spend $10 million to pay 45,000 canvassers, supplemented by 25,000 volunteers in the swing states.

The Bush campaign was relying on volunteers to get targeted voters to the polls. Prior to Election Day, Bush campaign spokesman Reed Dickens said the President had his own army of volunteers, more than 1 million of whom have pledged to walk precincts and make phone calls on his behalf. "They're all motivated out of love for the President. We'll take our volunteer base over their volunteer base any day," he said (Cleeland). The Bush campaign was benefited in GOTV efforts by the McCain-Feingold Campaign Finance Reform Law because under its provisions, the 527's were not allowed to coordinate directly with the campaigns. This meant the Democratic 527’s could not plan their activities with Kerry’s officials, while the Bush campaign was directly in charge of their volunteers.

Even though registered Democrats outnumbered registered Republicans in many red states, including Florida, the Kerry-Edwards campaign could not get enough of them to the polls (Bumiller). Jim Kane, an independent pollster remarked, “One volunteer is worth 100 paid workers in a get out the vote campaign. They don’t have the same enthusiasm as the guy who believes in the candidate and makes sure his neighbors and
friends of neighbors are going to show up at the polls” (Parker). Relying on motivated volunteers rather than paid workers turned out to be a huge positive for Bush.

Approximately two-thirds of the adult population (64%) was contacted in some way by either the Bush or Kerry campaign in the final two months of the race. Both parties reached about the same number of people. Direct mailings were the most common contact, with 49% of individuals receiving a mailing; phone calls were second (40%), emails third (14%), and home visits fourth (9%) (Cornfield 217).

Interestingly, an analysis of the emails sent by both campaigns in the week prior to the election show that 57% of Kerry’s emails were requests for donations opposed to only 8% of Bush’s. Bush used 54% of his emails to talk about issues and 38% on getting out the vote while Kerry used only 14% about issues and 29% on getting out the vote (Nielsen). Jakob Nielsen contends that Kerry’s supporters were probably so bombarded with fundraising requests that they began to disregard the emails, while Bush supporters probably became more energized with each contact.

The President’s campaign was extremely efficient in not only turning out voters, but turning out the right kind of voters. After the dust settled, it became very clear that the Republicans held an enormous advantage in their methods of voter targeting. The RNC hired research firms to mesh commercial databases with political polls to identify people who were inclined to vote for Bush, but who had not registered or were not motivated enough to do so. They called these groups soft-Republicans, and by including them in their databases, they were able to target four times as many voters as usual. The RNC then used the data to identify “trigger issues,” such as abortion, terrorism, or tax cuts, to motivate specific groups of voters (Edsall and Grimaldi).
William Saletan says that instead of spending the usual 75 to 90 percent of their money on undecided voters, the Bush-Cheney campaign spent about half of their money targeting these soft-Republicans. They learned to target people who drank Coors, watched college football, and had caller ID. Using this targeting, they tailored messages for 32 different subgroups of people and received huge results (Saletan 273). Even an anonymous Democrat who helped coordinate their GOTV effort admitted, “We are one election cycle behind them in this area” (Edsall and Grimaldi). It is a safe bet that this method will be exercised by both Republicans and Democrats in 2008, especially since it proved successful in 2004.

Normally, large turnouts benefit the Democrats, however in 2004, this was not the case, as the Republican GOTV effort was shown to be second to none. Even though ACT was able to get over 40,000 volunteers on the ground and knocked on over 4.6 million doors, it was just not enough (ACT). Charlie Cook writes that these groups “not only hit, but exceeded their target number of voters they thought would be needed to win... but the Bush/Republican/business/social conservative coalition got even more.” He goes on to say that in Ohio, ACT got 25,000 more votes than their goal, but Bush got 130,000 more. The same was also true in Florida (Cook).

Election Day

When November 2 finally rolled around, there were plenty of reasons for Kerry to be optimistic. John Zogby predicted a Kerry win prior to the election, even though his own polls showed Bush with a slight lead. One of the reasons he stated included the fact that George W. Bush was “not posting solid re-elect numbers,” which included job
approval ratings under 50%. He said the only presidents who ran for reelection with similar numbers were Ford, Carter, and George H.W. Bush – all of whom who lost. He argued that though the President was leading slightly, he was still polling under 50%, and in most cases, undecided voters would end up voting for the challenger at the last minute (Zogby).

Rasmussen Reports, another polling firm, projected a 50.2% to 48.5% win for the President (Rasmussen). The final CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll was tied at 49%. Of fourteen polls released after October 29th, but before the November 2nd election, the averages were 48.9% for Bush, 47.4% for Kerry, and 0.9% for the independent Ralph Nader (Real Clear Politics). There was a sense leading into the election that Bush was probably slightly ahead of Kerry, yet with the fact that undecided voters usually break significantly for the challenger, his lead was very precarious.

Further adding to the uncertainty was the Electoral College. A small lead in the popular vote would mean nothing if that candidate did not also receive the necessary 270 electoral votes needed to win the Presidency. Electoral-vote.com’s final prediction, based on the final state-by-state polls, was 262 electoral votes for Kerry, compared to 261 for Bush and 15 electoral votes undecided. That projection was made by taking the leader of every state-by-state poll, no matter how insignificant the lead might have been. Using only leads where the winner maintained at least a five-point margin of victory, the totals came out 225 for Kerry and 205 for Bush, with 108 electoral votes in the toss-up category (Electoral-Vote.com). Most analysts believed that the election would come down to the three states of Pennsylvania (21 electoral votes), Ohio (20), and Florida (27).
Which ever candidate could win two of those three states would most likely end up the winner. There was a sense that the result could go either way.

By mid-afternoon on Election Day, the results from the preliminary exit polls were leaked from the major news organizations and put up on various independent internet sites. The polls showed Kerry leading in most of the battleground states, including a four-point lead in Florida and a whopping 16-point lead in Pennsylvania (Galen). This news brought joy to the Kerry campaign staff; consultant Bob Shrum even took to calling Kerry, “Mr. President” after hearing of the exit polls (Sabato 67). However, as the night wore on and the returns came in, the joy turned to sadness, as Bush claimed Florida and nursed a significant lead in Ohio. The exit polls that were leaked to earlier in the day were obviously wrong. Though Kerry received wins in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota, the only way he could garner the 270 electoral votes needed to win would be to win the state of Ohio.

By 5:15 a.m. EST on November 3, Bush was leading in Ohio by a substantial 140,000 vote margin with 99% of the precincts reporting. However, Mary Beth Cahill, Kerry’s campaign manager, told reporters that there might be as many as 250,000 provisional ballots from the heavily Democratic Cuyahoga County, which is in the Cleveland area. However, at 5:45 a.m., White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card told reporters that the President is “convinced” that he won and threatened that the President may declare victory shortly, even if Kerry has not yet conceded (Sherry). Later in the morning, it became apparent to the Kerry campaign that there were not enough provisional ballots as originally thought to hold on to the hope of a comeback victory. Kerry’s staff told reporters that he would concede.
Breaking Down the Results

When the dust settled, 122,266,085 million Americans had cast a ballot for President, an increase of almost 17 million from 2000. The turnout of 59.4% of eligible voters meant that 2004 had the highest turnout since the 1968 Presidential election (Sabato 54).

The Final Results – U.S. President

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Total Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>62,025,554</td>
<td>50.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>59,026,013</td>
<td>48.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,214,518</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Sabato 53)

Bush received an almost 3 million vote majority of the popular vote. This was the first Presidential majority since 1988, and yet at the same time, his 2.4% margin of victory was the slimmest victory ever for a reelected President (Sabato 54, R. Cook 122). George Bush won 31 states and 286 electoral votes, while Kerry won 19 states and 252 electoral votes (though he officially received 251, due to a “faithless elector”). With Bush only winning 16 votes more than the minimum required to win, 2004 was the sixth-closest Electoral College vote in history.

Looking at a map of the Electoral College results in Appendix 1, one undoubtedly notices the regional imbalance of the two major parties. Bush swept the South (57.3% to 42%), the Rocky Mountain West including Alaska (56.9% to 41.7%), and the Great Plains (62.9% to 35.6%). Kerry on the other hand, won every Northeastern state (55.5% to 43.4%) and the Pacific coast states (53.8% to 44.9%). While the electoral vote in the Midwest went to Kerry 58 to 49, the popular vote was tied at 49.6% (Sabato 61). If these
regional strongholds for both parties maintain themselves over the next election cycle, it appears that the Midwest will consist of the vast majority of battleground states in 2008.

The vast "sea of red" on the electoral map is rather misleading because since the total red states consist of an overwhelming majority of the nation's landmass, a visual look at the map would suggest that President Bush won in a massive landslide. The fact that he only defeated Kerry by 2.4% of the votes suggests otherwise. To correct this visual imbalance, a second Electoral College map is provided, one that shows each state roughly to scale based upon the number of electoral votes they receive.

Though women overall favored Kerry to Bush 51% to 48%, they preferred Al Gore to Bush 54% to 43%. Sabato attributes this net gain of 5% to the perception that women trusted the President more than the challenger to deal with national security and terrorism. Bush won men with a solid 55%, but when controlling for race, his strength among white men becomes clear; he won white men in a landslide, 62% to 37% (Sabato 69). For a tabular representation of the vote totals, turn to Appendix II.

According to Larry Sabato however, President Bush's performance among white women was the key to his reelection. In 2000, Bush captured 49% of white women to Gore's 48%. However, in 2004, white women broke for the President 55% to 44%. Sabato writes, "While other shifts were also significant, nothing mattered as much as Bush's ability to expand his appeal among female voters. If analysts are looking for the 'post-September 11th effect' that delivered a second term to Bush, this is it" (Sabato 69).

Considering race, whites went to Bush 58% to 41%, while African-Americans favored Kerry 88% to 11%. Perhaps significantly, Bush received an above-average amount of African-American votes in Ohio (16%). The percentages for Hispanic voters
are under some dispute. The National Election Pool exit poll claimed that Bush improved his 2000 standing among Hispanic voters from 35% to 44% (Sabato 70). However, the William C. Velasquez Institute’s exit polls had Bush receiving only 32% of the Hispanic vote. Zogby International believes that Bush received between 33%-38% of the Hispanic vote. The political attitudes of Hispanics will probably be under dispute until further elections are held.

One of the bright spots for the Democrats was the youth vote. Voters aged 18 to 29 went to Kerry 54% to 45%. This age group represented the same proportion of voters than in 2000, which may not seem very impressive until one considers the overall increase in turnout and the highly mobile life of college students and young professionals. The bad news for the Democrats was the fact that Kerry lost every other age category. Among the 30-44 age group, Bush won 53% of the vote; among 45-59 year olds, he won 51%; among those 60 and older, he won 54% (Sabato 106).

Generally, the higher the income, the more likely an individual was to vote for Bush. Kerry won those earning less than $50,000 a year 55% to 45%, while Bush won those making over $50,000 56% to 43%. The difference becomes more apparent the higher up the pay scale a person is. For those making over $200,000, Bush received 63% of the votes to Kerry’s 35% (Sabato 72).

Religion in the 2004 Election

After the election, perhaps more was said about the effects of religion than any other issue. Much higher proportions of Americans are religious when compared to other Western nations, with 81% identifying with a religion (Kosmin 10). One poll showed
that 68% of Americans think that it's important for a President to have strong religious beliefs (Milbank).

There was an obvious contrast in the way that each candidate handled religion during the campaign. President Bush "used religion forcefully to sharpen partisan divisions and highlight his own qualities as a leadership," according to Russell Muirhead, an Associate Professor of Government at Harvard. The Bush-Cheney campaign attempted an aggressive outreach effort that included a call for churches to send their membership lists to Bush-Cheney headquarters. After the plan was dropped after a large outcry, Congressional Republicans unsuccessfully tried to pass a "safe harbor" bill that would allow churches to endorse candidates and actively participate in campaigns without losing their tax-exempt status (Muirhead 229). The President himself commonly spoke in religious terms, frequently using scripture in his speeches and often referring to the war against terrorism in "spiritual, if not sectarian terms" by casting it as a war of good against evil (Muirhead 232).

In contrast, Kerry was quite reserved about matters of faith, seeing the matter as an example of the contrast between the public act of governing and the private act of worship. This was to such an extent that a July Pew poll revealed that only 43% of Catholics knew that Kerry was Catholic (Wilgoren). To help appeal to voters, Kerry needed to rectify his public beliefs favoring abortion rights and civil unions for homosexual couples with Catholic doctrine. He tried to show the voters this during second debate by saying but couldn't "take what is an article of faith for me and legislate it for someone who doesn't [agree]" (Saletan). The result of this attempted justification was apparently unsuccessful; Kerry lost Catholics 52% to 47% to Bush (Sabato 109).
Kerry also hired a religion outreach director and tried to incorporate his faith into his speeches, but it was seen by many as disingenuous. Some suggested that the reason why this strategy failed was because many felt the Democrats were only looking at faith as a "constituency problem," and were only invoking religion to gain targeted voters (Sullivan).

Russell Muirhead concludes that religion aided Bush in a practical sense by providing a basis for political organization and in a rhetorical sense by framing issues in religious terms. However, the religious vote was not a key to the electoral outcome. While the amount of Evangelical voters rose between 4.5 and 5 million in 2004 from 2000, the proportion of voters who attend church weekly or more remained the same in 2004 from 2000, as did the share of voters who attend monthly, seldom or never. This means that Bush's increased share of the vote did not come from religious voters. According to Muirhead, he picked up only 0.4% in share of the total electorate who attend church weekly or more, while also increasing his share of those who attend seldom or never by 1.6%. That means that almost two-thirds of his gains came from infrequent churchgoers (Muirhead 238). If Muirhead's theory is correct, then all of the news media's attention that anointed Evangelical Christians as Bush's kingmaker was wrong.

**A Political Mandate?**

Perhaps the mostly hotly contested notion after the election was whether or not President Bush and the Republicans won a political mandate by the voters in 2004. The 2004 election cannot be called anything but a Republican success; however, it is also hard to defend the claims of a mandate at the same time.
It is true that Republicans reelected their President, increased their majorities in the House and Senate, and maintained a majority of state governorships. The President did receive a majority of the popular vote, the first to do so since his father in 1988. However, at the same time, the 3 million vote margin of victory was the smallest for a reelected President since 1946 (when only half as many votes were cast), the 35 vote margin of victory in the Electoral College was the smallest for a reelected President since Woodrow Wilson in 1916, and Bush’s 2.4 percent margin of victory in the popular vote was the smallest ever for a reelected President in our nation’s history (R. Cook 124).

Rhodes Cook contends that if a mandate existed for Bush, it was only within the confines of the South. The President won all 13 Southern states by nearly 6 million votes, but lost to Kerry in the rest of the country by 3 million votes. In electoral votes, Bush won the South 168-0, but lost the rest of the nation 251-118.

Conclusion

It is probably impossible to point to a specific reason as to why Bush was won and why Kerry did not, as the true reason probably is a combination of several, if not dozens, of factors. There is no consensus among political scientists and analysts on the subject either. For example, Charlie Cook has written that Bush triumphed because “the Bush-Cheney reelection effort was perhaps the best planned, best executed, most disciplined, and most strategic presidential campaign in history,” while Larry Sabato sees the key to Bush’s victory in his improvement among white women, the so-called “security moms” who trusted the President over Kerry to keep them safe in the war on terror. Still, others place the blame squarely John Kerry and his unsuccessful campaign.
John Zogby criticized Kerry for waiting so long to form a clear and consistent stance on the Iraq war; Zogby said that he “supported the President, opposed funding the troops, and never offered an alternative scenario. He tried to be all over the place and ended up no place at all.”

It was a common complaint that Kerry was simply unable to connect with the voters on a personal level. Kerry certainly lacked the charisma of Reagan or Clinton, but Kerry was seen as so out of touch that he failed to turn the sputtering economy or the troublesome war in Iraq into a significant advantage. He could not even win the state of Ohio, even though the state lost over 150,000 manufacturing jobs since 2000 (Cook).

Howard Kurtz noted that Kerry “never did learn how to deliver a speech” and could not shift to a more conversational style of speaking. According to him, even Ted Kennedy told Kerry that he used “too much 'Senatese'” and that Kerry would cross out lines in his speeches for being “too slogany.”

According to Howard Kurtz, the Kerry campaign had no clue as to how to counter their problem of defining their candidate throughout the course of the campaign. An anonymous senior campaign official said this:

When we got into the general, nobody knew how to go against Bush. [Senior advisor Bob] Shrum and [pollster Mark] Mellman built this strategy against Bush, ‘Stronger at home, respected in the world.’ What does that mean? We never had strategy memos. If there was a clear message in September about why you elect Kerry and defeat Bush, most of the people in the campaign were unaware of it (Kurtz).

Another campaign official had this to say:

I don’t know s*** about John Kerry…I don’t know what he stood for, other than an alternative to George Bush…I remember one day [Joe] Lockhart saying, after watching the evening news, ‘we have no message’ (Kurtz).
In truth, both campaigns made errors and both campaigns had specific success stories. Kerry was faced with an uphill battle from the start, having the unprecedented task of dislodging a sitting President in a time of war, yet Kerry did come extremely close. His press secretary David Wade defended the campaign by saying, “Having been written off twice, during the primaries and after the Republican convention, we battled back and came within 60,000 votes [in Ohio] of winning the Presidency.” He continued by saying had Kerry won, all of the campaign’s detractors would be writing “how we did everything brilliantly” (Kurtz). This may be true.

In the end, it turned out that Bush won what will go down as one of the most hotly contested Presidential elections in American history. The true significance of the race will be decided by future campaigns and elections. If one thing is certain, both parties and candidates will have lessons to learn from 2004 in order to adequately prepare for the 2006 and 2008.
Appendix 1 – Electoral Maps

Electoral College Results 2004

The Political Map of the United States, 2004: Bush vs. Kerry
## Appendix 2 - U.S. Presidential Election Results – The National Exit Poll

### Vote by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vote by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vote by Race and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Men</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Women</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White Men</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White Women</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vote by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vote by Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $15,000</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15-30,000</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30-50,000</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50-75,000</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75-100,000</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100-150,000</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150-200,000</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,000+</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Vote by Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Evangelical Christian Vote

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White Evangelical/Born-Again Christians</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vote by Church Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church Attendance</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than weekly</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times a year</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vote by Most Important Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy/Jobs</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Values</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Your Vote was Mostly....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For your candidate</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against his opponent</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Vote by Beliefs on Abortion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abortion should be...</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always Legal</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly Legal</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly Illegal</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always Illegal</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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