

Dirty politics, presidential candidates covered in mud

Campaign tactics focus on weaknesses of opponent, not strengths of candidate

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Ready! Aim! Splat!
Splat?

Ah politics. The race for presidency. The mudslinging.

This election year, campaign commercials have become downright dirty. Through the television screen into the living room, the Republicans and Democrats have countered attacks tit-for-tat. The new strategy is not telling the American public what the candidate will do for the country and why he or she is the better candidate – no, now the name of the game is telling the American public what the other candidate will not do for the country. Also, any poor life decisions made by the other candidate a decade ago may come to light . . . splat! . . . and why the other candidate is incompetent, dangerous, arrogant . . .

The point is, the way Senator John Kerry and President George W. Bush portray themselves is very different than the way they portray each other. Each candidate spins facts and figures to be seen in the best light.

"Hi. I'm so-and-so, and I approve this message."

Whether or not the messages are approved by the other candidate and the American public remains in question. The strategies and tactics displayed thus far have received criticism by conservatives and liberals alike.

According to Kerry, in commercials supporting Kerry, Senator John Kerry is a budget-balancing, middle class supporting, medicinal drug-re-importing, stem-cell researching, health-care reinforcing, tax-break giving, United Nations embracing, allies-supplier to Iraq, war commanding genius who promises a "new direction for America."

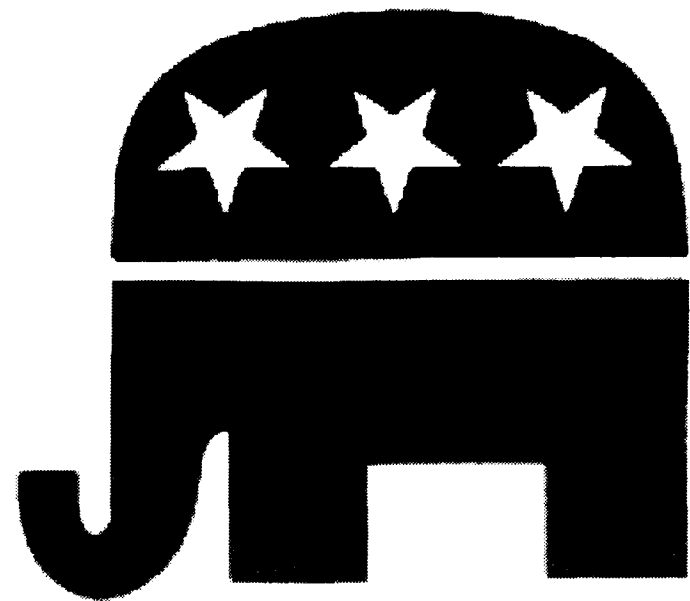
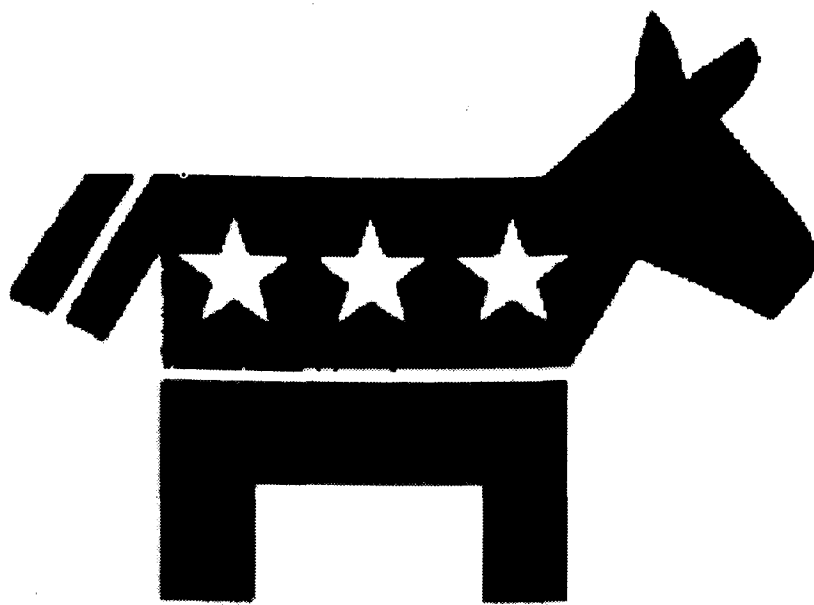
According to Bush, in commercials countering Kerry's, Senator John Kerry is a flip-flopping, high tax voting, big government, for-war-against-war-for-war-against-war, extremely far left liberal who doesn't even know where he stands and is practically a Senate no-show.

Are they talking about the same man? Now for the president . . .

According to Bush, in commercials supporting Bush, President George W. Bush is a "uniter, not a divider," small business helping, freedom-fighting, individual power-giving, better education advocating, huge tax break sharing, government downsizing, job supplying, faith-based conservative who offers "steady leadership in a time of change."

According to Kerry, in commercials countering Bush's, President George W. Bush is a poor healthcare handling, fiscally irresponsible, massive deficit creating, job losing, American-safety-forsaking nincompoop who we cannot risk having for another four years.

An independent group called Swift Boat Veterans for Truth paid for ads that criticized Kerry's record during the Vietnam War. Kerry asked the president to



Photos courtesy of Yahoo Images

Democrats and Republicans go head to head to compete for the presidential spot in the White House. Both parties use commercial ads to gain votes.

Symbols for the parties evoke mixed feelings; candidates attempt to create images that appeal to the yet undecided voters.

denounce the ads, calling them "a front for the Bush campaign," and the question has been asked – did the Republicans fund this campaign? Bush did not denounce the ads and has remained silent on the issue. Now there are ads showing different veterans commending Kerry's record during the war.

In Kerry's "Keeping Our Word" commercial, the ad states that America has lost 2.9 million jobs under the Bush administration. According to Factcheck.org, however, only 2.2 million jobs have been lost. The figure given was off by 700,000 jobs – that's as if almost the entire population of Delaware – men, women and

children – had jobs, but were counted as lost.

Bush has said that he will lower taxes and his opponent will raise taxes. Kerry has said that he will lower taxes and his opponent only lowers taxes for the rich. Kerry has said that Bush has lost jobs; Bush has said that under his administration many jobs have been created. These are just a few of many examples where the two presidential candidates seem to be presenting completely contradictory information. So, which one is telling the truth? What is the truth?

Our forefathers would roll in their graves if they knew the extent of this year's mudslinging.

Or would they? According to a BBC news article, Thomas Jefferson's opponent accused him of "favoring the teaching of 'murder, robbery, rape, adultery and incest'" during the election of 1800.

In 1828, John Quincy Adams was running for President against General Andrew Jackson. According to the same article, Adams was called a pimp, due to a rumor that he prompted an affair between an American ambassador and a Russian nobleman. In retort, Adams' supporters designed a pamphlet that stated, "General Jackson's mother was a common prostitute brought to this

country by British soldiers! She afterwards married a mulatto man with whom she had several children of which number General Jackson is one!!" Ouch - Adams' "your mom" approach to the campaign just goes to show that some things never change. At least Kerry and Bush aren't attacking each other's families . . . yet.

With the election weeks away, Democrats and Republicans need to clean the mud out of their commercials in a giant washing machine and be "spinned" dry. Well, maybe no spinning. There's been enough of that already.

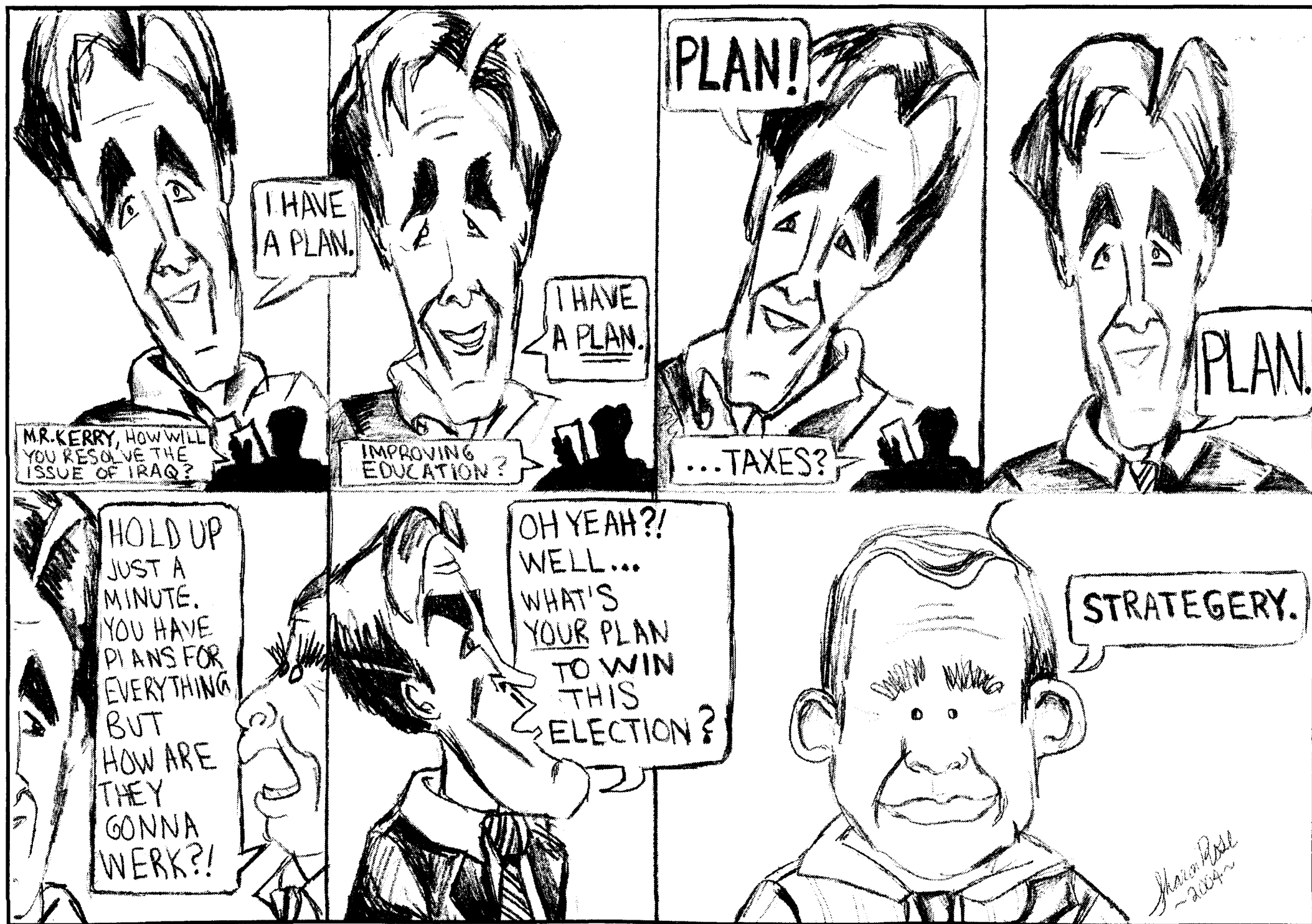


Photo by Kelly Nagurny

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If you are like me, you may have found the debates to be very amusing. Politics can be likened to a game - player A and player B try to get to the White House first by employing winner-takes-all, 'whatever it takes' strategies that sometimes beg the question: Where is the judgement here?

Don't be blindsided by the moves of the game, however. Take some time and look beyond the "plans" and "strategies" and vote. Despite the absurdity of some of the campaign tactics, it is important to see through to the valid points each candidate makes.

Use your brain. Get informed. Watch the news, think for yourself, decide who you would like to run the country you live in and VOTE. Your vote DOES count.

I created this cartoon after watching the second debate. I have always loved art for art's sake, but I never thought to use it to poke fun at the world around me until now.

We can all lighten up a little and laugh at the campaigns - laughter never hurt anyone.

"Hi. I'm Sharon Furfaro, and I approve this message."

VOTE cont. from 1

macing. Kerry did a better job of remaining expressionless and his tone seemed more controlled.

However, Bush did a better job of speaking to the cameras, where an estimated 50 million viewers/voters lurked. Kerry often looked away from the cameras.

Another subject included North Korea. Kerry favored more one-on-one talks with the rogue nation, something the Bush

White House has withdrawn from. Kerry relayed that because of his handling of Iraq Bush cannot be trusted in dealing with North Korea and its leader, Kim Jong Il.

Bush favors six-party talks with the pursuer of nuclear weapons. He believes regional pressure from Japan, Russia, China and South Korea would be a better strategy in halting the weapons program.

Homeland security funding was also discussed. The challenger once again took the offensive in

saying the death of long-held alliances has had a trickle-down affect. The senator explained that with fewer alliances, wars are costlier, leaving less money for domestic security. He also attacked Bush's two tax cuts, which he said were aimed at the country's wealthiest 1 percent.

The president countered by saying, "We're doing our duty to provide the funding. But the best way to protect this homeland is to stay on the offense."

Cartoon courtesy of the Star Tribune.

