

VIEWPOINT

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THE OBSERVER

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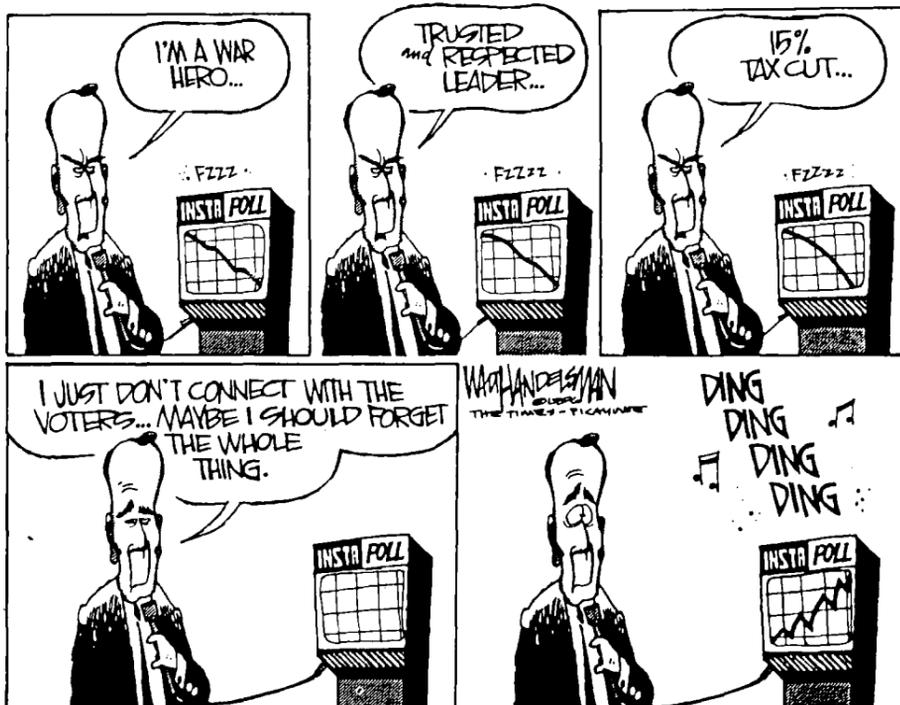
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■ AND IN THIS CORNER...

Campaign '96: Act One, Scene Two, Take Two

Today's column will be a drama in two acts, the second of which will air at a later date, thus once again pre-empting your favorite TV show. The questions and answers have all been agreed upon six months ago, and all actors have been thoroughly coached and weight-trained. The candidates are not allowed to question each other directly, but they may

night!
Questioner: Uh, you're ahead of yourself there a bit, Mr. President.
Mr. President: Oh, yeah. Sorry about that.

Questioner: Mr. Senator, the President has fumbled the ball on his own 20 yard line. What will you do?

Mr. Senator: Well, I, uh, I want to thank you all for giving me the, er, opportunity to be here. I have nothing against the President personally, I want to thank my wife for making me a millionaire, and my daughter, and that guy in the big hat who helped me in the mountains of Italy so many years ago when my arm was nearly chewed off by a rabid Nazi goat, why, if it hadn't been for that corker of a guy, I'd...

Questioner: Thank you, Senator. First question: What is your vision of America?

Mr. President: We have come a long way since the death of Kurt Cobain. We have struggled as a people through Burger King cups and Wendy's commercials, and we have still gone to McDonald's in record-breaking numbers! Now, that's something we can all be proud of, as Americans. We created over 10 million new jobs, and it's a good thing, because I'm starting to get a little hungry right now.

Mr. Senator: In our, in my administration, these young hoodlums who have been doing ten times the amount of drugs I did in my day, I mean, since two years ago, in selective group tests, blindfolded, throwing away the white population, I mean, how could you?

Mr. President: Do I get to respond?
Questioner: Yes, go ahead.
Mr. President: We have come along ways since the death of Kurt Cobain. We have struggled as a people...

Questioner: Thank you, Mr. President. Next question...

Mr. President: Stay the course! Four more years!

Questioner: Mr. Senator, where do you stand on health care?

Mr. Senator: Right here. Now, he, I

mean, the President, and I will call you President, you didn't, you should have called Mr. President, that guy we'd all like to forget very much he ever existed.

Uh...I mean, look at the commercials. You're scaring senior citizens. Stop that. That's my job. And, lawyers, I mean, my wife's a lawyer, I'm a lawyer, you're a lawyer, we should be working together, but trial lawyers, well, I guess they're lawyers, too.

Mr. President: Senator, you voted against my health care package. You voted against the weapons ban. You always vote against me, darn it. Stop that.

Questioner: You have questioned the President's foreign policy, Senator.

Mr. Senator: You bet. When I was back there in the Mekong Delta, I mean, the United States before World War I just sat around drinking a lot and watching Babe Ruth.

Then I went and fought for my country, and then after World War II we fought wars selectively, that's where we are now, after World War II. But he, but we're, there's no selectivity any more. What's this UN business? Why should we pay dues? We own the thing. What's Somalia?

Mr. President: Well, I'd just like to say that I take full responsibility for what happened everywhere in the world. Northern Ireland, Bosnia, the Middle East, we're better off than we were four years ago. Stay the course, stay the course, looking good, America's number one.

Mr. Senator: I haven't heard you demand everybody stop the violence yet. Why don't you demand everybody stop the violence? If I were president, I'd demand everybody stop the violence, so I think you should demand everybody stop the violence.

Questioner: What makes either of you believe you can relate to the average American?

Mr. President: Well, Jim, I grew up in a backwater state and my momma was poor as poor does, so I think I can relate

to Americans everywhere. I've even ridden in buses around the nation just to prove that I, too, have suffered greatly. Look at my wife. Take my daughter, please.

Mr. Senator: I know what good, hard-working Americans go through every day. I was one, I am one, now, was, then, I fought for my country, I married Elizabeth, we became multi-millionaires, but we know what hardship is like.

You'll all, Mr. President, me, my wife, we'll all benefit from a ridiculous tax cut for no apparent reason other than to make me look good. I mean, drugs and kids and these new-fangled computers and my arm...

Questioner: Go ahead and finish your sentence, Senator.

Mr. Senator: Okay, food.
Mr. President: Well, that sounds like a good idea. How would you like to go create a few more jobs?

Mr. Senator: Sounds good to me. You know, you can really tell we're friends. That's why you can check out the new America on the Internet at "www.leeches.com." I haven't seen it, and I have absolutely no idea. I don't really know what an Internet is, but my underpaid, overworked interns say it's looking good.

(Scene Two: A TV talk show the same night)

Mr. Perot: Bad. Very bad. 'Course, Perot's on at 11:00.

Ralph Nader: NO NUKES! SAVE THE WHALES! DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER! FREE WILLY! PLANT A TREE, SAVE THE AIR!

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Matthew Apple

make snide side-remarks in the interest of appearing humorous.

(Act One, Scene One: A small press club in Insuranceburg, Connecticut)

Questioner: Mr. President, you've won the coin toss. Will you take the ball or the down-wind side of the field?

Mr. President: I'll take the ball for 100, Jim.

Questioner: Okay. Out of 100 people surveyed, how many believe this is a complete and utter farce?

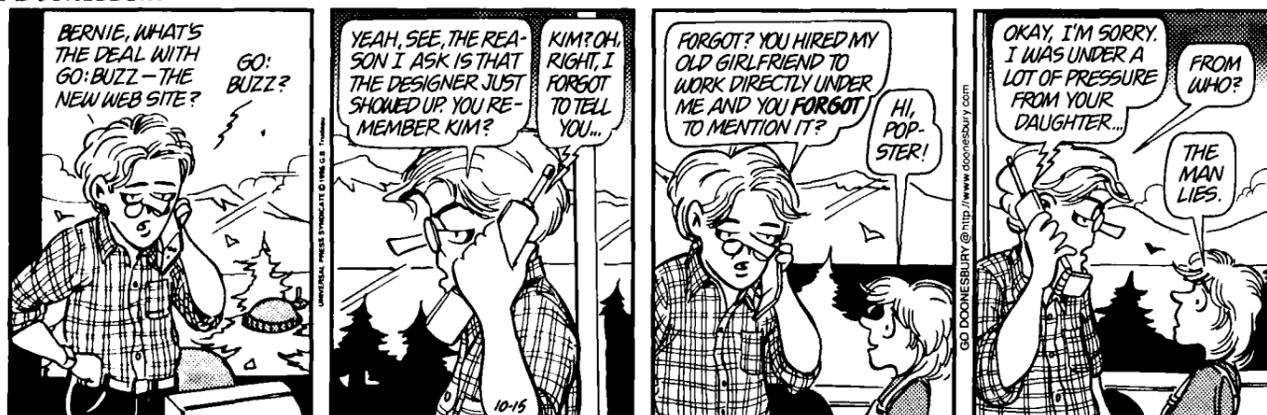
Mr. President: That's easy. All 100! (sound effects: Ding! ding! ding!)

Questioner: You are correct, sir. Anything you'd like to say to the camera?

Mr. President: My fellow Americans, Mr. Senator, the press, the TV viewing audience, that little cross-section of Americana which supposedly rates us according to a cutesy little hand-held turn-dial machine, my Mom: I am honored to be here today. I will begin by saying how respectful I am of the Senator, how respectful I am of democracy, and my wife, and America and free marketplaces and McDonald's, and GOD BLESS AMERICA! Thank you, good

■ DOONESBURY

GARRY TRUDEAU



■ QUOTE OF THE DAY

"A President needs political understanding to run the government, but he may be elected without it."

—Harry Truman