THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

THE AGE OF PHOTO OP POLITICS

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706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

Moderator:

WILLIAM A. GALSTON, Senior Fellow;
The Ezra K. Zilkha Chair in Governance Studies
The Brookings Institution

Featured Panelists:

KIKU ADATTO
Scholar in Residence, Harvard University's Humanities Center

GLORIA BORGER
CNN Senior Political Analyst;
Political columnist, "U.S. News & World Report"

BILL KOVACH
American journalist;
Senior Counselor, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism

DIANA WALKER
Photojournalist

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GALSTON: Welcome to Brookings. Let's let the meeting come to order. My name is Bill Galston. I'm a Senior Fellow in Governance Studies here at Brookings, and I want to welcome you to the first session of the second year of our ongoing series called Governing Ideas. Before I frame this panel and introduce the panelists, let me tell you a little bit about the series.

As you know, here at Brookings we do policy analysis, we look at political institutions and processes, and we've been known to dabble in a little bit of political analysis from time to time. But it has struck many of us increasingly that the political and policy discussions take place within a broader framework and therefore ought to be considered within a broader framework, that our politics swims in a sea of culture, that culture is influenced by history, it's influenced by ideas, and it's influenced by faith. So when we talk about governing ideas, we are trying to probe this broader context, and it is that

connection that I'm particularly pleased to welcome you all to today's session.

I don't need to tell anybody in this media-saturated culture just how important the media is or should I say are in helping to shape our public discourse and our politics. Increasingly over the past two centuries this discourse has been discourse not only of words but also of pictures and images. This has raised some very, very fundamental questions. Indeed, speaking as a former and still recovering philosopher, even some metaphysical questions about the nature of reality and how images shape or reflect reality. This is an ancient question. For those of you who read Plato's "Republic" as an undergraduate, you will recall the Parable of the Cave and the centrality of Plato's reflection on the relationship between images and reality. Plato had a somewhat deflationary view of images, but it's possible to take a different view, and bringing these considerations more up to date, we can all think of the iconic images that have shaped our view of American culture and

politics in our lifetimes. I could read the roll of these images, but I think you all what I'm talking about.

I cannot imagine a better cast of characters than the ones we have convened today to help us reflect on these questions. Our first speaker will be the noted author, scholar, and commentator on American society and culture, Kiku Adatto. Some of you are probably acquainted with her work on sound bite politics, and her latest book just out is called "Picture Perfect: Life in the Age of the Photo Op." It is available for purchase in very affordable paperback form as well as other forms on the back table. This book I can tell you all is in addition to being a very probing analysis of the topic, an absolutely wonderful read. Kiku writes like an angel, and it's not a short book, but it will slide down very, very smoothly. I promise you.

And convened here to help us discuss the issues that Kiku has raised in this book is an all-star cast. We're all going to sit in the front row

and watch Kiku's presentation and then we'll all come up, but let me introduce them in the order in which they will speak. First, Diana Walker who is a noted photographer and served as "Time" magazine's White House photographer through a series of presidential administrations. If I recall correctly, Diana and I met in the course of the political campaign a quarter of a century ago.

Second is the noted journalist Bill Kovach who has been in addition to being a leader as practicing journalist, someone I think of as the conscience of American journalism, someone who has always upheld the highest standards of journalist integrity throughout his long and distinguished career.

Finally, a great and good friend of mine who is well known to you in many different guises, Gloria Borger, part of the best political team on television, if they do say so themselves, and as well as a wonderfully lively regular columnist where she writes

the "On Politics" column for "U.S. News & World Report."

I've put the dishes on the table and now for the food and drink, let me call on Kiku Adatto for her presentation. She will share with us and reflect on some of these iconic and fundamentally shaping images and then we'll proceed to discussion. Kiku, the floor is yours.

MS. ADATTO: Thank you, Bill. It's a special pleasure to be here today and especially with my panelists, and that's a treat. Today I want to talk about the book "Picture Perfect: Life in the Age of the Photo Op." When we think of what do we mean by life in the age of the photo op, it's that we're absolutely awash in images. Today with the internet and blogging, cell phone cameras, digital, audio, it's almost like a wild west show in which the pictures are flying fast and furious and a lot of the gunslingers are operating not face to face but with an alias, so they're posting the commercial, a blog, a rumor, and they're pictures and words and we don't even know the

source of them because on the internet, on YouTube, the federal regulations don't apply. You don't have to say who you are and the candidate doesn't have to affirm the message.

What I'd like to do in this talk is to make sense of the world we live in now, this image-saturated world, by looking back historically how this photo-op culture came into being, and to take us back at the beginning to the invention of the photograph itself in 1839.

When the photograph was invented, it was celebrated as a pencil of nature, a mirror with a memory, and the aspiration of the early photographers whether they were doing portraits, landscapes, or pictures of the city, was somehow to witness, document, to open up yourself to the world and find what was going on in the world. Even at the beginning of photograph, people were alive to the artifice and manipulation of the photograph. No one was naïve about that. The early portraits, their aspiration was to get to the soul or character of the individual, the

spirit of fact, but one could enhance that process through the techniques of touching up photographs during that period.

But the early days of photography, aware as they were of the artifice, aware as they were that pictures could be manipulated, for example, Emerson praised photography when it was invented by saying, If you look at our portrait, who can argue with the sun which wrote it? But when he looked at his own pictures, he found them supremely ridiculous and later said, Some people know how to put on a good face for the camera. A great story about Abraham Lincoln, we think of Lincoln, as a man, a president who probably wouldn't survive in the photo-op culture today, but he's actually the first president who used photographs effectively, and image-conscious ones. His advisers, his handlers of the day, asked him to please grow a beard and wear a standing collar so he'd look more attractive to the voters during the campaign, and a little girl wrote a letter and advised Lincoln the same, and he said, Wouldn't people think it's a silly

affectation to change the way I look now? But once he was elected, the whiskers appeared, and during his campaign, his convention, they fluttered down from the ceiling portraits of Lincoln and carried out a huge painting of Lincoln. So pictures and politics are united right from the very start.

What I'd like to do is look at the part of the story of the rise of the corrupt culture that's more contemporary and I'd like to begin with this photograph of Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan and his media team really were the first to cultivate what we now call the modern photo-op, a picture that is designed to show on the network evening news. Before that, the banners, the hoo-haw, the conventions, nobody had actually crafted the backdrop and the setting and set up that ribbon and set up the tape so that the press had really one picture to take. Reagan was also masterful at weaving in the myth from the movies, the political ideology, the conservative ideology, and his platforms and programs, and it's in this interesting bundle that we see in the current

campaign. You take a mythic image that's part of the American story. Here we see Reagan on horseback, the mythic cowboy.

But something changed after the Reagan administration. After 2 years of Reagan, the press decided to strike back. They had been in a sense of conduits of Reagan's photographs, because whenever there's a photo-op, it always takes two to tango with a photo-op. The politician and their media advisers offer the picture. They set the picture up. But who takes it? They can't. The press has to take the picture. The press has to accept the dance card. So with Reagan they accepted it for the most part. There were some critical and famous reports, but by and large his movie was being made on the network evening news, the Reagan Show.

But something did change in coverage, and you'll see it here, first in color and then in black and white. President Clinton put on a white hat and got on a nice white horse called Firepower, and this is how it ran in the "New York Times" in black and

white, the title of the photograph, "A Lonesome Trail It Wasn't." Something had happened. All of a sudden we see in the frame and with their boom mikes and their cameras. What is the effect of this kind of stance toward photojournalism, taking pictures of presidents? It's to puncture the myth. We've got to have the blank background to look like the mythic cowboy, and the press said not this time.

What happened is very dramatic in the changing press coverage. I'll give you a 1968, 1988, 2008 comparison. In 1968 when Richard Nixon, Humphrey, and Wallace ran for president, the word photo-op was used one time on a network evening newscast. Once. It was by John Hart and he was reporting an incident where Nixon was driving around on a golf course with comedian and entertainer Jackie Gleason, and Hart said their programmers are calling this a photo opportunity. After Hart said he used that word on the news, he figured the word would be banished forever. People would think it was ridiculous, contrived, he has used it with disdain.

And as he reflected upon it two decades later, he said, Now of course it's a term of art. We use it almost synonymous with the word photograph itself.

But there were other dramatic changes. In 1968, very little coverage was image conscious, looking at the candidates' ads or their media events or their media advisers, about 6 percent. By 1988, 52 percent of the coverage was image conscious. In 1968, never on the network evening news was an ad shown. Walter Cronkite and other anchors and reporters felt that that would be giving free time to the candidates' potent visuals. The only exception in 1968 was Ted Koppel did a report in which he showed "Nixon's Panel Show." It was somewhat like an ad where if you had citizens come and there were questions and answers, so no ads.

The other interesting thing in terms of the rise of gotcha politics, in 1968, there were only two examples of even tweaking of politicians and the gotcha politics style. A dramatic example of where it wasn't is when Spiro Agnew, Nixon's running mate, was

trying to slam the Democrats for being soft on defense. He said, "Richard Nixon is a Neville Chamberlain," and all of a sudden he caught himself because he meant to say Humphrey, and he backed off and corrected himself. That evening on the network evening news, not a mention of it. They ran the complete Agnew press conference, failed images, gaffs, goofs, gotcha moments were also not part of the network evening news. And the last contrast between 1968 and 1988, media advisers. Roger Ailes, head of Fox News, was Nixon's ad adviser, media adviser, in 1968. His name was never mentioned, not once, on the network evening news. Again the reporters thought why would you show those guys? They're flax for their men. So by 1988, this whole world had changed.

Going to the ads, the ads ran 125 times mostly without correction. Failed images, we can think of a million of them, Dukakis in the tank being the most famous one, but the reporters would pluck out little things, a gutter ball when you're bowling, a missed throw, a squealing microphone. At one time,

Sam Donaldson caught Dukakis not playing his trumpet looking at the ABC cameras and called him on it. So there is that shift. So we have the beginning in 1988 of the image-conscious culture, the photo-op culture, this intense desire to expose as we see in this picture the politicians' image making. Did it work? The argument I make in the book is it did not. For all of the intense coverage of images and image making, it didn't work for a few reasons.

Number one, if you're going to be a theater critic and criticize the politician's image on television, you have to show the pictures. So you give the pictures another play on television, and when people are looking at the news in a cursory fashion, often times they're not listening to the critical words of the reporters because we are intensely visual people. Going back to Plato, Bill's example, Plato said, Our most profound sense is sight, the visual sense, and the campaigns new that. Give the pictures.

The second reason it didn't work is that however much we try to puncture the picture by calling

attention to its self-conscious design, you're not breaking through to the facts or the reality. All you're saying is the Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz" thing, There's a man behind the curtain. Look at how they set up this picture, but we still don't get to politics, we still don't get to the issues. Is this picture true or false? What does this picture stand for? That's what reporters need to do. So that was the dilemma of this very sophisticated form of critique but yet failed.

Going to Kennedy, I want to look at another movement. Here we have Kennedy like Reagan, a president who really knew how to perform before the media. This is after was elected at a press conference. We know how well he did in the Kennedy-Nixon debate. But also the Kennedy presidency was filled with pictures. We had the feeling of his family, of his world, and they were very adept at crafting pictures for television. I'll show you another picture of Kennedy that begins what I call his new aesthetic, this new way of taking pictures. This

is a photograph by an art photographer Gary Winnigren , and it's of Kennedy at the 1960 Democratic convention. Look at the photograph. We don't see the candidates with their funny hats. We don't see the cheering crowd. We don't see the face of the candidate. At the very top of the frame we see a bank of out-of-focus TV cameras in the center, the candidate and then his face on the television screen, marking this huge shift in consciousness. Who is the real Kennedy? Maybe he's the guy on the screen.

Remember Eliot Richardson from the days of the Nixon administration? Here's another photograph by Winnigren back in the 1970s. Eliot Richardson would have lent the picture probity if we're coming to the close shot. But with its wide-angle lens, you see the funny plants, the tape recorders, and way over in the corner this gal poking her head in with another tape recorder. What photographers started to do, photojournalists started to do, these are art photographers and we'll see the photojournalists in a minute, but the art photographers were the first ones

to really get on to looking at media events and trying to expose and debunk them, take what we would consider a mistake in normal photography, like you don't want someone poking their head into the camera frame, and using it as a way of puncturing, debunking, the media event.

Now we're going to photojournalists and the evolution of this. As I said, in 1998 is when the television news, the networks turned to the photo-op, image-conscious style of coverage, obsessed with images and how they're made. There was a delay with photojournalism. It really came in the 1990s. Some photojournalists did some excellent work, but in terms of giving it a prominent place in the newspaper, and I tracked the "New York Times" completely, all the pictures from 1968 through the present. Here we have Robert Dole who is about to become majority leader. Again, in the frame is the photographer, so you have calling attention to posing for the camera. This is John McCain in 2000. There are many other photographs of him like this, in this austere room with a light

waiting for the media event. Even Supreme Court justices are not immune from this type of debunking photograph. This is by Steven Crowley of the "New York Times" with their annual portrait. Usually we see them in their dark robes looking again with all the probity and authority of the bench. But Crowley pulls back, shows the curtain and the lights, and shows us in a sense a photo opportunity laid bare. When we think on this picture of how this is taken off on YouTube and the internet in terms of exposing photo-ops, making fun of them, generating all of the negative gotcha, this is sort of an elegant gotcha photograph, it is still the Supreme Court justices. So it begins the sensibility that we now have on YouTube and on the internet.

Even though I'm talking about these myth-debunking photographs and myth-debunking coverage that first television and later photojournalists adopted, the papers still give politicians many, many mythic pictures, ennobling pictures, McCain is one, Obama is another, and Bush giving a Thanksgiving turkey to the

troops. What they giveth in the perfect photo-op, the press also taketh away. This is before he went to the Olympics in Beijing and this was part of a four-part panel of photographs that stretched down the front of the "New York Times" and below the fold. Why was this picture in the paper? The "New York Times" is a pretty conservative paper. What it illustrates is the fixation on popping the bubble of the president's photo-op, the fixation of what I called images, these gotcha moments, where you can actually construct one, and that's what they did, like a political cartoon. This was not when he was talking with the president of China, he was talking with reporters, and they showed the panel, he's going to the door, the second with the Alfred E. Newman look, oops, wrong door, third with an aide pointing to the right door, and the last, he's leaving. It was an interesting case because there was a hew and cry about this photograph, and the public editor's answer is a perfect illustration of my point about this contest of control the picture between politicians and the press because they said we gave

him a lot of serious photo opportunities on page one, they didn't quite say now it's our turn, but now we can take this picture of this spontaneous event. So that battleground is what politicians inherit today, the I feel pretty video of John Edwards, bashing YouTube on Hillary Clinton, it's just a mass of this kind of reporting. We can talk about this. I think there are pros and cons of gotcha politics and it would be worth discussing.

The con is the degree that you're making fun of politicians or showing them choking on food or not singing the Star Spangled Banner correctly or slipping, any of that kind of banana peel vaudevillian poking fun at them I think degrades politics. It makes us more cynical about politics and it takes us away from the issues.

But there's another kind of gotcha politics that's very good. With the presence of the cell phone camera and the digital camera, politicians can no longer say one thing one place and another thing another place. One Republican operative said they

can't just shoot from the lip when the big boy and girl networks are not around. The second thing is when politicians make an egregious slip as George Allen did with the racist slur in Virginia, the makaka moment, there with the webcam -- did you know the whole story when -- yes, he looked -- he was in Virginia and you know traditionally in the campaigns you always have the opponents taking video. Allen had seen this kid a million times. He'd even served him food at their -- being gracious to the campaign, but now he kind of wanted to make a point and he said, "Look over there, look over there at makaka. Welcome to America." This was recorded and the Jim Webb campaign put it right up on YouTube and Allen's racism was just exposed for everyone to see. In that sense it's a good thing. In that sense you document the foibles, the problem is exposed in a way that we want to expose. What is this man about and what does he stand for?

I want to go now to probably the most famous photo-op of recent times which cannot be captured in a

photograph. This one you really have to see as the movie it was constructed on in television, George Bush's mission accomplished moment on the aircraft carrier in 2003. What was interesting, and I begin my book with this, is to look how it was covered at the time because there are lots of parallels with how Palin, McCain, and Obama are being covered now. It was covered with such enthusiasm. This is the greatest photo opportunity of all time. Wow. As Chris Matthews said on CNN, "Who can they get -- the Democrats get from their casting studio as good as this guy?" He came in in a flight suit. He co-piloted a fighter jet. CNN even had a reporter flying in a comparable jet just to give us the sounds and the excitement of flying. The event was celebrated by everyone, and the key part of the track, something I want to talk about later, is again the use of the movies. Remember when we saw the picture of Reagan, the mythic cowboy from the movies and we can think of John Wayne and Gary Cooper? We have a whole set of stories and a whole lot of movies we've seen that make

that image powerful. The same with the "Top Gun" fighter pilot image, and it was the networks, not the Bush campaign, that compared it to "Top Gun" with Tom Cruise and Independence Day and "Air Force One" with Harrison Ford. That was on their soundtrack. What a movie. So that magnified the power of the image. Bush as you know -- when they set it up they were 30 miles from San Diego. They thought they were going to be 100 miles out at sea, and they even turned the aircraft carrier around so the coast of San Diego would not be in the background for this spectacular photo-op.

But what's interesting in terms of the larger story of my book, this photo-op would have been forgotten, completely forgotten, it was simply a picture. Why we remember it? It's for the words embedded in the background, the signage the Bush people put in, and that since the Clinton administration has been a new thing in crafting photo-ops. Don't just craft the picture. Build in the caption to the picture. Strong on defense. Mission

accomplished. Strong on the economy. And if you look at photographs in the paper, those are built right in, and this time they were too smart for their own good because mission accomplished is a definitive declarative statement and this photo-op flopped not because anyone took us behind the scenes, it flopped because reality punctured the picture. The mission was not accomplished and this became a photo-op that had an anniversary and still does every year because of the sign. So one of the big stories of my book is looking at this world that we're living in, when I first wrote about the sound bite I used it as an indicator of how powerful images have become. The sound bite in 1968 was 42.3 seconds, in 1988, 9.8 seconds, today it's about 7 seconds. But we live in a world in which sound bites per se don't matter as much as they once did. We have access to candidates' speeches on the internet. We can again see the full range of their speech. The networks are giving the unedited excerpts of the speeches. So it isn't that

we're constricted in words, it's how we're going to parse and decipher the meaning of words.

The other thing about words being important is, and I was just talking to Gloria about this beforehand, when we think of how John McCain and Sarah Palin have constructed their maverick image, it wasn't like Ronald Reagan. They didn't get on a white horse or chop wood. It wasn't like George Bush who put on the blue work shirt -- and talked like a cowboy going after Osama bin Laden and using the lines "wanted dead of alive." What they've done it is with words, but the narrative is potent from the movies, these mythic stories of America. You can conjure them up with a story and people know and can fill in the picture.

I want to end with just two provocative pictures, a very disturbing one which takes us to a very different type of discussion during the Iraq war. This is a photo-op that the U.S. military set up. Remember the terrorist al- Zarqawi who was head of Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia and there had been a long hunt for al-Zarqawi? At one point the military came out

and they found his videos and then they did a kind of failed images on him. They said look at all his outtakes and goofs. He doesn't know how to shoot the gun. Some guy is getting burned by the gun. He's wearing white New Balance sneakers, and they did a whole report on that. But finally the got the guy, they killed him, and they set up this photo-op, and this picture, because you have through the Newseum you can look at the front pages of pictures -- of newspapers -- hundreds of newspapers every day, this picture appeared or some variant of it on most American newspapers' front page. And the question I want to pose to you, why was this picture in the paper? Why is al-Zarqawi in a gilt frame in a white matt? And why do we see a big close-up of his bloody face? The military would say, We have to prove that we got al-Zarqawi. After all, the Iraqi people are not going to think he's dead unless they can see that, and they did that with Saddam and Saddam's sons. But my further question is, but what about Sioux City, Iowa, and Boston, Massachusetts, and Los Angeles, and

Washington, D.C.? We're not Iraqis. Why are we looking at this picture? Is it -- what does it say if we have our military regulations and our view of our own soldiers, is we cannot show anyone killed in action -- the face of anyone killed in action, photojournalists. There were huge restrictions as we know in the Iraq war, not only no flag-draped coffins arriving, photojournalists have to have signed agreements now in order to show a picture of the wounded. So it's a clampdown, it's a deeply censored war in terms of what photojournalists can do. The American public is not seeing the full face of this way. We're seeing a photo-op war, whether it was the mission accomplished or the Thanksgiving turkey to the troops. But this photo-op is troubling because we're drawn into witnessing the face of the dead enemy and how seriously do we take a picture? Is it just because it's a picture that absolves us from moral responsibility of looking at this? Is this going back to the feudal era where you would see say at the end of "Macbeth" his head on a pike, like okay, we got the

enemy? Is this closer to his head on the pike or is there something because it's simply a photograph that we can dismiss it? So I think there are a lot of moral dilemmas associated with what we show in the picture.

The final one, we talked about failed photo-ops, and there's a different kind of failure. When we look at an image and we think it's a document but the picture fails us because it doesn't show all that we should see. This of course is the famous photograph of the toppling of the Saddam Hussein statue. But if the press had pulled back, if the television cameras had pulled back, if the photojournalists had pulled back, the square was empty. There were few Iraqis present. It was the American military with the machine that was pulling down this statue.

In conclusion, in this era in which we're flooded with images, in which on the one hand we are more sophisticated than we ever have been about how the camera can lie, how pictures can be digitally manipulated, we're more cynical than ever, and yet

there is something where we still believe what we see. There is just this impulse. It's part of the nature of photography. It seems to real. And so I think what we have to do is be as critical of the photo-op, of the pictures, as we are of words and always focus on what does this picture mean? What is the larger story? We need the context. The picture is just the beginning of an understanding of events and never its conclusion, never its full summary.

MR. GALSTON: I suspect this will work best if the commentators will for their opening remarks come up to the podium and then we'll do it more on a roundtable basis after that. So if you'll come back after the podium remarks, that would be great.

Just a couple of quick responses. I'm old enough to have been almost sent in for the Kennedy-Nixon debates and political scientists have discovered that people who listened to the debate on the radio thought that Nixon won and people who watched it on television thought that Kennedy won and that's really something to think about. What is the dominant

reality? I was in Walter Mondale's presidential campaign in 1984 and I remember Leslie Stahl did a famous scathing, very long report on the Reagan administration in 1984 and she was quite sure that nobody from the administration would ever talk to her again. As soon as it ran the phone rang. It was Michael Deaver. Leslie picked up the phone sort of trembling expecting a bellowing, shouting, indignant Deaver on the other end of the line. Instead, the first words out of Deaver's mouth were something like, Leslie, that was great. She was stunned. When she recovered she said, What do you mean that was great? As we say in the Marines, We tore you guys a new one in that report. And Deaver said, The pictures were fantastic, the words don't matter, and at least in that election there was something to that.

You've given us an enormous amount of food for thought. I think you've put on the table some of the most important issues that we could possibly confront as citizens as well as analysts of our public culture and American politics. So with that I will

ask the real photojournalists among us to offer some remarks and then followed by Bill Kovach, battling clean-up, Gloria Borger, and then we'll have a discussion.

MS. WALKER: Good morning. There are so many aspects to Kiku's book, and in the discussion there are so many things to say I hardly know where to begin. I have for a long time worked for "Time" magazine as a photographer. When I first went there to meet the picture editor, he said to me, he described what he wanted me to do, and I said, I don't get it. What are you really looking for in the pictures that I'm supposed to take for you in Washington? And he said, Well, I want everything. And I said, What do you mean you want everything? And he said, Well, look at these pictures, and he went and he got these pictures to show me and they were taken in Russia, in Moscow, and they were a picture of -- it was a picture of Nixon and I guess it was Khrushchev. And he said, You see what our photographer Dirk Halstead did in this situation. He said, He took the

straight-on picture of the action that the photographers were allowed to see. Then he turned around and he ran up those stairs, got up on a balcony above and then shot down on top of them and showed you were the cameras were, where -- what was going on, what the whole scene was. So Kiku's pictures showing you the whole scene, the wonderful one of Bill Clinton on the horse as opposed to Ronald Reagan on a horse, I think those two pictures tell you the whole thing.

But when I started out I was kind of given the orders by my magazine to show the scene as in the Supreme Court justices, I think I have exactly that same picture that Crowley took that day, to show the whole scene as well as what they want you to take. Over the years this battle of control over the picture has produced something of a dilemma I believe for news organizations. I covered the White House for "Time" for almost 30 years. We were presented photo-ops every day. My sort of mantra was there must be something in this picture that I take that tells you of the president's mood or how he relates to everybody

else in the picture. Often times you can see that in a photo-op. It is genuine what you see. But a lot of times it's not genuine. Somehow we have to take another view.

When I was offered either the straight-on shot or the side shot would always take the side shot because the majority of the people would take the straight-on shot. But this dilemma brought "Time" to this place where they asked me to begin to photograph the president behind the scenes where there were no mikes and lights where I would be allowed to take pictures that nobody else had. I started doing this back in the Reagan administration. I remember the first really important for me picture I took had to do with Nancy Reagan and Raisa Gorbachev. They had a photo-op of Raisa and Mrs. Reagan sitting in two little chairs with a plain background out in a hallway and that was the picture that was offered to the press. I had asked weeks before to be behind the scenes in the actual tea that they had. There I was in the actual tea and there was just no question that

this was going to not be a very friendly relationship. The two of them sat in the home of the Aga Khan who had let the Reagans use his villa in Geneva for these meetings and there they were in this opulent setting with two waiters carrying the tea, preparing to pour the tea, and Mrs. Reagan looking at Mrs. Gorbachev as if they could not have possibly come from more different backgrounds.

So I tried to do that for "Time" magazine for quite a long time, right through in fact the Hillary Clinton campaign this year where I would go out and only do behind the scenes where I wasn't interested in going out front. All I wanted to see her doing was relating to people and doing things behind the stage where nobody else was. What this produces occasionally is a better understanding of our leaders I believe, and I believe this strongly. However, when I would go behind the scenes with President Clinton, for instance, I would request the opportunity and the press office would actually speak to the president about it. They'd go all the way up.

They would say, Is it all right with you if Diana Walker of "Time" is in here today doing some behind-the-scenes stuff? And he's say, Sure, because he couldn't have cared less about having a photograph around. He was perfectly comfortable with it.

In the White House all the presidents have their own photographer there to take pictures. So I would go behind the scenes and you may say they controlled your going in and your coming out, and they certainly did. When I was inside, however, whatever I saw, they could not control. They have no control over our pictures ever. The control that they have is letting you in and letting you out and one presumes they're not going to let you in where there's a tremendously difficult matter of state being discussed. People have asked me over the years, But you were just playing into their hands because if they allowed you behind the scenes it meant the following week "Time" magazine would do a big picture act with your images. And I always replied something that I seriously believe and that is if you have the

opportunity to get in closer, take it because you are there for the public. You are there for the people who read "Time" magazine. You are going to try and give them something that they are not getting from anybody else.

I did that kind of work all the way through this year and I don't denigrate in any way the images at a photo-op because if it is the signing of a bill, it is important that you see the president sign that bill. If it is the awarding of a medal to a soldier, it is important that you see that. So there are all these kinds of dilemmas out there about pictures and I know that Kiku's book is far more comprehensive than we can be in this short time.

I would like to say one or two things about manipulation because I think it's important. It's just as upsetting to the photographer as it is to the public to discover that a photograph of theirs has been manipulated. You know it's gone on as Kiku said for generations that you could manipulate photographs all the way as you said to 1839. Today it just is

simply easier. But what happens in this is that you just have to trust the publication that you read, there is nothing else you can do, and the editors of the publications that you're looking at and you're reading have to trust the photographers they use. The "Los Angeles Times" had a terrible time recently when with the how much more money it takes now and all the limitations of sending your own photographer to Iraq or to Beirut or to Afghanistan, it's daunting. So often, news organizations are forced to buy photographs produced by photographers in areas that they don't know. They don't know these photographers. They don't know if they can trust them. And the "Los Angeles Times" used a picture which exaggerated the bombings in Beirut and they were horrified to find this out, and of course the photographer who did this, his reputation is of course ruined, but someone else could shrug and say who cares, he got paid for the picture. So this is a tremendous problem.

"National Geographic" years ago when computers first became as popular as they are today or

almost moved a pyramid so it would fit on the cover of the "National Geographic" and the readers of the Geographic had a fit. They knew that that pyramid couldn't have been that close to that sphinx. It just wasn't. And so they had to apologize and go through all of these problems. My own magazine had a famous controversy about O.J. Simpson which I'm sure Kiku mentions in her book. It was a more respectful cover than our competition "Newsweek" gave that week, but we had darkened the face of O.J. Simpson, and that is a long and complicated story that I will have to leave to someone else to tell you.

But photo-ops really in terms of the White House which I do know fairly well started back with Teddy Roosevelt and he learned that it played well to have pictures of his children riding ponies and pet animals on the South Lawn. He learned that that kind of a picture appealed to the public and he started allowing photographers to come in and to do that kind of thing.

I don't think I've answered any questions, but why don't we move on, Bill, and then maybe we'll have time to talk about it.

MR. KOVACH: One thing I admire about Kiku's work on this book and her previous book is that she takes the time to try to put the subject that she's dealing with, images and how they affect us and affect our lives as citizens, in an historic context. I'd like to just extend that historic context a little bit for purposes of our discussion because the history of communications at least certainly going back to Gutenberg but I would argue, and I think Bill might agree, goes back to the time humans started trying to record experience and communicate it by carving things on cave walls. But especially since Gutenberg's time, every change, every innovation in communications technology has had one fundamental impact on at least Western society and now internationally, and that is to democratize information so that more and more people had more and more information about the people and institutions of authority and little by little

we're able to exert that knowledge in forms of pressure on those institutions to behave in ways that were more conducive to the citizenry or what came to be the citizenry and Gutenberg's press created the opportunity for the people to have an opinion, an opinion on which democracy grew. So in effect, that communications revolution created the press and with the press and public opinion created democracy, so the press or the communications system in democracies are born together, and there are those of us who argue that they will live or die together.

The next great revolution, high-speed presses changed things, but the real complement or the real parallel to I believe Gutenberg's print pressing was the advent of images, television. The democratization of public information by images and the impact that had on society was delayed somewhat because it was -- still the democratization was parallel to and limited by distribution. You had a few channels of televised image information in terms of news in terms of the kind of information that a

democratic society depends on for decision making limited to an hour an evening surrounded by a vigorous print press that could accompany those images with a lot of information about the image and what it meant and what it didn't mean so that the struggle that occurs with every democratization of information, the struggle between the information and the organized institutions, the government, church, social, political, economic, those institutions that organize society, have to get on top of the democratization. They have to learn a way to use the new communications system to keep the body politic, keep the community organized in a way that makes it an efficient community organization. So the struggle with each democratization of information, the struggle is between the access to more and more information and the ability of the institutions that hold communities together to manage that information.

The visual images that television brought us challenge the print press in ways it had never been challenged before, not even by radio, but I think the

competition remained fairly stable, and they were stable in ways that Kiku has documented. Once those images became too strong, the press began to show the background. These images are fake. These images are phony. These images don't mean what they say. And they had plenty of time and space and plenty of access to audience in order to make that case. It wasn't just the picture, but it was the stories that went with it that described in detail why this image is incorrect because this policy, this action, the decision, doesn't match that image so that you had a way to study verbally the issues involved. But once satellite and digital technology came, once the movement of this democratization moved to digital communication, the entire competition between image and word changed.

The democratization of information that occurred with the communications revolution in the 1980s and 1990s has created a struggle akin to that of Gutenberg's, but we're far, far, far from having any sense of how it's going to work itself out. The

disappearance, virtual disappearance, of linear discussion of issues compared to visual is overwhelming. The visual image dominates the scene. The idea of a serious linear thoughtful discussion of what these images has almost disappeared. I think the danger now is that the combination of the democratization of information in the form of images and the economic organization of the system of communication information has changed so that the ability to communicate to a mass audience constantly with a verbal, a linear discussion is disappearing very rapidly. New organizations like the "New York Times," "Time" magazine, even the broadcast networks, have to maintain a mass audience and find some way for that mass audience to fund the work they do. They can't do it. The "Washington Post," the "New York Times," all the major news organizations I know of, are laying off staff in great numbers. The number of journalists actively covering important issues on a daily basis and providing reports to the American people in some depth is rapidly disappearing. The

number of journalists covering Washington is increasing because of the number of international journalists who are covering here and the number of small niche publications, but the number of journalists who serve a mass audience is declining. The "New York Times" may have a larger readership if you combine their newspaper and their website, but they don't have the mass audience that pays the advertising freight to support a newsroom to continue to produce that. So the ability of the communications world, the journalistic world, to gather, organize, and present linear, thoughtful discussion about issues of the day is declining as the number of images that shape public thought -- as Bill mentioned and Kiku mentioned Plato's great parallel, we're hardwired to images and images go directly to our gut, not to our brain. There's no thought involved. It's a reaction. Sarah Palin discusses it in her "you don't blink." That reaction is the key to leadership. Those issues are pushed ahead by image communication, not thoughtful communication, but image communication.

And I guess my concern is that at this point and for the last 10 years I've been involved in trying to through the training programs we've developed help journalists think more critically about how they cover issues, how they present issues and how they help the public react to the information on which a democracy is based, how they deal with this competition, and I have to say that after 10 years of work in that field, I'm not sure we've made that much progress and I'm not sure we quite understand how the American public is reacting to the kind of information that's out there because I guess the big question -- I'm throwing in too many things but that's the way I am, the big question in my mind now is there is a generation of voters out there in the country who are now being faced with another decision on leadership and it's a generation that came of political knowledge during the Reagan years which in our history as a bit of a watershed as it moves from a generation that was inspired by the rhetoric and the communications of the Depression and the Second War with a sense of

community, by a generation with a sense of personal need, personal desire, and I think none of us know how that generation is responding to the messages they're getting now, essentially visual messages, communicating feelings, communicating emotional reaction to issues and questions rather than thoughtful, step back and consider this for a while. I'm going to leave it at that and take my seat.

MS. BORGER: I'm just going to talk a little bit about what Bill talked about and I want to keep it short so we can get to your questions because I have half a brain that's in television and half a brain that's in print. So I sort of first-hand witness the kind of conflict between -- the competition between the print journalists to get the print photographer to get the great picture is competing with the picture journalists are you talking about. And we live in a world of reality television. Reality television is kind of popular. And I think that has sort of infected in a way, some ways good and some ways bad, the way we cover politics because just as print

competes with television, television now competes with YouTube and everything that is live, video-streamed, and I think what we've decided to do wisely is to if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. And particularly at CNN which has such a very large platform in every way, you will see us if we can't cover something fully on television, and we're doing more and that by the way, candidates in their own words, I call it C-span on steroids. We have been trying to do that a lot. But we will direct you to our website and say if you want to see the full speech at the convention, watch X and watch Y.

I call it in television, I joke about it, when somebody asks you to come in and you ask permission just as Diana always did, ask permission can I get a behind-the-scenes view of Hillary Clinton as she's backstage getting ready to give a speech or in the White House, when you do that in television it's a little different because they know that you're not going to just click a picture, but there will be words and there will be audio with it. So even when

we do get to go backstage, I always call it the semblance of access, because you asked for access but you know you're not getting real access. When I used to drive my kids in a carpool I always used to say that the great thing about my driving my kids in a car was that they would forget that it was their mother actually sitting in the front seat and that she was actually listening to all the things they were saying to their friends. Bu political operatives are a little smarter than that and they always understand that while sometimes they may forget you're there, they know you're there, so what you discover as a journalist who's with a camera trying to be there is that they're setting up meetings for you to cover, the politician is fully briefed on what you want to hear and they want the politician to say so increasingly there's less and less true access.

The real access, and I know it's been called gotcha, but I think is sometimes we have photographers with little cameras and they're YouTube-like in a way and sometimes you can catch moments and I think our

photographers did during this campaign when President Clinton got very enraged at a reporter and I believe it was just after the South Carolina primary, and you saw a real moment of Bill Clinton forgetting that in fact, yes, he was going to be on national television and it showed you how rusty he was, actually, and actually having a moment of true rage. And whether warranted to not, we report you decide, and I think those moments are fewer and fewer. That was truly reality television. It's very hard for us to get those moments because not only do you have political consultants these days, but you have people who stage political events, people whose full-time job is to make sure that the backdrop says Brookings, Brookings, Brookings, Brookings, or whatever the political slogan is and get the crowds together. People who make sure that John McCain and Sarah Palin have very big crowds. Or that Barack Obama has 90,000 people at Invesco Field. So these people, they're a whole new breed to set up just for the cameras, and there's a new tension

which is between the folks who stage the events and the folks like me who have to cover these events.

So there's more and more thirst out in the public which is used to reality TV trying to find out, and who knows if reality TV is really reality TV, by the way, trying to find out, to see the politicians the way they may see someone on "Survivor" versus the way the campaigns want you to see the politician. So I think of the Invesco Field staging and I think of Berlin and I think of what the McCain campaign did with the Berlin 200,0000 showing up to that event. They decided to take a picture and to turn Obama into a celebrity and to run an ad about Obama as a celebrity and then they could use Invesco again in that sense, turn him into an unserious candidate because he was speaking before 200,000 people, and John McCain would be the candidate who was fighting for you on your side, I'm here. While Obama was in Berlin, I think McCain showed up at a bratwurst house in some battleground state to show that in fact he was on your side. It didn't work, but it was a way for

him to use the image. Just as the Obama campaign in order to make a point about John McCain's age showed him in a golf cart with George H. W. Bush. The McCain campaign knows that that was a bad photograph for them, but as they said to me, What are we supposed to do? The former president of the United States asked John McCain to go in a golf cart with him, of course he's going to do that and rightly so. So there is this tension between the campaigns and between the press and the way we cover these people now because there is -- we are in a world that is not only 24/7, but it's digital and it's online and our -- in what I do these days it's kind of interesting. I think at CNN because we have more cameras out there probably than anybody and because we have heard from our viewers and they say we want to hear from the candidates, we've been doing a lot more of that and it's very interesting to me. You'll see it even during daytime programming, we will dip into live events with candidates. I don't think, and I could stand corrected, that we didn't do as much of that 4

years ago. I do not believe we did. And I think it's the sense of we're going to take you into our world a little bit. We're going to lift the veil. We're going to try and show you the events that we go to every day and let you hear the candidates, we call it unfiltered, in their own words so you can make your own judgments. One of the successes of that, and I enjoy it, and we have something, and I don't want to sound like an ad for CNN but it just shows you the way we're changing, it something we call Ballot Bowl on the weekends which is C-Spain. We have our journalists introducing the candidates, but we go to their live events and that is a way for us not to sort of -- we're not showing you the microphones and everything behind them, but we are showing you the town hall meetings that John McCain is doing or the events that Barack Obama is doing and we're allowing you to make your own judgments on that candidates.

That is something that television can do, the print cannot do. Print can do verbatims from speeches which they do from time to time, but it's

interesting because there's a question of is it an abdication of our journalistic responsibility because our responsibility is to filter and to explain the pictures, or is it the right thing to do to just lift the veil, let the viewers in and let the viewers see for themselves and watch these pictures for themselves and make their own judgments. I'm going to leave it at that so we can open this up to your questions. Thank you.

MR. GALSTON: Folks, time to mike up. Let me just tell you where we are in the proceedings. We started a few minutes late because of the traffic so we'll run a few minutes late so we'll have time first for a question that I'd like to pose to the panel as a whole and then for your questions.

I don't know about you, but I could think about this stuff and talk about this stuff all day. This has just been a marvelous series of provocations. As I listened to our three commentators, they raise in a very informal but heartfelt way three of the critical concepts that we have to deal with. Diana

Walker focused on the idea of trust and she said at some point, and I quote because I wrote it down, "You have no choice but to trust the publication." Bill Kovach focused on democracy and the consequences of a closely related term, namely, democratization for democracy. He raised a question, What is the relationship between the democratization of information and the health of democracy? Democratization and democracy are not synonyms. They have a very tense relationship and Bill called our attention to that tension. Finally, Gloria Borger focused on the idea of reality. You go to "behind the scenes in search of reality." Do you find it there? Where is it? This is a philosophical question. Is reality TV real? This is a question that's bedeviled philosophers for millennia. There's a quest for reality. Where do we find it and how do we find it?

Here is the omnibus question that I'd like to put to the four of you for about 10 minutes or unconstrained discussion after which I will turn to you, our faithful audience. My question is this.

Taking everything into account, how well served is American democracy by this new media phenomena that the four of you have described and commented on in different ways? Is the relationship between the photo-op culture, the media, the American people, our leaders, and our political institutions, is that good or tolerably good order in the context of this new reality that you've talked about? I get the impression that Bill Kovach for his part has some serious about those relationships are in good order, but perhaps others of you have a different view. So that's the omnibus question that I'm going to put on the table. How are we doing? The Ed Koch question. Kiku?

MS. ADATTO: I think that it's a complicated question and there are different parts of the answer. I think let me give you the troubling part first and that is the aspect of the photo-op culture in which we have gotten further and further in terms of the images we create from any sense of documenting reality to the degree that reporters whether on television or

newspaper reporters or to the degree that we see on the internet -- no basis, they're just images shooting past each other with no grounding in fact. That's the most -- I'd say the internet in many ways is the most problematic and in one sense promising. The YouTube culture of just putting up negative ads and images without any of the fact correction, although people chase after it, is really problematic because the campaigns are feeling they almost catch up. It's so rapid. How are we going to catch up?

And it's problematic for the television networks and the newspapers because are you going to be pulled constantly by that direction or are you going to, and I thought Gloria put it very well, pull back the veil? I thought what was interesting about your use of the veil, it was a veil of kind of irreal images in the same way that reality television is irreal. We know it's choreographed. It's not really real. It's all choreographed and set up. These people are doing things in front of the cameras, hundreds of them. That's the new -- and you know the

camera is there. So how can it really be pulling back the veil? So I think that going back to what reporting was, newspaper and television in earlier days, is actually a wonderful thing, going back to the fundamental which is let the candidates speak, let's see them, let's (inaudible) what Diana Walker does so beautifully in her photography, behind the scenes not in terms of the instruments of image making, behind the scenes in terms of what is the character and what are the beliefs and who is this person.

Focusing on the people is good. As far as the democracy, again I have a two-part answer. I think in one sense it's very exciting not to be locked into three television networks in terms of the visual images but that we have a range of pictures and we offer up things on the internet. The fact checking we can do today is amazing. T track down a story, to get the image is quite remarkable. I know that from the teaching world. When I teach students I'm trying to track something down so fast. The public discourse, as I was saying when we expose politicians they can't

lie -- they can't say one thing in South Carolina and another thing in Boston, I think that's good. It increases the public square. I find that promising.

The troubling thing about democracy, and I just have an anecdote from my son who was watching both conventions and he just graduated from college and he's reading all these political philosophers and all these things, yes, it's great, but he was appalled, this from like the mouth of a kid, he goes, Gee, I'm wondering, mom, if democracy is the best way to go after watching the Republican National Convention, because what we see going on there is a form of spectacle, a show in which there are very important images, and maybe we'll return to talking about how important the myths are, but these pictures are powerful and resist puncturing because as I said at the beginning with Reagan, the ideology, the platform is tied to pictures we love across the political spectrum. The maverick hero, the tough woman, Sarah Palin, the double mavericks. We've seen those. If you look at the maverick here we, we see

the woman sidekick, Harrison Ford, when he's out like being Indiana Jones, his tough woman sidekick, that's appealing. Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, they've both got big guns in their hands. So the idea to pull in this cultural resource, I find that the threat and frightening part about democratic discourse that Bill is talking about, serious argument, because what do we want in the public square? We want a commonwealth in which civic discourse and argument are really pealed back. We want to hear the candidates discuss it. We want as the public to be part of that discussion.

When I see this barrage of pictures that I'm -- watching a fantasy movie and it keeps going on and to the degree that the networks fan it, cover it, it's a frightening phenomenon and I think that's a threat to democracy. When we live at the level of that kind of spinning and myth making it's the best thing we can do -- believe me, the best photo-op is not really a photo-op, it's a movie in which text, the narrative and the pictures have a storytelling function, a real storytelling function which the Republicans have done

a great job if the economy doesn't get in their way giving us a narrative that's compelling, that people are familiar with and the end of the narrative -- I'm a good guy. I'll fight for you. I'm really the change agent. So I think that's the problematic part for democratic discourse.

MR. GALSTON: Let me throw out a provocation now. Bill Kovach in his remarks set up almost an algebraic equation. Words are to pictures as reason is to emotion. Diana, Gloria, what do you think about that?

MS. BORGER: I agree. I absolutely agree. I -- again half my brain is words so I don't think we can live without the words, the interpretation, the reporting, not to mention investigative journalism that we have less and less of unfortunately these days because of the budget constraints that Bill was talking about. But I also think that, let's talk about the presidential campaign, votes for president are the most personal votes that anybody casts. This is somebody who's going to send your kid to war.

Trust, character, all of those things matter. How we make decisions about somebody's character very often is the way we make decisions about somebody we're having dinner with. Do we like them? Do we not like them? Do we think we trust them? Do we don't think we trust them?

Print has an awful lot to do with that because -- a front-page piece in the "New York Times" yesterday, very interesting, this is what John McCain has said about deregulation. He's been a great deregulator in the past. Here are his words. Here is what he is saying now. What television does is we take those words and we put them up on the air and you see an interview of John McCain in 2007 talking about the values of deregulation and letting Wall Street do what it needs to do and it's good for the world. So I think they work. I think they do work together. Which is more powerful? Which reaches more people? The visuals these days because everybody has -- not everybody, but so many have access to visual media and so many different platforms that you need both of

them, but emotionally I think you look at the visual and that's the way people very often make decisions which is why it's so important to be responsible in what you show on television -- sound bites how long you show it for. We've been encouraged and I think absolutely rightly so, when John McCain said the other day the fundamentals of the American economy are strong, we showed what came before he said that and what came after he said that so you didn't just get the 9-second bite as you did in Obama's ad, but you got the whole 20 seconds, 30 seconds, whatever it was which is a lifetime. So it's important to be responsible about it, and by the way, there's a lot of not being responsible about it going around. So that's the real struggle that I think television --

MR. GALSTON: Diana?

MS. WALKER: I think now because of the internet that words and pictures are just about -- they're equally important. I look back in my own memory at pictures that I have thought have been so terribly powerful and didn't really need words. I

think back to the Vietnam war and I think of the picture Eddy Adams took of the general lifting his gun up and shooting -- putting it right to the temple of this other Vietnamese and how horrifying that picture was. I think of Utz's picture of the little girl running covered with flames from napalm. I look at the pictures -- the images of Abu Gharib this -- a couple of years ago and I look at them and I say I have to know the explanation. I've got to understand these pictures. I've got to, but they are incredibly powerful.

The pictures of 10 years or 15 years before that during the Clinton administration -- the pictures of the Marine's body being dragged through Somalia through the village. That picture was horrifying and it is images on a page, a picture on a page I still believe is of great import, but I do believe now that words and pictures must go together because I think you -- people look at the internet and distrust images. They know. When I get an image yesterday of Governor Palin in a bikini, please, this is what is

there and this is what's being sent out and it goes back again to the question of trust of your news organization which I think is very, very important and their responsibility to make sure that anything they use is verified.

MR. GALSTON: Bill, I'm going to let you have the last word, and simply point out that you've gotten now two responses to this quasi-algebraic equation that you put on the table. One of them is, you know what, pictures do touch emotions but emotions are an important and valid part of the democratic decision-making process. The second response you've gotten from Diana is there are two kinds of pictures, those that end conversations and those that begin conversations and maybe -- and would we have had the kind of national conversation about Abu Gharib that we ended up having had it not been for those pictures. It's a reasonable question I think.

MR. KOVACH: I absolutely agree with that. I think the fundamental problem is where are you going to have that conversation. What the system has now is

a fragmented population. We got 300 million people and I'd dare say there are not 100 million of them who have the same source of information. They don't go to -- they don't all go to broadcast television, they don't go to CNN, they don't -- they go everywhere. I've got four children and eight grandchildren and it's a pretty -- it's a pretty good sample. Their take on this campaign, the ones who are following it, the four children are and three of the grandchildren, their takes are entirely different because all seven of them have different collection of information sources. They're on this website or that website or this -- they go to CNN or they don't go to CNN. And for those seven to come together with a joint picture of what the issues are, what the candidates are all about in this campaign, is not there yet. It may be by mid-September or mid-October. I would say mid-October more likely. But it's such a fragmented distribution of information. It is massively democratized that it's almost individually democratized. And it makes Kiku's point about that

mythological message being sent by that image -- just one of those images can have more impact than all of the other communication that's going on combined and I think that the world we're living in now is we don't know what image is jelling out there among the public because the system is so fragmented and so confused in so many ways and that goes from print journalists trying to figure out what --

One quick thing. Gloria's little anecdote about Bill Clinton. It demonstrated something about Bill Clinton we didn't know, but part of what we didn't know was he blew up and he blew up because he knew he had made a big mistake, but he also blew up because he had been on the road making speech after speech after speech after speech with a reporter tracking him every step of the way and the only time he was put on television was when he made a mistake. And in his mind he was thinking, My God, I've been saying all these important things and now I'm hit with this. He knew he was caught, but the journalism had not presented Bill Clinton in a full and round form

and that happens with every individual involved in this country.

MR. GALSTON: A lot to think about. Ladies and gentlemen, the floor is now yours, and there is I believe a roving microphone that will be made available for questions. We'll start in front here. If you would identify yourself please and ask a nice short question and address it to either the panel as a whole or someone in particular.

MS. GREENIE: My Walin Greenie . I'm from Amherst, Massachusetts. My question is this, that from a recent study I found misinformation tend to stick in the back of the voters' mind longer. So misinformation even though it be corrected later, but unfortunately because it's misinformation and stays longer, so that perpetuated the misinformation. So given that, how do you address the ugly ads campaign tactics that both campaigns are doing?

MS. BORGER: We do reality -- newspapers do it, we do it. We take a look at an ad and we do a reality check on whether this political advertisement

is telling the truth or not telling the truth. And we've had some pretty nasty ads lately on Obama and his views on sex education for kids, et cetera, and we've really tried to deconstruct them. But again it's the image -- to get back to our discussion, it's the image that kind of sticks. If you look in that ad on sex education which said that Obama's for sex education for 5-year-olds which of course he's not, he's talking about teaching kids how to recognize sexual predators. The photographs, I don't know if you noticed that (inaudible) Obama in that ad were kind of sneering sort of images that honestly you don't really see Obama do very often, but a camera can catch anything. And so I think that if you're prone to not like Obama, you look at that picture and you go that looks like Barack Obama.

So it's hard to compete with those images because they're on all the time. There's a billion dollars being spent in this campaign. But the only thing we can do as journalists is do our reality check

on the ads, but the reality check doesn't go up every single time the ad airs. That's what we have to do.

MS. WALKER: But that's been going for years has it not?

MS. BORGER: Right. Yes. Absolutely.

MS. WALKER: Ads that tell lies. And at least today you can see instantly -- almost instantly a response, a response either by the other candidate or by the network.

MS. BORGER: Right.

MS. WALKER: Which is probably better than it was 10 years ago. But it's not really new. It's just the speed that's so new.

MR. GALSTON: Yes?

MR. CUMERA: My name is Snogo Cumera , a Visiting Scholar at George Washington University originally and now professor (inaudible) Kyoto, Japan. I thank you for insights (inaudible) I'm asking all of you actually, do you find any tendency among politicians to accommodate with such a photo culture in everyday practice? Taking my example, in Japan I

find that Japan shares all the same kinds of problems like former Prime Minister Koizumi, very famous in Japan too maybe, said to be very media savvy because he comments -- his comments are very short and conclusive in the photo -- making a perfect sound bite, if not accurate and rational, still persuasive so that he enjoyed an extraordinary approval rating. Do you find the same tendency in the United States or some other? Thank you very much.

MR. GALSTON: The question on the table as I understand it is whether the popularity of a politician is closely related to that person's ability to use the media to advantage.

MR. CUMERA: They find necessary or what (inaudible) find out what they are trying to do.

MR. GALSTON: One way of putting the question is have politicians been compelled to adjust their presentation of self in response to new technologies, new modes of media organization, new ways of communication?

MR. KOVACH: I know. That's the struggle that takes place. There is a new system of communication that communicates differently than it previously did, how do I organize a community for me out there so you have to do -- the "Times" running that picture of George Bush at the door helped George Bush because Bush made fun of himself. That made him more likable, his self-irony, self-humor. It's that effort that John McCain is doing now. Obama is not as successful at it I don't think from what I've seen in making a personal connection and I think the personal connection is part of -- is part of the -- it's an emotional reaction, not a thoughtful reaction and I think these -- I think these issues are what we have to watch as journalists to figure out how do we function in this world to help the public make a decision, not be driven to a decision, but make one?

MS. BORGER: Something interesting has happened with John McCain though because his original appeal was the Straight Talk Express, access to journalists 24/7. You'd sit on the bus with him for 3

days and you'd had enough of John McCain. You didn't want to talk to him ever again. You heard from him 7 hours a day. And then his campaign realized after he was asked a tough question on the Viagra issue and didn't want to answer it and the cameras were trained on him for 30 really long seconds where he refused to answer this question and made a lot of faces, that in order to do better with the public he had to limit his access to the media. It had always worked the other way around. And so now you have someone who is very good with the press because he was undisciplined essentially and you felt like you got the John McCain because you did, now in order to win a presidential election he's limiting his access to the media, he's limiting what we can do. We could take pictures on the Straight Talk Express, our cameras were always rolling on the Straight Talk Express 24/7. Now in order to win and stay on message because nobody can stay on message 24 hours a day, that's ridiculous, they limited his access so he can talk to us in sound bites as opposed to talking to us nonstop about

sports, culture, every kind of issue in the world, in order to win he had to reduce it.

MS. ADATTO: One of the -- just extending that point is what we see -- and I think this is a huge challenge for the press is the -- and it started with Reagan and they're doing it again very expertly, to the degree that the campaign is choreographed, to the degree that there is not access to reporters and the pictures and narrative are entirely manufactured by the campaign to the degree that all you have if you want to cover the candidates are these photo-ops, and photo-ops as Bill and I have been arguing to have a larger narrative, a story that's cohesive. If you look at John McCain and Sarah Palin's convention video, if you look at what they say on the campaign trail and if you look at the ads, it's the most cohesive narrative I've seen. It's completely connected. It's almost as if you just repeat different lines of the script. That allows, and this is so important in campaigning, storytelling. It's a form of speech we really have to pay attention to.

Storytelling that has resonant images and ideals and values that are now connected with a certain myth which is not true that they're outsiders, they're change agents, but it's connected with this word maverick which is so potent. And what's the challenge for the press if that's going on, if everything is so controlled? It's to break through the mythmaking to the reality that lies beyond.

And I like very much Diana said about photographs. A photograph should make you ask questions. A photograph is getting the story going. So what I would recommend for the -- especially for television is not to be -- which is the -- you need pictures but not to follow this pictures so much, not to just keep putting them up, not to accept the feed. Going back to what I said it takes two to tango with the photo-op, some of them -- the dance card, no, we have this already, now we're going to report on something else. And the key part going back to the Leslie Stahl example that Bill gave, remember the White House called when she'd done the tough report?

I looked at that and I talk about it in my book of course. Her pictures didn't match her points. When she was criticizing Ronald Reagan, she was showing all his pictures. I'm thinking this is Journalism 101 or Film Video 101. If CNN, MSNBC, Fox, any of the networks want to provide a reality check, have their pictures match their point. There are so many important fundamental issues affecting this democracy about the state of our economy, about foreign policy, the housing market. These are deep, big issue.

There are plenty of pictures. Think of oneself as a documentary photographer a witness to these events and when they're run show pictures about it. That is a choice beyond the photo-op to get off the track of their feed and on the track of issues and get the pictures to match the issues rather than the feed because if you're taking the feed from the politicians, you are their conduit. You're letting them run the story and you're giving way too much time to their mythic picture on both sides of the campaign.

MS. BORGER: But let me argue with that just a minute. In the sense of when you're in the middle of a political campaign which are also after all about issues which we try and cover because they're really important to people's lives particularly now, we're dealing with the economic problems. Sometimes if you take a feed of Barack Obama talking about the economy and you have a feed of John McCain at a speech talking about the economy, that's important (inaudible) you're not going to take -- you try not to take too much of the rah, rah, rah. But I think people also have to filter and listen -- and listen for themselves. So it's a hard -- it's a hard balance because you -- you want to -- you don't want to just tell their narrative the way they want you to tell it, and you don't, but then you balance it by saying I'm going to let you the viewer -- just listen to the guy. Just listen to him. And I think there's a benefit in that too.

MR. GALSTON: We could clearly go on indefinitely. Alas I'm getting the hook sign from building and grounds here at Brookings that probably

has another use for the room at 12:15. So let me just take the occasion to thank Kiku and this splendid panel for a wonderful discussion that I wish we could continue for another 5 hours.

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

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