

FOR RELEASE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1992, A.M.

**The Press And Campaign '92:
A Self Assessment**

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PRESS SEES COVERAGE AS HAVING HURT BUSH ELECTION CHANCES

A substantial majority (55%) of the American journalists who followed the 1992 presidential campaign believe that George Bush's candidacy was damaged by the way the press covered him. Only 11% feel that Gov. Bill Clinton's campaign was harmed by the way the press covered his drive to the presidency. Moreover, one out of three journalists (36%) think that media coverage helped the Arkansan win the presidency while a mere 3% believed that the press coverage helped the Bush effort.

Despite reservations about the fairness of the coverage, eight in ten journalists rated press coverage of Campaign '92 as *excellent or good*. Fewer than one out of five (18%) judged press performance as only fair or poor. The survey also found the press thinking it did a good job on most of the major elements of the campaign coverage.

These are the principal findings of a *Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press* survey of more than 250 members of the press community, conducted in the final weeks of the election campaign. The polling included both top and middle level print and broadcast journalists, who were either directly or ultimately responsible for election coverage. Among the sample were 48 members of the media elite -- newspaper editors and columnists, network anchors and producers, and the senior newspaper, news magazine and television executives -- who the Times Mirror Center, with a nod to author David Halberstam, calls "*The Powers That Be*."

This second Times Mirror survey of the press found the media judging the impact of its coverage quite differently than did the first press survey completed in May of 1992 during the final stages of the presidential primary campaign. The earlier polling found most journalists (50%) thinking that campaign coverage was having a neutral effect on George Bush's campaign, as he turned back the challenge of an insurgent Pat Buchanan. At that time, a 64% majority thought that Bill Clinton was being hurt by the way the media covered him during his struggle with the "character" problems that plagued his primary campaign.

Although the conclusions about who was helped and who was hurt changed over the course of the year, both surveys found journalists lauding press coverage generally, despite their widespread belief that the coverage was having a negative impact on one of the campaigns. In-depth interviews with top media executives conducted as part of this project reflected a widespread view within the media community that the press bore no responsibility for the impact of its campaign coverage. By and large journalists believe that media campaign coverage was either neutral in intent or neutral in effect.

The complex response to the question of responsibility may also reflect a tendency revealed in many of the interviews to confuse the impact of coverage with the intent of the reporting. Robert C. Toth, Los Angeles Times correspondent, who conducted the in-depth interviews found some top editors and news producers thinking that "negative coverage" had a "neutral effect" because the media was "fair and objective," and reflected reality. Others looked at that same coverage and acknowledged that it hurt the candidate.

The quantitative survey bears out these twin aspects of the press community's belief about the tone and substance of its campaign coverage. "Negative coverage was due to his (Bush's) record" was the main reason (45%) given by journalists who nevertheless judged the effect of the coverage on Bush as neutral. But even respondents who said Bush was hurt by the coverage explained that the harm was the result of either reporting "Bush's record" (38%) or "the focus on the economy" (23%). In short, very similar reasons were given for reaching very different conclusions about press performance and responsibility.

Media reluctance to accept responsibility for its impact on the campaign is one of the most important findings to emerge from Times Mirror's in-depth interviews with top media executives. In many of these interviews there was evidence of a new defensiveness in the press this fall. "We

are more aware of our public image and trying harder not to be seen destroying people by investigative reporting and dishy stories," said a senior editor. The emergence of talk shows this year, as a chastening sign that politics can work well without the press as interlocutor may have further induced the media to lower its profile. So may have the many indications that the public is turned off by "the cult of toughness" that sought to embarrass and demean candidates.

Whatever the reasons of the media's new stance, one editor accurately predicted that "it is unimaginable that in the debates one of the candidates will be asked what he'd do if his wife was raped." Michael Dukakis stumbled badly over that rape question in 1988. Despite the "convulsive" coverage of Gennifer Flowers in the primary campaign this spring -- or perhaps because it recalled the extremes to which the press went for exposes of Gary Hart's philandering in 1988 -- a number of media respondents saw Clinton getting off easier this year than Dukakis or Hart did four years ago.

The People and the Press Differ

The public rendered a more critical judgment of the presidential campaign coverage than did journalists. However, both the press and the public see improvements in press performance over 1988.

While 80% of the news media sample rated the '92 coverage as either good or excellent, surveys of the public throughout the campaign found fewer than six in ten rating press coverage of the campaign positively and more than one in three voters feeling that the press was doing only a fair or poor job.

*Table 1
Rating of 1992 Press Coverage*

<u>Rating of Press Coverage</u>	<u>Press</u>		<u>Voters</u>			
	Nov 92	Sept 92	May 92	Mar 92	Feb 92	
Excellent	10	12	10	12	11	
Good	70	45	44	51	45	
Only Fair	16	27	33	28	32	
Poor	2	11	10	6	7	
DK/No answer	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	
	100	100	100	100	100	

The public also became sensitive to differences in the way the press covered Bush and Clinton over the course of the campaign. The percentage of voters who thought that the press was unfair in the way it covered George Bush steadily increased throughout the year. In March, only 13% of voters believed the press was being unfair to the President. By mid-September that sentiment grew to 22%. In Times Mirror's post-election survey, 35% took the view that the press was unfair to Bush in its coverage while 61% saw the press as fair in its coverage. (Comparatively, 77% believed the press was fair to Clinton and 67% believed the press was fair to Ross Perot.)

Both the public and press agreed, however, that the media improved on its 1988 effort. Times Mirror's post-election follow-up survey of voters found 36% rated the press "A" or "B" for its campaign coverage, compared to 30% who gave the press good grades after the '88 campaign. However, the percentage giving the press a "D" or "F" for its campaign performance remained relatively high (31% in '92, 35% in '88).

Similarly, many of the top media people, after grading themselves good, volunteered that the coverage was "excellent if compared with 1988." "We were determined not to ignore the issues this time, not to get caught up in the horse race (polls) and 10-second sound bites," explained one senior editor. Added a network anchor: "We had much more content analysis, much more issue reportage, this year."¹

Coverage of Issues and Economy Praised

Reflecting these views, members of the national press and the top media executives interviewed were positive about specific aspects of campaign coverage. Overall, more than 70% gave *good or excellent* ratings to coverage of Clinton's Vietnam draft status, the candidates' positions on issues, and the economy. There was little difference of opinion within the media community about press performance, as most elements of the press lauded both overall coverage and the media's handling of several specific aspects of the campaign.

The press gave itself a somewhat lower grade (63% rating it good or excellent) for coverage of *Ross Perot's candidacy*. But many of the *Powers That Be* group were nonetheless critical. "We've given Perot a free ride since he re-entered the race," complained one senior editor. "We were all on the verge of carrying very critical stories about his temperament and his personal life when he pulled out. Since he re-entered, we've treated him as an eccentric." Observed one television newsman wryly: "We may have been soft on Perot because he was good for ratings."

¹ When asked in the Spring to compare '92 and '88 coverage, 49% of Times Mirror's press respondents said they felt that coverage had improved.

Table 2
Press Rating of Coverage In General
And of Specific Issues
(Percent Rating Excellent or Good)

	<i>Overall Coverage</i>	<i>Clinton's VN Draft Status</i>	<i>The Econ-omy</i>	<i>Candidates Positions On Issues</i>	<i>N</i>
<i>Total</i>	80	72	73	76	(267)
<i>TV</i>	82	70	74	78	(141)
<i>Print/Other</i>	79	74	73	73	(126)
<i>Top</i>	84	70	81	79	(94)
<i>Middle</i>	79	73	69	74	(173)
<i>Powers</i>	83	71	75	77	(48)
<i>Male</i>	80	70	73	75	(213)
<i>Female</i>	82	78	74	78	(54)
<i>18-34</i>	84	84	89	79	(19)
<i>35-49</i>	83	67	71	78	(152)
<i>50+</i>	76	78	73	71	(94)

Times Mirror's media respondents were more self critical about coverage of *the campaign's entanglement with TV's fictional character "Murphy Brown"*. Only 50% rated coverage good or excellent and many offered a strong dose of self criticism. Sitcom's unmarried television newswoman character became a cause celebre after she bore a child on prime time and was criticized by Vice President Dan Quayle for flouting "family values." Most members of the *Powers That Be* group felt the underlying issue deserved more serious attention than it got. "Quayle's intrusion made it almost impossible for us to examine Murphy Brown in the broader social context of young, unmarried, inner city girls who are having most of the babies," admitted a television newsman. Several of the Times Mirror Center interviewees felt that, as another broadcast journalist put it, "Murphy Brown was actually good for Quayle. We instinctively lined up against him, disdainful of him, saying he's a fool. But he tapped into something." Observed a television producer: "Maybe the moral question for us is how many headlines Iran Contra got compared to Murphy Brown. I'll bet it was 7 or 8 times more about her."

Coverage of *Bush's relation to the Iran Contra* scandal received the harshest judgment. Over 70% said it was only fair (48%) or poor (23%); only one-fourth (24%) said it was good. The main excuse was the complexity of the story. "Only programs with lots of time, and papers with lots of space, could treat it adequately," said one television executive. Other excuses were that the story was old, and there was "no smoking gun" to prove that the President lied about his knowledge of the arms-for-hostages. "Besides," said a television newsman, "the polls showed most of the public believed the President lied." "Only the three serious newspapers have done a good job of explaining this issue," said a television executive, citing out the *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post* and *New York Times*.

Press Approves Talk Shows; Feeling Not Reciprocated

Television and radio *talk shows* emerged not only as a new platform in political campaigns in 1992, but as the dominant mode of discourse between candidates and voters. Twenty-three talk show hosts surveyed by Times Mirror expressed views that were almost always different, certainly more outspoken, than the traditional press. The broad community overwhelmingly approved the

effect of the shows on the campaign (68% said positive), but the shows' moderators did not return the compliment.

Nearly four in ten (39%) rated overall press performance as *only fair or poor*, which was twice more critical than was the press community at large (18%). Similarly, while seven in ten journalists gave the press good grades for the coverage of issues, the economy and Bill Clinton's draft record, more than 50% of Talk Show moderators gave only fair or poor grades to coverage of these issues.

But almost perversely, the talk show hosts were also more critical of themselves than was the general press community. One in four (26%) of the hosts said the shows had a negative effect on the campaign process. "The format doesn't really allow for exposition on the whole issue," explained one host. "A Talk Show host has an agenda - part of that agenda is entertainment and securing advertising revenue. I'm just not sure that is the ultimate and valued forum for educating the American public on political issues." Other media critics of this new phenomenon took aim at the cheerleading like atmosphere of some talk show political interviews. Questions are soft, with no follow ups, as many "*Powers That Be*" people complained. "It's a free-fire zone," said one TV executive in dismissing the new forum, "with soft-ball questions and no follow-up to keep them honest." A senior editor said: "(Larry) King is atrocious as a journalist, but if viewers had no other source of news, bad journalism is better than nothing." Said another editor: "Anytime you air issues, you have to say it's a good thing. At the same time, the quality of the shows makes me cringe."

Talks' moderators were far more likely to acknowledge that Bush was hurt by coverage than was the larger press community (74% vs. 55%), and also more certain that Clinton was helped (52% vs. 36%). Of the various community segments, they were least approving of press assessments of political commercials (only 48% vs. 77% for the community) and twice as disapproving (74% negative) of media-sponsored opinion polling compared to the rest of the press (36%). "I'm starting to think polls don't reflect public thinking," said a show host. Moderators were also more critical on coverage of issues than the community as a whole. More than half gave fair or poor marks to coverage of Clinton's draft status, of candidates' positions on issues, and of the economy, as mentioned above. But they were also more critical than the larger community on Murphy Brown coverage, and extremely critical (87% fair or poor) on Bush and Iran Contra.

"Until Perot's plan came out, for example," complained one talk show anchor on economic coverage, "there was not enough clear delineation of where Bush and Clinton stood. It should have come earlier. We (the media) thought the issue was too complicated, that people didn't care, but they did. The public began demanding more, and press responded. The public was ahead of us on such things. It has done a first rate job this year."

Print vs. Broadcast

Print and broadcast journalists judged press performance in Campaign '92 much the same, with some notable exceptions. Television newsmen were more positive about talk shows' impact than their print colleagues (75% vs. 62%), for example, but among "*The Powers That Be*", print Powers were more positive toward the shows than broadcasters.

Print bosses were often quite critical of their broadcast colleagues. "Television got outmaneuvered by the candidates and the radio talk shows this year," said one senior editor. "It decided not to be victimized by 10-second sound bites and political commercials, but it offered no substitutes. Where was the hour of prime time in the campaign explaining the issues? Why was there no hour on Clinton and Bush? I think the written press was pretty good compared to television." Another editor complained that television, unlike the print media, has avoided coverage of the press performance, particularly its own. "Being scrutinized is salutary, but there is clearly less scrutiny of TV by TV, than of print by print," he said.

In comparison, broadcast journalists were often generous in their praise of the written media, singling out specific newspapers and even individual reporters for credit on campaign stories.

These comments notwithstanding, the in-depth interviews with top print executives often revealed a very insular view of campaign coverage. As one senior editor commented on several issues: "I know how well we (his newspaper) did, and generally how well other papers did, but I can't answer about all the media."

Broadcasters were more critical than print newsmen about coverage of Bush and Iran Contra. This was an issue to which the broadcasters clearly gave less attention because it was complicated, old and unresolved. Talk Show moderators were particularly critical of opinion polling, perhaps because they found it of little use on their programs and even counter productive if horse race results turned off callers by suggesting prematurely that the race was over.

Thumbs Up to Policing Ads, Polling Divides Media

Times Mirror's press respondents were for the most part positive about press coverage of political advertising and the press covering its own campaign performance. But journalists were ambivalent, at best, about opinion polling.

The press community barely gave a positive plurality to *media-sponsored polls* (41%), with 36% negative, 12% saying neither negative or positive and 8% saying not much effect. Print respondents were marginally more favorable toward polling compared to the average. But Talk Show moderators were far more hostile (74% negative). Familiar arguments were given for and against. "The voter gets to know what the candidate knows, so he can better evaluate why the candidates are doing this or that," said one editor; "polls add insight and understanding." Said another: "It is a horse race, and people want to know who's ahead." But opponents complained that polls can be treated as "self-reinforcing prophecies," and that respondents may give "politically correct" answers that reflect who is ahead in polls rather than their own views. One television executive complained that polls, like Dow Jones averages, "make you think you know what's happening when you don't." And a television newsman observed that polls are often used as a substitute for reporting. "Polls are still a work in progress," said a columnist.

Most of the community (60%) applauded *media-coverage of media coverage*. Aside from improving accuracy and quality, the consensus view was that media policing contributes to greater public understanding of the diversity within the press. "The public needs to know that we in the media are among the most vigorous critics of the media," said an editor. But critics, particularly among the broadcasting Powers That Be, dismissed media coverage with such words as "incest" and "masturbation." This may reflect the fact that the electronic media did the least self-examination. Only CNN regularly airs a media affairs program, a condition which one print editor called "a great shortcoming of television." On the other hand, a television newsman pointed out that newspapers often use their TV entertainment editors to critique television news, producing misinformed and frequently fatuous copy.

Most applause was given to press assessments of candidates' commercials during the campaign (77% positive). Such propaganda debunking, said one television newsman, "is the primary reason why no Willie Horton ads or their cousins have appeared in this campaign. Our coverage is keeping the bastards honest." Others were less sanguine about the coverage's impact. "They still lie," said a television executive; "we're slowing them down a bit, but they run an ad 400 times while we do one news report once that says the ad is misleading." And an editor noted a downside to such coverage: "Some candidates have used our stories against their opponents, saying (media name) judged the opposition ads to be misleading. So it's not a cure, not a panacea."

"We'll need a Teddy White to come along later to see if those who planned commercials really sat around worrying about whether we'd criticize them or not," observed an editor, in a comment that could well embrace all of the innovative aspects of Campaign '92.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

DESIGN OF THE PRESS SURVEY II SAMPLE

The sample for the Times Mirror Press Survey II was designed to be representative of senior members of the national news media. The sample includes people with varying levels of responsibility within national media organizations and additionally includes an independent sample of radio talk show hosts.

First, for the general national media sample, organizations were selected and then, within selected organizations, persons holding specific professional titles were selected. The specific sampling procedures are outlined below.

The complex sample design for this survey involved measurement of three dimensions of the media:

1. Importance of medium in terms of audience size of market/influence upon populace or other media
2. Type of medium, e.g., television, newspaper, radio
3. Level of responsibility of the individual sample member

The three dimensions were sub-defined as follows:

1. Audience size/market
 - a. National audience
2. Type of medium
 - a. Newspapers
 - b. Television stations and networks
 - c. Cable networks
 - d. Wire services
 - e. Radio stations and networks
 - f. Magazines
3. Level of responsibility
 - a. "Top" - broadly defined as senior editors, news directors
 - b. "Middle" - broadly defined as correspondents and reporters

The specific sampling frames employed to select organizations were Editor and Publisher International Yearbook 1991, Broadcasting and Cablecasting Yearbook 1991, Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media 1991, and 1992 Media Encyclopedia: Working Press of the Nation.

Examination of the sampling frames and other sources suggested a two stage sampling strategy. Media organizations were first selected according to the criteria outlined below.

MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS SAMPLED

GENERAL NATIONAL SAMPLE

Network Television Stations:

ABC	NBC
CBS	CSPAN
CNN	

Televisions Chains with Washington, D.C. Bureaus:

Gannett	Conus
Cox	Hearst
Group W	King

Top Circulation/Influence Newspapers:

Wall Street Journal	Detroit Free Press
USA Today	Boston Globe
Los Angeles Times	Philadelphia Inquirer
New York Times	New York Post
New York Daily News	Miami Herald
Washington Post	Atlanta Constitution
Chicago Tribune	

Wire Services:

Associated Press International
United Press International
Reuters

News Services:

Knight-Ridder	Hart Hanks
Copley	Hearst
Gannet	McClatchey Newspapers

News Magazines:

Newsweek
Time
US News and World Report

Radio Stations and Networks:

Capital Cites/ABC Inc.	CBS
NBC	United Radio Network
National Public Radio	American Public Radio
Mutual News Radio	UPI
Sheridan Broadcasting	National Black Network
Associated Press Broadcast	

PROFESSIONAL TITLES SAMPLED AT EACH SAMPLED ORGANIZATION

NATIONAL SAMPLE - "TOP" LEVEL

Television/Radio Stations
News Directors
Newspapers/Wire Services/Magazines
Managing Editor
Executive Editor
Senior Editor

NATIONAL SAMPLE - "MIDDLE" LEVEL

Television/Radio Stations
Washington D.C. Bureau Chief

Newspapers/Wire and News Services/Magazines
Political Editor
Political Correspondent
Political Reporter
D.C. Bureau Chief

"The Powers That Be" respondents who are identified in the detailed tabulations include the very top editors or news executives of national newspapers and magazines, top networks news executives, executive producers of the most widely viewed news broadcasts, and nationally known columnists, anchors and political correspondents. In total, 48 respondents fell into this category - 19 from print and 29 from broadcasting.

The sample for the radio talk show hosts portion of the survey was selected through the National Association of Talk Show Hosts. First, the top 10 radio markets were identified. Within each market those association members with the largest audience were selected for the sample.

The final selected sample was divided into five subsamples. Each subsample was split into replicates and quotas were set for number of completed interviews from each subsample. These quotas were set because the sampling frame for "Top" level respondents was somewhat smaller than for the other groups represented in the sample. In order to ensure adequate representation of these smaller groups in the final sample of complete interviews it was necessary to set quotas. The subsamples and quotas for each are listed below:

<i>SUBSAMPLE</i>	<i>QUOTA</i>
National TV Top Level	37
National TV Middle Level	104
National Newspapers/Wire and News Services/Magazines/ Radio Top Level	57
National Newspapers/Wire and News Services/Magazines/ Radio Middle Level	69
Radio Talk Show Hosts	23
TOTAL	290

Each person sampled for this survey was mailed an advance letter. The letters were intended to introduce the survey to prospective respondents, describe the nature and purpose of the survey and encourage participation in the survey. Approximately one week after the letter was mailed specially trained interviewers began calling the individual sample members and conducting the survey or setting up appointments to conduct the survey at a later date.

Interviewers for this survey were experienced, executive interviewers specially trained to ensure their familiarity with the questionnaire and their professionalism in dealing with media professionals of this level. The interviewing was conducted from October 7, 1992 through October 29, 1992.

In addition to the regular telephone interviewing, Robert C. Toth, Correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*, conducted personal interviews with 20 of the super elite or "Powers That Be" respondents. These respondents were selected from the top level sample in each category.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

TIMES MIRROR PRESS OPINION SURVEY
OCTOBER 7-29, 1992
Press/N=267
Powers That Be/N=48
Talk Show Hosts/N=23

INTRODUCTION: Hello, I am _____ calling on behalf of the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press in Washington, DC. May I speak with (Name of Respondent). Is now a convenient time to conduct the interview that was written to you about? **(IF NO - ASK TO SET UP AN APPOINTMENT?)**

Q.1 All in all, what campaign event has had the greatest impact on the Presidential election campaign, so far? (Accepted more than one response if given)

	<u>PRESS</u>				<u>Talk Show Hosts</u>
	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/ Other</u>	<u>Powers That Be</u>	
Debates	22	27	17	17	30
Republican convention	15	15	15	8	4
Continuing bad economic news/recession	14	15	13	29	4
NET: Perot mentions	28	26	31	35	44
Perot entering the race	11	11	11	8	13
Perot dropping out of the race	11	11	10	8	22
Perot (general)	9	6	12	23	17
Democratic convention	10	11	10	15	9
Clinton's success/campaign strength	9	9	10	13	13
Right wing effect on Republican campaign	8	8	9	4	-
Declining confidence in Bush	8	6	9	8	4
Coverage of Clinton character issue	5	6	4	6	-
No one event/events not important	4	4	5	6	-

	<u>PRESS</u>				Talk Show Hosts
	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/Other</u>	<u>Powers That Be</u>	
Primaries/Events connected to the primaries	3	4	2	4	4
High level of voter interest	2	3	2	-	4

Q.2 All in all, how would you rate the press coverage of the '92 Campaign? Would you say the coverage has been excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	<u>PRESS</u>				Talk Show Hosts
	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/Other</u>	<u>Powers That Be</u>	
Excellent	10	10	9	11	26
Good	70	71	70	73	35
Only Fair	16	16	16	8	17
Poor	2	1	3	2	22
Don't know	$\frac{2}{100}$	$\frac{2}{100}$	$\frac{2}{100}$	$\frac{6}{100}$	$\frac{-}{100}$

Q.3 All in all, has George Bush's candidacy been helped or hurt by the way the press has covered him or has the press coverage had a neutral effect on his candidacy?

	<u>PRESS</u>				Talk Show Hosts
	<u>Total May 92</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/Other</u>	
Helped	22	3	2	3	-
Neutral effect	50	39	38	40	26
Hurt	*24	55*	57	54	74
Don't know	$\frac{2}{98^2}$	$\frac{3}{100}$	$\frac{3}{100}$	$\frac{3}{100}$	$\frac{-}{100}$

²2% also volunteered "both helped & hurt" in May, 1992.

Q.4 Why do you feel that way? (**PROBE:ANYTHING ELSE?**)

	<u>PRESS</u>				Talk Show Hosts ³
	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/ Other</u>	<u>Powers That Be</u>	
NEUTRAL:					
Negative coverage due to record	45	51	38	61	2
Press has been fair/ Unbiased	34	36	32	17	1
Press given equal treatment to both	7	2	12	6	1
Negative & positive balance each other	7	8	6	-	1
Press is not trusted/ Media bashing	6	8	4	-	-
Press gives Bush benefit of the doubt	5	4	6	-	-
Press has little effect on voters	1	-	2	-	1
Don't know/No answer	$\frac{4}{109^4}$	$\frac{6}{115}$	$\frac{2}{102}$	$\frac{17}{101}$	$\frac{-}{6}$
HURT:					
Press has reported Bush record	38	35	41	44	5
Focus on economy has made Bush look bad	23	23	24	44	-
Press is biased against Bush	16	13	21	8	5
Press is biased towards Clinton	14	13	15	8	5
Coverage is tougher/ more thorough	10	9	10	16	1

³The numbers for "Talk Show Hosts" reflect **frequencies** rather than percentages for this open-ended question.

⁴Percentages add to more than 100% because more than one response was accepted.

	<u>PRESS</u>				Talk Show Hosts
	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/ Other</u>	<u>Powers That Be</u>	
Press is critical/ Adversarial	8	10	6	-	3
Coverage reflected voter discontent	6	8	4	4	1
Media bashing made Bush look bad	3	4	3	4	-
Press tougher due to incumbency	3	4	3	4	-
Other	2	1	3	-	-
Don't know/No answer	$\frac{1}{124}$	$\frac{1}{121}$	$\frac{2}{132}$	$\frac{4}{136}$	$\frac{-}{20}$

Q.5 All in all, has Bill Clinton's candidacy been helped or hurt by the way the press has covered him or has the press coverage had a neutral effect on his candidacy?

	<u>PRESS</u>					Talk Show Hosts
	<u>Total May 92</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/ Other</u>	<u>Powers That Be</u>	
Helped	13	36	42	30	33	52
Neutral effect	12	49	45	54	46	35
Hurt	*64	11*	8	14	17	9
Don't know	$\frac{1}{90^5}$	$\frac{4}{100}$	$\frac{5}{100}$	$\frac{2}{100}$	$\frac{4}{100}$	$\frac{4}{100}$

⁵10% also volunteered "both helped & hurt" in May, 1992.

Q.6 Why do you feel that way? (PROBE:ANYTHING ELSE?)

	PRESS				
	Total	TV	Print/ Other	Powers That Be	Talk Show Hosts ⁶
HELPED:					
Press is biased towards him	29	29	29	13	7
Strong campaign/Good campaign strategy	23	24	21	44	2
Positive coverage a reaction to attacks	17	19	13	19	1
Coverage of Bush has made him look good	13	9	21	6	1
Not subjected to same scrutiny as Bush	13	14	13	13	2
Press did not know him/ his record well	8	9	8	13	-
Because he is new/ Represents change	7	5	11	-	1
Young press enthusiastic about Clinton/Gore	4	2	8	6	-
Other	<u>2</u> 116 ⁷	<u>2</u> 113	<u>3</u> 127	<u>-</u> 114	<u>-</u> 14
NEUTRAL:					
Negative & positive balance each other	66	59	72	68	5
Press has portrayed reality	18	19	16	9	1
Press has been fair and unbiased	11	11	10	14	2
Press has little effect on voters	5	6	3	-	-

⁶The numbers for "Talk Show Hosts" reflect **frequencies** rather than percentages for this open-ended question.

⁷Percentages add to more than 100% because more than one response was accepted.

	<u>PRESS</u>				<u>Talk Show Hosts</u>
	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/ Other</u>	<u>Powers That Be</u>	
Press has given equal treatment	4	5	3	5	-
Other	2	2	3	5	1
Don't know	$\frac{2}{108}$	$\frac{5}{107}$	$\frac{-}{107}$	$\frac{5}{106}$	9^{-}
HURT:					
Extensive focus on character issues	69	58	77	75	1
Press just reported facts about Clinton	17	8	24	13	-
Questions about his veracity/Trust	14	8	18	13	-
Press is critical/ Adversarial	14	25	6	13	1
Focus on his record as Arkansas Governor	3	8	-	-	-
Other	$\frac{3}{120}$	$\frac{-}{107}$	$\frac{6}{131}$	$\frac{-}{114}$	$\frac{-}{2}$

Q.7 As I read from a list of campaign stories tell me how good a job you think the press has done in covering each.. First (**READ ITEM - THEN ASK**) Would you rate press coverage of this as excellent, good, only fair or poor?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Can't Say</u>
a. Clinton's Vietnam draft status					
Total	11	61	21	6	1=100
TV	10	60	22	6	2=100
Print/Other	11	63	20	5	1=100
Powers That Be	21	50	23	4	2=100
Talk Show Hosts	8	35	35	22	0=100
b. Ross Perot's candidacy					
Total	15	48	27	7	3=100
TV	14	51	24	9	2=100
Print/Other	15	44	31	6	4=100
Powers That Be	21	46	23	6	4=100
Talk Show Hosts	13	52	31	4	0=100
c. George Bush and Iran Contra					
Total	4	24	48	23	1=100
TV	4	21	49	25	1=100
Print/Other	3	27	48	21	1=100
Powers That Be	4	21	48	23	4=100
Talk Show Hosts	0	13	52	35	0=100
d. Murphy Brown					
Total	12	38	31	13	6=100
TV	14	39	27	14	6=100
Print/Other	8	37	36	13	6=100
Powers That Be	15	33	31	17	4=100
Talk Show Hosts	31	17	22	30	0=100
e. The debate about the debates					
Total	13	58	20	5	4=100
TV	13	58	19	4	6=100
Print/Other	13	59	21	6	1=100
Powers That Be	15	65	12	4	4=100
Talk Show Hosts	13	61	13	13	0=100
f. The candidates' positions on the issues					
Total	17	59	21	2	1=100
TV	17	61	19	2	1=100
Print/Other	16	57	25	1	1=100
Powers That Be	25	52	19	2	2=100
Talk Show Hosts	4	44	43	9	0=100

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Can't Say</u>
g. The economy					
Total	27	46	23	3	1=100
TV	28	46	22	3	1=100
Print/Other	26	47	24	2	1=100
Powers That Be	27	48	15	8	2=100
Talk Show Hosts	0	44	30	26	0=100

Q.8 Do you think press assessment of candidates' commercials is having a positive effect or negative effect on the campaign process?

	<u>PRESS</u>				
	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/Other</u>	<u>Powers That Be</u>	<u>Talk Show Hosts</u>
Positive	77	74	81	77	48
Not negative or positive (VOL)	6	7	4	9	9
Negative	2	4	1	2	13
Not much effect (VOL)	10	8	12	6	30
Don't know	$\frac{5}{100}$	$\frac{7}{100}$	$\frac{2}{100}$	$\frac{6}{100}$	$\frac{-}{100}$

Q.9 Do you think the increased importance of talk shows such as Larry King and Rush Limbaugh is having a positive effect or negative effect on the campaign process?

	<u>PRESS</u>				
	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/Other</u>	<u>Powers That Be</u>	<u>Talk Show Hosts</u>
Positive	68	75	62	73	65
Not negative or positive (VOL)	8	4	11	13	5
Negative	19	16	23	8	26
Not much effect (VOL)	1	1	1	-	-
Don't know	$\frac{4}{100}$	$\frac{4}{100}$	$\frac{3}{100}$	$\frac{6}{100}$	$\frac{4}{100}$

Q.10 Do you think media coverage of media coverage of the campaign is having a positive effect or negative effect on campaign coverage?

	<u>PRESS</u>				
	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/ Other</u>	<u>Powers That Be</u>	<u>Talk Show Hosts</u>
Positive	60	52	69	54	39
Not negative or positive (VOL)	11	16	5	13	22
Negative	10	10	9	6	22
Not much effect (VOL)	14	16	13	23	17
Don't know	$\frac{5}{100}$	$\frac{6}{100}$	$\frac{4}{100}$	$\frac{4}{100}$	$\frac{-}{100}$

Q.11 Do you think media-sponsored opinion polling is having a positive effect or negative effect on campaign coverage?

	<u>PRESS</u>				
	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/ Other</u>	<u>Powers That Be</u>	<u>Talk Show Hosts</u>
Positive	41	37	45	42	18
Not negative or positive (VOL)	12	13	11	17	4
Negative	36	36	35	31	74
Not much effect (VOL)	8	8	8	4	4
Don't know	$\frac{3}{100}$	$\frac{6}{100}$	$\frac{1}{100}$	$\frac{6}{100}$	$\frac{-}{100}$

Q.12 How do you rate the chances of Bill Clinton winning the White House in November? Do you think there is an excellent chance, good chance, only fair chance or poor chance that Clinton will win in November?

		<u>PRESS</u>					
		<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>Print/</u>	<u>Powers</u>	<u>Talk</u>
		<u>May 92⁸</u>			<u>Other</u>	<u>That Be</u>	<u>Show</u>
							<u>Hosts</u>
Excellent		1	56	58	54	65	43
Good		12	39	38	40	25	48
Only fair	+)))))))))	*52	3*	2	5	4	9
Poor		*32	-*	-	-	0	-
Can't say	.)))))))))-	3	2	2	1	6	-
		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

⁸Question wording in May, 1992 was "How do you rate the chances of a Democrat ...".