

Thirteen

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Bill Moyers' Journal

Campaign Report #9 Election Eve Special

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Campaign Report #9 — Election Eve Special

[Tease — Interior, studio]

BILL MOYERS: Good evening. The candidates have said all they're going to say, told all they're going to tell. We've listened. We've looked. We've laughed one minute and reached for aspirin the next. We've questioned. Nodded yes, then no. Changed our mind a score of times. And now in voting booths like this one tomorrow, we must decide. Tonight, in this special edition of the Journal, some reflections on the campaign. I'm Bill Moyers.

[Bill Moyers' Journal opening]

[Interior, studio]

MOYERS: You will not hear in these 90 minutes any of the candidates. We will not dissect the issues again. And, frankly, we have no idea how the events in Iran will affect the election. Nor is there a theme to this broadcast any more than there has been a theme to this campaign. We thought it a good time just to listen to Americans making up their minds, and to consider a point or two that struck our fancy in these dwindling hours of decision. We begin on the road. Our first stop — Pittsburgh, where the Steelers were playing the Cincinnati Bengals. We went there because the lingo of sports so pervades politics today, it seemed fitting to see how fans and players were lining up for the big game itself — the contest for the White House. Ohio and Pennsylvania between them account for 52 electoral votes, more than the points scored in that game. Then we go to Watts — that black ghetto in Los Angeles that was the scene of bloody riots in 1965. We chose Watts, not because we thought its people representative of black voters at large — we don't know if they are and most blacks live outside ghetto precincts. No, we chose Watts because it's the home of an outspoken man named Ted Watkins, who took us around to hear some people rarely affected at all by presidential politics. In keeping with the spirit of the campaign, and the times, we will occasionally interrupt our reflections with — you guessed it — commercials. Old commercials from previous campaigns, reminding us that in a media age, politics is the way we amuse ourselves between wars. I'll be right back, after this message.

[Franklin Delano Roosevelt 1933 political ad]

MICKEY MOUSE *[fleeing Depression, mobs at banks and stock market crash]:* Doctor! Doctor! Doctor!

Dr. PILL *[pointing to F.D.R. poster]:* There's your doctor.

MICKEY MOUSE: Mr. President, what will cure a depression?

PRESIDENT *[singing]:* Confidence can lick this old depression! Confidence, and wear the right expression! Smile! Grin! Laugh right out loud, and watch the golden sunshine scatter every cloud! Confidence — hey, hey! It's our salvation! Confidence, the hope of our great nation! Teach it, preach it, count it, shout it — Confidence! Just have confidence!

[Pittsburgh — stadium parking lot]

FOOTBALL FAN: Carter, for sure. He's more definite. Reagan's too wishy-washy. Carter, for sure.

ANOTHER FAN: Carter, because Reagan is against women's rights and against minimum wage. He thinks it's too high for people. And those two reasons alone are why I wouldn't vote for him.

ANOTHER FAN: Who I'm for and why? I'm for Reagan. I think we need a change, we've had enough problems for long enough. That's about it, pal.

ANOTHER FAN: Should you put Reagan in, who needs another four years of experience? Carter already has four years, maybe he'll do better the next four, so I'll vote for Carter.

[Inside stadium — workers preparing for game]

STADIUM WORKER: I'll vote for Reagan.

REPORTER: Why?

WORKER: Because, the other guy didn't take our boys back from Iran. He's weak. Carter's weak, very weak person.

REPORTER: Have you always felt that way about him?

WORKER: No, I voted for Carter. Ain't going to vote for him this time.

2nd WORKER: Well, I'm not sure who I'm for. Last time I voted against Carter and this time I'm undecided. I may be that way until the day it comes to vote. I'm not sure who I want. If they could find a way out to give me more money out of my pay — that's the main issue with me. My paycheck. And I think every individual thinks the same. Take more home.

[Outside stadium, before game]

FAN: Anderson. Because, he's different. Carter's been around for a long time and he hasn't done very good and I don't like Reagan. You know, why have a movie star?

ANOTHER FAN: I'm for Reagan, because I feel that Carter's had his opportunity and has completely failed the country. I think it's time we give someone else a chance, although I am a registered Democrat.

ANOTHER FAN: I'm a member of the National Rifle Association. They say go with Reagan all the way, so that's who I'm going with.

REPORTER: Purely on that one issue?

FAN: Purely on that one issue. That's all I need.

REPORTER: Why is that so important to you?

FAN: Because I love my hunting. I love my guns. And, if we get somebody else in there, there it goes — down the drain.

ANOTHER FAN: There's none of them that's worth a damn. I vote religiously, okay? But I think this is a wasted vote this time here. All right, now, I'm going to vote for Anderson. As a protest vote.

ANOTHER FAN: I'm voting for Reagan. For business' sake. I think that Carter screwed the steel industry, and I think Reagan will help it.

ANOTHER FAN: Reagan! You know, I hear all these things he did in California — you know, I don't know what he did in California. I live in Pennsylvania, all right. I'm interested in the steel mills here in Pennsylvania. I'm interested in labor here in Pennsylvania, okay. I'm not interested in what Reagan can do for those people. I want to know what Reagan's going to do for me and my people.

ANOTHER FAN: I'm not voting for anybody. I'm voting against Carter.

REPORTER: Why?

FAN: Why? I think his record for the last four years has been fantastically outstanding for ruining the country. Economically, housing, jobs, everything.

[At the game]

FAN: I'm going to vote for Reagan hoping that Bush will become president. Because Reagan and Carter, I don't think you have a choice. And we know Carter's bad. We don't know about Reagan. So I figure I'd take with the unknown, hoping that Bush gets in, who I think is an intelligent man and can handle the situation.

REPORTER: How about you?

ANOTHER FAN: Carter all the way.

REPORTER: Tell me why.

FAN: Because Carter's the closest thing labor has to an ally.

ANOTHER FAN: Well, I think I'll vote for Reagan. I don't care for Carter. He doesn't have a presidential attitude, I don't think.

ANOTHER FAN: Reagan.

REPORTER: Why, sir?

FAN: We need a change. We must have a change.

ANOTHER FAN: Reagan.

REPORTER: Why, sir?

FAN: The best of the two.

ANOTHER FAN: Let's give someone else a chance to make things better or worse. I'm for Reagan.

ANOTHER FAN: I'm going to vote for Reagan, because I think we need a change. Carter is a big disappointment to me.

CAMERAMAN: I'm voting for Anderson because I feel that sooner or later we've got to elect somebody who tells it like it is, and he's honest. I run down his platform, and I find myself in perfect agreement with everything. I think it's a good blend of conservatism and liberalism and—I just like the man.

FAN: Reagan, because I'm very unhappy with what 'Peanuts' has done.

REPORTER: In what way?

FAN: Practically every way. He gave the Panama Canal away. And he hasn't supported the steel workers and the coal people.

ANOTHER FAN: Well, I would vote for Jimmy Carter. Why, because I think he's done a lot for the United States. Like, you know, he's made peace between the Middle East.

ANOTHER FAN: I think it takes more than four years for him to accomplish the goals and objectives that he had in mind. And I'm a Democrat, so I definitely wouldn't consider Ronald Reagan.

ANOTHER FAN: Reagan's not going to do nothing for us [blacks]. Reagan don't care about us. Reagan's not going to do anything for us.

ANOTHER FAN: Reagan. I voted for Jimmy Carter the last time and all these steel workers are out of work, and the gasoline costs you more money to get to work if you are working. And Reagan looks like he's going to do something about it.

ANOTHER FAN: Reagan—I never even considered him a governor. He's an actor. Lies like hell.

ANOTHER FAN: I'm thinking of voting for Ronald Reagan. All three of them are saying that they're born again. But he, most likely, right now, is saying biblically, and going along with biblical principles and doesn't want ERA because he feels it's a ruination of the family life.

PHOTOGRAPHER: As far as Reagan, he's more on the home front. He doesn't—no political war policy. I think it would be better to have someone, with the Middle East crisis and everything, that knows some foreign policy in there.

REPORTER: So you voted for Carter four years ago?

PHOTOGRAPHER: No, I didn't, I was for Ford four years ago. But, since he's not running, I think I'll stick with Carter this year.

[After the game: interior, locker room]

FOOTBALL PLAYER: Well, I found the one thing in my football career that you have to do, is you have to

make a decision, when you're playing. And I believe one thing Mr. Reagan can do, right or wrong, is make a decision.

ANOTHER PLAYER: I'm not that fired up about Ronald Reagan. The man has a good record, and I have a lot of respect for him, but I don't feel that he has the international acumen necessary to lead this nation at this point in time. Plus, his age is a critical factor, I feel.

ANOTHER PLAYER: Well, right now it's Anderson, because I think he's the only one that has the intellectual ability to really handle the job right now. I don't think Carter's done the job that we need, and I don't think Reagan can conceptually handle the job.

ANOTHER PLAYER: If I had to be pinned down to giving an answer, I can tell you who I'm not going to vote for. That sort of leaves only two other people. I'm not voting for Reagan.

ANOTHER PLAYER: I don't think there's any choice. I think there's no clear cut candidates. They seem to intermix a lot, and I think I'll end up going down a party line that I like. The Anderson ticket just seems to be something that tempts me right now.

ANOTHER PLAYER: I feel that irregardless of the choice, you know, it's like — irregardless of what the score is a half time — you know, we've got to come out and play.

[Interior, radio studio — Watts, California]

DISC JOCKEY: Good afternoon, southern California. This is KACE, 103.9, daily for the music of southern California. Los Angeles, of course — the sound of Watts. Reminding you to make your vote count. And if you don't understand where I'm coming from, let the unknown rapper put it on your mind, as he talks about Election '80.

[Film montage — Watts today]

[Song]

Well, it's 1980, you know what I mean? A lot of candidates on the presidential scene. The people are looking for a new direction. They're going to voice a choice in the '80 election. They're going to voice a choice in the '80 Election! And you knows it. Don't be a sucker! Don't be a sap! This is me and my election rap. I'll spell it out and lay it in your lap, we got a presidential generation gap. Anderson says he's the one. Jimmy says he's smarter. Ronald Reagan says he'll save our sons, and he'll save our daughters. The candidates say they'll and inflation. And save our paychecks from gas stations. Oh, yes. They'll balance the budget, too. With a few more taxes for me and you! Your party, my party. Everybody's got a party!

[Film montage — Watts riot, 1965]

TED WATKINS *[voice-over]*: The Watts riot covered ten square miles of Los Angeles. Let me see if I can analyze, you know, what has happened in Watts in the 15 years that have shown up. And why people are voting in the national election. Why people basically are more politically astute, why people have more feelings about the political process here in Watts than they do in most communities in the black nation across this country. In the urban ghettos across this nation, and I have visited every one of them, *[on camera — in a park]* is that the only reason that people are not rebelling, that they're not going into hot summers and etc. is because of the sophisticated police departments that have been developed, basically to occupy black ghettos in the United States today. They've been concentrating on them for the last 15 years, and developing techniques on how to deal with mob situations. They've pulled in more liquor in these ghettos in the last 15 years, than they ever did before. They've got more dope coming into these communities. People who basically would be active in any kind of situation like that are now resorting out of frustration to parking lots, drinking, dope and, and, and — which actually begins to take their mind out of the problem areas that they really face.

[In parking lot — Watts]

MAN *[playing harmonica and singing]*: Don't you forget the election. Baby. Carter should be on the run —

2nd MAN: Black people don't have anything to do with politics. We've been in this country for 400 years and we don't have nothing now. We won't get nothing later. You understand me? Politics is for white people.

3rd MAN: The point is what Reagan did to us— You know what Reagan did for us? Reagan said we ought to be treated like animals—

4th MAN: We don't want Reagan. Reagan can't do nothin'. Reagan isn't no president. Reagan wasn't even governor. He was a cowboy. He was a cowboy. We don't want Reagan.

[Back at park]

WATKINS: I could not accept what we saw this morning down there as a part of my life. I would have to be constantly fighting against that. The reason that I came to California when I was 14 years old, was because I refused to get off of a sidewalk in Mississippi, because a Western Union boy wanted me off the sidewalk. And I hit him. My father told me that I had to leave at midnight, because the next morning Western Union boys were going to get together and lynch me in Vicksburg, Mississippi. I left when I was 14 years old and came to California. I can't accept that second class frame of mind — the conditions, the environment, that everybody wants to put me under. And I can't believe that there's a situation today that exists that says that every black man has to be in his place, has to accept this way of life.

[Elsewhere in Watts — Watkins interviewing fellow blacks]

WATKINS: Do you think that anybody running for office cares anything about what's happening in the black community or across this country?

MAN: No.

WATKINS: Really cares?

MAN: No.

WATKINS: Do you feel that Mr. Carter has done something?

WOMAN: He will. Give him a chance to prove himself, I feel. But Reagan, no way. He's going to cut out welfare. He's going to try to do everything to harm us. And there's really going to be some killing and stuff if he tries to cut off our welfare and different things.

2nd WOMAN: Hey, if you can't go to someone to get better help for your house, you know, to provide for your kids, you know— they really— what's the sense in, you know, putting forth any effort and, you know, voting for somebody or, talking about your fellow congressman, or doing this or doing that — when you're not getting the proper help yourself? Only thing is, that matters are going to get worsen. It's going to get worse!

3rd WOMAN: If we get Carter down here in the black community to spend a night in some of these black folks' homes, maybe he can get the feeling of what's going on down here.

4th WOMAN: That's right, honey. It is so right.

MAN: None of the candidates have really said too much about what they're going to do for black people. Everybody's talking about Iran, Iraq, the war and all that, but we got a whole lot of tension going on right here in our cities, in the street, you know. Right next door! And nobody's doing nothing to solve that.

[Elsewhere in Watts]

MAN: People have forgot about what went on here. It's time to build this city back up to what it was once before. Things is getting really terrible — the crime rate, everything is going up. You know why? Because, we don't have nothing to do. No places to go. No jobs!

2nd MAN: I'm a garbage man, all right? I've been dumping garbage cans for 20 years. You think Washington care about me? Huh? Hell, No! You think they care about me? Hell, no!

WOMAN: They sittin' up there on the hill. They ain't doing a damn thing down here for us. You know, only time you see the people from Washington down here is around election time, you know?

[Elsewhere in Watts]

WATKINS: Somewhere along the line, blacks have to show some unity, a show of strength. And I don't think the election is the glue that's going to do that. If for no other reason, they should vote, is because Ku Kluxs are on the rise and voting. All kinds of racists are on the rise and voting. If you were saying that there's more reason for us not to vote, I'm saying that there's more reasons today for black America to vote than there ever has been before in the history of this country.

[Elsewhere in Watts]

YOUNG WOMAN: What we really need is Kennedy. That's who we need for president. We don't need Reagan. We don't need Carter. We don't need none of them.

WATKINS: But, why Kennedy?

YOUNG WOMAN: Because he's best. He helped us blacks. Just like Abraham Lincoln. He's for the blacks.

WOMAN: Put Reagan up there, like my baby says, he's going to send us all back to Africa!

WATKINS: You think Ronald Reagan's going to send us all back to Africa, honey?

2nd WOMAN: He's prejudiced. And I know that for a fact.

1st WOMAN: All he's going to say is we're lazy, don't want to work, want to stay on welfare. How can we work when we ain't got no jobs?

MAN: I'm a Democrat, but like my man was saying, I'm voting Republican.

WATKINS: You're going to vote Republican?

MAN: That's right.

WATKINS: You're going to vote for Ronald Reagan?

MAN: That's right.

WATKINS: Why?

MAN: What has Jimmy Carter done for the blacks?

WATKINS: Nothing. What has Ronald Reagan done for the blacks?

MAN: He ain't done nothing. As a matter of fact, he's a racism, I think. Because, he ain't going to let nobody come over and kick our ass and take what we got. If we're going to have to fight him, we don't want to fight him and Russia! From a ghetto point of view, you Democrats, you know, when you learn politics, right? You Democrats— you ain't got— you ain't got nobody to tell you what the Republicans are about, right? Most blacks are born Democrats, right? We don't even know what the Republican Party is about. Right? So what I'm saying is, you know, until you know what your rights are, you know, you don't know nothing!

[Elsewhere in Watts]

MAN: Everything boils down to nothing but a little hustlin'. Everybody comes down to hustle. People will come down to hustle. Police come down to hustle niggers, you understand? This is nothing but a hustling center. Right? That's all this is. All that other bullshit ain't bother nothin' you all are doing.

2nd MAN: Government hustles big.

3rd MAN: That's the biggest pimp going.

2nd MAN: They got the big hustle, right? They got the big hustle. It's a game, that voting.

1st MAN: It's a game, that's all. It's just the thing, you know. It's all a game, you understand? A guy comes to my door and asks, you know, would you register to vote. You understand what I mean? I said, 'What am I going to get out of it?' He says, 'But, I'm trying to make 75 cents. Man, everyone I get to register, I get 75 cents.' See how hard you got to hustle.

[Montage — hustling, music, action, etc.]

ANNOUNCER: Bill Moyers' Journal will be back after this message.

[Eisenhower for President 1952 commercial]

ECHOING VOICE: The man from Abilene! Out of the heartlands of America, out of this small frame house in Abilene, Kansas, came a man — Dwight D. Eisenhower. Through the crucial hours of historic D-Day, he brought us the triumph and peace of VE-Day. Now, another crucial hour in our history. The big question—

REPORTER: General, if war comes, is this country really ready?

EISENHOWER: It is not. The administration has spent many billions of dollars for national defense. Yet, today, we haven't enough tanks for the fighting in Korea. It is a time for a change.

ECHOING VOICE: The nation, haunted by the stalemate in Korea, looks to Eisenhower. Eisenhower knows how to deal with the Russians! He has met Europe's leaders, has got them working with us. Elect the number one man for the number one job of our time. November 4th! Vote for peace! Vote for Eisenhower!

[Interior, studio]

MOYERS: Next to being a candidate in the race for president, and choosing as a voter among the candidates, there's nothing harder about a race than reporting it. Instead of looking down the tube as a spectator, you're living in the swirling patterns of the kaleidoscope itself. No one has reported the campaign better — if I may be permitted a bit of boastful camaraderie — than my colleagues at National Public Radio. I've invited some of them to join me electronically this evening for a last roundup before the polls open. Linda Wertheimer, chief political reporter for NPR has been covering both Reagan and Carter. She's with us at the White House in Washington. Scott Simon in Chicago has been covering John Anderson and the voters of the midwest. Cokie Roberts has also been following the candidates and the voters. She's in Los Angeles. Linda, you were with Ronald Reagan yesterday. How's the Reagan camp reacting to the events in Iran?

LINDA WERTHEIMER *[in Washington]:* We heard about it very early in the morning. They got a call from the State Department at around six. And Governor Reagan had some meetings and decided to stick to his schedule and a policy of 'no comment'. He was a little bit gentler with the President in his first campaign appearance of the day than he had been. But then later in the day, their spirits lifted and their rhetoric got very hot indeed. And he started attacking the president. On the plane, they were elated. I think, without them actually saying so, that they must have been getting positive information from the tracking polls that they were taking. They were giving us the impression that the October surprise that they had been dreading had happened. And the surprise was, that it may be possible for the hostages to come home and Governor Reagan to be elected in the same week.

MOYERS: Jimmy Carter has had to campaign all year, Linda, under the cloud of those hostages. What has it meant to him?

WERTHEIMER: I think it has sometimes been a cloud and it sometimes been a great help to him. It helped him to really eclipse Senator Edward Kennedy, both because the American people rallied around the president in Iowa for the caucuses, giving him a big send-off. And, because, when Senator Kennedy made some comments about the president's handling of the situation, when he was in San Francisco, he took a dive in the polls. The president used it again in Wisconsin, with a very early morning press conference, talking about there being some hope, the day of the Wisconsin primary. He won the primary and the hostages did not come home. My impression is that the president has used this issue very well, up to this point. But it seems to me that he has used it and he has used it — and he may very well have used it up.

MOYERS: Cokie, one of your beats this campaign has been the voters themselves. What has the hostage situation said and meant to them?

COKIE ROBERTS *[in Los Angeles]:* Well, aside, Bill, from the whole question of the hostages themselves they've become symbolic of a whole variety of issues that are troubling American voters this year. I hear over and over again, we're out of control. Why should a little country like Iran be able to push us around and take our people? But they're not just talking about those hostages. They're talking about being out of control of a whole variety of things. Being out of control of their pocketbooks. Out of control of their kids. Mothers said to me over and over

again. 'I had to go back to work.' And they feel badly about it. They can't be the same kinds of mothers that their mothers were. But, on the other hand, they like it. They like having that sense of power. So then their husbands feel out of control of them. So that there's a whole variety of things that those hostages are just a tiny symbol of in this election year.

MOYERS: What has the political impact of that sense of hopelessness meant?

ROBERTS: Well, it has worked better for Ronald Reagan. No question about it. Because the hopelessness has been especially true in the economy. And people talk also in terms of American strength abroad. We remember when we were number one. I had a woman say to me the day after the debate in Pittsburgh, 'I decided to go for Reagan because I remember when I used to be proud of this country, and I want to be proud of it again.' So, there's that sense of renewed hope of going back to another time that he has played upon. On the other hand, people don't really believe they can go back to another time, and that has worked for Jimmy Carter.

MOYERS: Has the conversation of the voters, Cokie, changed in the course of the two months you've been on the trail?

ROBERTS: It has changed tremendously. Right after the conventions we heard nothing but the economy. You'd go into a shopping mall — and at the end of this I think I'll write 'Shopping Malls I Have Known' — and people would talk about nothing but the economy. And then all of a sudden, around the beginning of October — and, I wasn't looking for it — people started talking about war and peace. Especially women. One woman after another would say to me, 'I'm afraid for my son. I don't want my son to go to war.' And so then that had switched from the economy, which was working for Ronald Reagan, to war and peace, which was working for Jimmy Carter. Since the debate, I haven't heard so much about war and peace. Ronald Reagan hasn't seemed as scary. And we've heard more in this last couple of days about — well, if Reagan wins, maybe he'll surround himself with some good people. So I've heard a lot more about that in the last day or two. Of course the hostage thing has got a whole new conversation, and yesterday was the day it happened, which was Sunday, which was a tough day, Bill, because you get men and women together. And they don't tell you the same things when they're together.

MOYERS: That's revealing, sociologically as well as politically. Scott, there's another unknown factor in this election than the hostages, and that's the campaign of John Anderson. What has happened to that campaign?

SCOTT SIMON [*in Chicago*]: Well, I think the short answer is that Mr. Anderson and his people underestimated severely the cost of the campaign — the cost both in terms of money and time, and just devotion of interest, to getting on the ballot. They underestimated the amount of money they'd need for a credible television campaign. And they overestimated critically the amount of money that they could raise through direct mail, the amount of money they could get through bank loans — which turned out to be nothing — and, I think, very critically, they overestimated the amount of media time they could get after a while, considering their position in the polls and how that media attention might be used to establish Mr. Anderson as a serious, substantial alternative to the two major party candidates.

MOYERS: Well, six months ago, people were saying John Anderson was crazy to be running as a Republican, and lately they've been saying he's crazy to be running as an independent. What does that say to you about 1980?

SIMON: It just says to me that there are some people, of course, who plainly believe he's crazy, whatever he does, which I think is probably unfair. The ideological differences were there. Mr. Anderson was not particularly at home in that Republican Party which nominated Ronald Reagan. And I think there are clear differences that he tried to establish between himself and the president and Mr. Reagan on things like military policy, his opposition to the MX missile — on domestic policy, his, really, greater willingness to use the powers of government to reindustrialize the northern industrial and midwestern states. But, I guess what must be the biggest disappointment to him is that he was never able to make any of his issues those issues which turned the campaign. He was never able to establish himself as riding the crest of an issue and forcing the president or Mr. Reagan to respond to it.

MOYERS: You've been with those folks for the last few days. What, in an honest moment, did they tell you is the impact they will have tomorrow?

SIMON: An honest moment? They say they'll stand up for some principles. They might, just might, win Connecticut. And they'll have had a good time and learned a lot.

MOYERS: Well, learned a lot. Do you think they'll go on from here? Or is this the last hurrah for John Anderson?

SIMON: You know, I really can't answer that. I think he's been increasingly candid with at least the local interviewers in the campaign over the past few weeks that he might want to continue as a politically-active independent, possibly even as a candidate for president, or found a new party. And I really don't know about that. I think he'll make an attempt to be active in public life. If he makes an attempt to form a new party, and continue that sort of candidacy for the president, I think he'll run into an organizational problem, which is that a great many of the people that have joined him this time out were Kennedy Democrats. And four years from now they might prefer to begin again in the Democratic Party and only join an independent effort if it seems called for at the moment. But I don't think, to answer the question in a more general way, we've seen the last of the independent candidacies launched from what's really broadly accepted as the mainstream of American political thought.

MOYERS: Linda Wertheimer, if you could identify the one factor that's been the most crucial to Reagan in the alleged surge that he's been experiencing in the last few days, what would it be?

WERTHEIMER: It would be the debate in Cleveland. And before the debate in Cleveland, it would be the debate in Chicago or the debate in Manchester or the debate in Nashua, New Hampshire.

MOYERS: Why?

WERTHEIMER: Governor Reagan had one very serious problem when he started out — that was his age — and his perceived conservatism, and the ability of the Carter campaign, which has gone up and down during the course of the year, to make Ronald Reagan the issue. They succeeded to a great extent in the beginning of the fall, as Cokie said, when the war and peace issue began to be in the front of everybody's minds with the Iran-Iraq war, President Carter talking about Governor Reagan as being untrustworthy, a person who we could not trust to conduct foreign policy in a restrained and rational way. But, when Governor Reagan stood before us for 90 minutes in Cleveland with President Carter leading him through his paces, he did not seem to be the sort of person that President Carter was painting him to be. The president was using war words, scary words, words like belligerent, and applying them to Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan was standing there — a big, tall, good-looking man, obviously at ease in the situation, occasionally making a joke — while the president was much more tense and intense. And Ronald Reagan gave us the appearance of the man who was different from the man that Jimmy Carter had been describing.

MOYERS: The triumph of personality over propaganda, or personality as propaganda?

WERTHEIMER: Well, it also is an interesting phenomenon that we are able, as citizens, to see somebody for a long stretch of time in those debates. And millions of us watched them on television. And so we do get a good view of the candidate, a personal, our own view of the candidate. We can make up our own minds about it. And I think that it is interesting that a great many people do make up their minds, sort of, from their bellies, and not so much from what they hear, but from what they feel about the person that they see.

MOYERS: Well, Cokie, you've been out there watching those bellies. What effect did the debate have on the voters' perception of both Reagan and Carter?

ROBERTS: Well, I couldn't agree with Linda more. I saw the debate and thought that it was pretty much of a draw. And then I got a plane early the next morning and took a poll in a neighborhood in Pittsburgh. And one person after another said to me, 'I'm not scared of Ronald Reagan anymore. I was a little nervous about him. I was afraid he was a war-monger. But, he's not a war-monger, he's not a scary man.' They also worried a little bit about whether he 'had it' to be president. But he stood on the same stage with the president for 90 minutes. So he could be president as well as anybody.

MOYERS: What's that Linda?

WERTHEIMER: Being too old was a question as well. And there he stood for 90 minutes and nothing to indicate that he will be 70 when he is sworn in if he's elected. Nothing to worry about in the age issue there. So that laid two things to rest and all of a sudden, Jimmy Carter could no longer make Ronald Reagan the issue, and Ronald Reagan could travel the country as he's been doing this week asking the bottom line question. Are you better off financially? Is the country better off economically? Is the nation more secure than it was four years ago? And the crowd just roars — 'No, no, no.'

MOYERS: Scott, what does it say to you, Scott, that a single performance can have that kind of impact on this presidential election?

SIMON: Well, it's distressing, of course, when you view a number of candidates running that have records stretching back for a time, and you should be able to judge them according to that. I want to express I guess what amounts to a contrary viewpoint, at least from the perspective I've had covering the Anderson campaign — which is, that it might be that we've come to expect debates in American politics. And I think we might be reaching the point where debates really won't have the impact that they had in 1960, for example. I think they certainly have an impact on a certain core group that's watching them and is willing as undecided voters to go one way or another. But, I think mostly they serve to reconfirm a judgment that has been reached before and an audience sort of tailors their reactions to whoever they're working for. And I think they're at the point of becoming a little bit more like — in sporting events, where you root for somebody, decidedly, than they are deliberate contests for public opinion.

WERTHEIMER: My impression has been that people looked at the debate, thinking, 'I really am not sure that I want to vote for Jimmy Carter, but can I vote for Ronald Reagan?'

MOYERS: Everybody's talking about what a poor choice we have tomorrow and in these last two minutes, I'd like to know what your response is on the road to that lament. Scott?

SIMON: Well, I try not to get into conversations like that. But, I think as long as I can remember in American politics, people have been complaining about the poor choices, and I don't say that to excuse them. I think there has definitely been a narrowing of aspiration, a narrowing of what Americans seem to want from an elected public official. And that might just be realistic judgment in a country like this. On the other hand, there does seem to be a process that excludes people from running — from entering serious contests, because they're considered, you know, maybe a little bit ridiculous, for trying to reach against the grain. And, I think that might be bad in a time where we're reviling people for not participating in the process. At the same time, if we tell them they can only compete if they're going to be serious about it and tailor their viewpoints to conform to what's perceived to be public opinion.

MOYERS: Cokie?

ROBERTS: Well, this whole business of not liking the choices is true, and a lot of that comes from the coverage of the candidates. They all have feet of clay and people see all of their weak points — no question about it. But, one interesting fact, Bill, is that we participate more than any other democracy in the nomination of our political candidates and less than most in the actual selection in the general election. And I think that those two facts might have something to do with each other. I think that with our new nominating process that we get people who don't necessarily appeal to the broad spectrum of voters. So that tomorrow we can only expect about half of the people who are eligible to actually come to the polls.

MOYERS: Thank you all three — Linda Wertheimer, Scott Simon and Cokie Roberts from National Public Radio.

ANNOUNCER: Bill Moyers' Journal will be back after this message.

[Kennedy for President commercial, 1960]

JACKIE KENNEDY: Queridos amigos, les habla la esposa del Senador John F. Kennedy, candidato a la presidencia de los Estados Unidos. En estos tiempos de tanto peligro cuando la paz mundial se ve amenazada para comunismo, es necesario tener en la Casa Blanca un líder capaz de guiar nuestros destinos con un mano firme. Mi esposo siempre vigilará los intereses de todos los sectores de nuestra sociedad. Que necesitan la protección de un gobierno monetario para el futuro de nuestros niños y para lograr un mundo donde exista la paz verdadera. Votan ustedes por el Partido Demócrata el día ocho de Noviembre. Que viva Kennedy.

MOYERS: There's not just one election tomorrow. There are hundreds. So many things to do with your vote beyond electing a president. For one thing, there's a Congress to choose with dozens of interesting races and strong challenges to some key leaders in both houses. There are 34 Senate seats at stake tomorrow. 24 of them now held by Democrats. The Republicans would have to take nine seats to become the majority. And in the House, Republicans need to win 59 seats to get control. It's expected the Republican ranks will increase in this election, and the new Congress is almost certain to be more conservative. The point is, when you vote tomorrow, think Congress.

MOYERS [voice-over]: If Congress is America's longest running morality play, as I think it is, Tuesday's election will thicken the plot.

[Interior, House of Representatives, October 2, 1980]

Rep. MICHAEL MYERS [at lectern]: And you, the members of this party are the ones that will decide my fate. As you go to that voting machine to put your cards in, keep in mind, use a comparison, when you hit the button and you vote to expel, that it will have the same effect as hitting the button if I was strapped in an electric chair in this well.

MOYERS [voice-over]: Will Philadelphia's Michael 'Ozzie' Myers of Abscam fame win his fight to represent the cradle of liberty for yet a third term? And maybe another \$50,000?

[Press conference, October 8, 1980]

Rep. ROBERT BAUMAN: In addition to alcoholism, I have also suffered from homosexual tendencies, although I do not consider myself to be a homosexual.

MOYERS [voice-over]: Will Robert Bauman, the darling of conservatives, return to the House and resume his crusade for right-wing morals?

Sen. BARRY GOLDWATER [in a commercial]: And we can have the strength, once again, as we had under Eisenhower and Dulles, to let the world know that we're not going to stand for being pushed around—

MOYERS [voice-over]: In the year of resurgent conservatism, will the father of it all be around to celebrate? He's in a tough fight with a Democrat who says the grand old man of the right is too far gone.

BILL SCHULZ [in a commercial]: Well, 28 years ago, Barry was a younger, hard-working Senator. Now, it's just impossible for one man's stamina to span thirty years when the problems of the country continue to rise and the demands of the job continue to rise.

MOYERS [voice-over]: But age has caught up with the Republican left as well.

[D'Amato commercial]

MAN: Hey, I see you're wearing a Javits button.

2nd MAN: Yeah, he's my candidate.

1st MAN: Are you kidding? He'll be 82 if he finishes his term. And he voted with Jimmy Carter 82 percent of the time.

[Javits commercial]

Sen. JACOB JAVITS: I've been suffering for some time from a muscle disease that affects only my walking. But in no way does it affect my brain, my reasoning and my ability to do my job as senator.

MOYERS [voice-over]: Jacob Javits is running as a third party candidate, after having been beaten in the primary by a frenetic local politician named Alfonse D'Amato, whose right wing rhetoric plus his mother's endorsement—

Mrs. D'AMATO [in a D'Amato commercial]: I hope you'll vote for him so he can—

MOYERS [voice-over]: —may beat Javits and liberal Democrat Elizabeth Holtzman.

Rep. ELIZABETH HOLTZMAN [in a commercial]: I just want to say how proud I am to be able to help break open the political process, and I think it shows the political process is open to women, it's open to young people, it's open to independent people, it's open to people of conscience.

MOYERS [voice-over]: But the big story in congressional politics this year is the all-out battle Republicans are waging to end 25 years of Democratic control. Jim Wright of Texas, 26 years in the House, majority leader since 1977, is in trouble, charged with voting less like a southern Democrat and more like an eastern liberal.

Rep. JIM WRIGHT [in a commercial]: I think the truth is that I am probably the most moderate — not to say conservative — I'm not an arch-conservative; I don't pose as that, but the most nearly conservative member of the House who would have any chance to be the majority leader.

MOYERS *[voice-over]*: John Brademas of Indiana, the Democratic whip, fighting for his political life, a target for voters unhappy with unemployment in South Bend and the economy in general.

Rep. JOHN BRADEMAS: On the one hand as majority whip you're like to get blamed for everything that goes wrong; but I have little control over OPEC, Japanese auto manufacturers, or the Ayatollah Khomeini.

MOYERS *[voice-over]*: Morris Udall of Arizona—

Rep. MORRIS UDALL *[in a commercial]*: If you're an incumbent, your record's fair game, and should be looked at. So I ask you—

MOYERS *[voice-over]*: —chairman of the House Interior Committee, something of a hero to environmentalists for his stand against strip mining and for preserving Alaska, forced now to answer, 'What have you done for Arizona lately?'

[Richard Huff commercial]

ANNOUNCER: For the past 30 years, our water has been diverted to southern California, and Mo Udall hasn't stopped it. If Tuscon is going to get the water it needs, we'll need a congressman President Reagan can work with.

RICHARD HUFF: I'm Richard Huff—

MOYERS *[voice-over]*: Just about every right-wing group in America wants to unseat Frank Church of Idaho, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. If he survives, it will be because he persuades conservative Idaho that stature in Washington can sell spuds to the world.

Sen. FRANK CHURCH: Idaho is my special responsibility. And since January I have been instrumental in securing the purchase of lentils by Egypt, and of dried peas for distribution to refugees in Thailand and in Somalia, and in Pakistan. And the sale of grain to Taiwan—

MOYERS *[voice-over]*: Senator John Culver of Iowa, small-town boy, Harvard-trained. One of the most liberal members of the Senate. The right is after him too, but he isn't budging an inch.

Sen. JOHN CULVER: I believe when the push comes to shove, that Iowa's elderly poor ought to be getting help, and the last people that need it are the oil companies that already are making unconscionable profits.

MOYERS *[voice-over]*: And down in Texas the oil companies are out to defeat a man they couldn't buy.

Rep. BOB ECKHARDT: Wait until you see each one of these special interests come in—

MOYERS *[voice-over]*: Bob Eckhardt of Houston, the most liberal member of the Texas delegation — and the toughest.

ECKHARDT *[in a commercial]*: Big money boys can't scare me; they don't own, they can't buy me. I'm going to go right on fighting the big boys and protecting the people against gouging and rip-offs. That's my job.

[Interior, studio]

MOYERS: If you looked at the television commercials being used in congressional races around the country, as we've done, you'd be appalled, I think, at how negative and vacuous so many of the campaigns have been. And you'd wonder at a people who plead for politicians to lead on the broad national issues and then punish them with defeat if indeed they rise above parochial concerns. Even so, and sadly, as Bob Eckhardt suggested, we never really get the Congress we voted for as much as our special interests get the Congress they paid for. Votes get counted, but it's money that counts. Pay attention, too, if your state is one of the 13 that will choose a governor tomorrow, or one of 42 electing state legislatures. Those elections could decide the shape of politics to come, because the House of Representatives will be reapportioned next year, and it takes both branches of a legislature and the signature of a governor to approve new congressional boundaries. And then there are the people who take exception to the system of government once removed from the governed. They want to vote on some issues directly, not through representatives swayed by lobbyists. It's called a citizens' initiative, and in 23 states tomorrow the swish you hear around the polling booth will be the rustling of grass roots.

[Montage of local issues depicted through still photographs, film clips, etc.]

MOYERS *[voice-over]*: In Oregon they'll be deciding whether animals can be caught in leg-hold animal traps. In

the District of Columbia, the issue is a constitutional convention with the possibility of statehood for the federal city. Out in Montana, it's litter control and a recycling law. And the morning dove's future is at stake in South Dakota. While in Minnesota the issue is the initiative itself. Should voters in the future have the right to propose and place their own concerns on the ballot? All of the initiatives to be decided tomorrow are essentially local, tailored by the people who live in that state according to their own needs. But if all are homegrown, many reflect national concerns. Following the lead set by California's proposition 13, citizens in eight states are proposing drastic cuts in property tax. While Washington seemed determined to expand the use of nuclear power, citizens in states most affected are taking matters into their own hands. Despite the defeat of one nuclear initiative in Maine, folks in Oregon and South Dakota are asking for a public vote before each new nuclear power facility can be built. There are citizens in Missouri and Montana who want strict controls on radioactive waste dumping, and in Washington and South Dakota initiatives would control the transportation of radioactive materials within the states.

[Interior, studio]

MOYERS: For all you apathy mongers who shake your heads over the declining participation in voting for national elections, take heart. When citizens initiatives are on the ballot, the turnout increases by 20 percent, suggesting perhaps that the more people feel they can make a difference and see the difference, the greater the difference they make.

ANNOUNCER: Bill Moyers' Journal will be back after this message.

[Pat Brown for Governor commercial, 1966]

REAGAN: I feel that I have had— well, if I didn't feel that I had had experience that qualifies me to seek this job, I wouldn't do it. Now, mine was not in politics—

REAGAN *[in a movie]:* You wanted law and order in this town. You've got it. I'll shoot the first man that starts for those steps—

REAGAN *[in soap commercial]:* And here's exciting new Boraxo waterless hand cleaner. Watch. *[Cuts to scene of Reagan, in a western, rubbing mud in the face of a 'bad guy']* New Boraxo waterless hand cleaner removes the toughest dirt or stains, gets hands clean and smooth fast anytime. What a convenience. That's new Boraxo waterless hand cleaner.

REAGAN *[in a movie]:* I see beyond this joint, right through the dirty wallpaper.

ANNOUNCER: Ronald Reagan, the tight-lipped soldier of fortune, whose past was a mystery—

ANNOUNCER: Over the years, Ronald Reagan has played many roles. This year he wants to play governor. Are you willing to pay the price of admission?

[Gerald Ford commercial, 1976]

WOMAN: I'm afraid that Carter's too ambiguous.

MAN: Carter is not quite sure which direction to go, and he changes his mind on his stand every other day or so.

MAN: He contradicts himself from one day to another.

MAN: Well, he's changed his opinions from one day to the next.

WOMAN: He's much too wishy-washy.

MAN: He's very, very wishy-washy.

MAN: He seems to be a little wishy-washy.

MAN: If he'd stand up and say what he's for, he'd be a little bit easier to understand and maybe to believe.

WOMAN: All the things we've read about Jimmy Carter I think are true: that he is fuzzy on a lot of the issues, and I like President Ford, the man who will tell you just exactly where he does stand.

[Interior, studio]

MOYERS: How would you feel when you vote tomorrow if you knew that you were not only expected to choose a president, but to carry on an historical legacy? Well, you'd feel the way the voters do in Palo Alto County, Iowa. Since 1896, when they helped to send William McKinley to the White House, the farmers and townsfolk there have

always — *always* — voted for the winning presidential candidate. Jimmy Carter won 55 percent of their votes four years ago, but they're still angry that he embargoed grain sales to Russia after promising them in 1976 he'd never do a thing like that. Record grain prices and a bumper harvest make them feel a little better about things nowadays, but it's still a tough and close fight in Palo Alto County this year, as we discovered on a visit there.

[Radio studio, Emmetsburg, Iowa]

RADIO ANNOUNCER: Well, you're just 30 seconds away from our opportunity to find out just how people in Emmetsburg and Palo Alto County feel about their presidential preference. That's coming up in 30 seconds here on KEMB. We are in the process of polling people of Palo Alto County to find out if they can tell us who they think will be the next president. Let's introduce the guests that we have in the studio. We have, representing the Democrats, Mr. Boyd Griffith; and representing the Republican side, Mr. Ed Norlin. Gentlemen, welcome to the studio today. Boyd, let's start with you. Do you feel that there's a lack of interest in the general election here?

BOYD: I very definitely feel there's a lack of interest and I think that people who voted for Carter originally feel a reluctance to come out and strongly endorse him. It'll take going into the voting booth before some of them will make their final decisions.

ANNOUNCER: Well, I should mention that we do have our first votes up there. We've apparently received four votes so far and all four have been for Ronald Reagan. So we have Anderson, zero; Jimmy Carter, zero; and Ronald Reagan, 100 percent, right now. If you don't like the way that looks then give us a call. We'd like to find out how you feel about the presidential candidates.

[At grain elevator]

FARMER: The way it looks right now, I'll probably stick with Carter. He has brought the farm program back here towards the last three months, brought the prices up for the farmers. That's what I'm looking at right now.

REPORTER: Are you happy with that choice?

FARMER: Not really.

REPORTER: Why?

FARMER: I can't see really Carter or Reagan, myself.

2nd FARMER: I'm undecided. One day I think Carter, and the next day Reagan. As a man I really like Reagan. I've been a radio fan of his since the 1930s, when he was on WHO, Des Moines. I think he's a concerned man. I think Carter is too. Haven't completely made up my mind. But, it'll be Carter or Reagan. And I hope I vote for the guy that wins.

[Elsewhere in Emmetsburg]

BANKER: During this last spring, I had never seen a time in the twenty years that I've been in the banking business that farmers have been under the pressure they have this last year. I think part of it is due to the Carter administration, and so I'll probably vote for Ronald Reagan because I look at it as a change and I hope a positive change for my farmer customers.

FARMER: I'm going to stay with Carter. I think the last few weeks — especially the grain going up — I think it's going to convert a lot of these farmers back to Carter. I'm sure it will.

WOMAN: Reagan, because I'm just not thrilled with Carter — what he's been doing?

REPORTER: What specifically?

WOMAN: Well, I'm a farmer's wife. And it hasn't been too good, till just the last few months.

REPORTER: And Reagan will be good for the farmers?

WOMAN: Well, I don't know, but he can — I don't know if he can be any worse than Carter.

[Radio studio]

RADIO ANNOUNCER: Right now, it's 11 votes for Carter, 11 for Reagan, 50-50, and we have yet to have a vote cast for John Anderson, which I think is very interesting. Someone on line two wants to talk to us on the air. Okay? We'll find out who we have here. Yes, go ahead please.

CALLER: Yes. I'd like to put two votes in for President Carter, mine and my husband's.

ANNOUNCER: Tell us, why are you doing that?

CALLER: Okay, because I think he's got a hard job. I agree with the way he's doing it. And I think we're all going to have to work together in the United States in order to pull it through.

ANNOUNCER: Okay, fine. Listen, thank you so much for calling.

CALLER: Thank you.

ANNOUNCER: Bye, now, 852-4551 — that's our number. All three lines are open if you'd like to give us a call. We have votes coming in very quickly here. Ronald Reagan has taken the lead. He now has a total of 50 percent — 50.88 percent, of all the votes in. Carter has 43. —

[Interior, Cafe]

MAN: I think I'll probably Reagan because I don't really think that I can afford Carter for another term. Inflation has been so high, and the economy's been so poor. I don't know that Reagan will do a — I don't know for sure that he'll do better, but I know — we've seen what Carter can do — and I know that it's costing me too much to live.

2nd MAN: I can't say I really like what Carter has done the past year, but I'm a little scared of Reagan because of his age, and I just don't know what I want to do yet.

3rd MAN: I'm going to vote for Anderson.

REPORTER: Why?

3rd MAN: Well, because I don't want to vote for Reagan. I don't want to vote for Carter. So, I'm going to vote for Anderson. I usually vote, that's the reason.

4th MAN: I think I'm going to vote for Reagan. I'm a registered Republican and I think Reagan comes from the Midwest. Maybe he can understand our problems out here a little bit more.

WOMAN: I'm definitely for Ronald Reagan. We need something for a change, rather than what we've had the last four years. And I think Reagan is the fellow that can get a few of these things and fulfill them. I think he's not going to just — he's going to say what he wants to do and he's going to get that administration behind him.

2nd WOMAN: First he said he was against aid to New York City. He was against bailing out New York City. So then when he went to New York City and talked to the people in New York City, he decided that maybe he was for them. I'm just really not very pleased with the candidates. I'm not pleased with Carter either. I think he's got real good vision as to what's ahead for the country and for the world. And I think that that's really important, because I think we have to think in terms of global policies, rather than just national policies now. And, I think, Mr. Reagan is very nationalistic. I think he thinks in terms of America, and America the superpower. And I think those days are past.

3rd WOMAN: I'm for Reagan. I feel that we are definitely in need of a change, even though Carter has had a Democratic Congress, he has not been able to get through legislation that he has advocated.

1st WOMAN: I think that's one of his biggest fault.

[Radio studio]

RADIO ANNOUNCER: We are now tied, at 37 votes for both Carter and Reagan. And that comes to 48.5 percent for each of them, and 3.9 percent for John Anderson. He's received three votes all the time since we've been on the air. Okay, we have somebody on the line here we'd like to talk to now, and could I have your name please? Okay, Fred, tell us how you feel?

CALLER: I support President Carter. I think he's about as good as we got. I think today the farmers have never had it better.

ANNOUNCER: Okay. Well, Fred, thanks so much for calling in and expressing your opinion.

CALLER: You betcha.

ANNOUNCER: Okay, bye now. If you would like to be on the air, please call us up. Let's get those votes in, and it looks as if we are going to have a very, very close contest. Just as you guys predicted before we started. Any comments?

ED NORLIN: I anticipated it would be real close, and just out of curiosity, I would love to know how many farm people called in — they're real busy during the harvest.

ANNOUNCER: Yeah, you know, that might make a difference.

NORLIN: I wonder if we've had much of a farm response, really, in our call-in program.

ANNOUNCER: 852-4551, that's our number. All three lines are open, if you'd like to give us a call.

[In a farm field]

FARMER: Right now I'm leaning towards Reagan. I'm just dissatisfied with Carter. I think inflation has hurt us tremendous, you know. I think when Carter when in it was around 7 or 8 percent, and it was up to 18 percent here at one time. The high interest rates, too, has hurt us. It's just a comment. About the only thing worse than high interest rates, and there's no money available — that's even worse, you know, when it comes time to put our crop in — we can't borrow any money at all. Reagan, and maybe a more middle-of-the-road type of politics that I'm interested in and possibly than even Carter is.

[Radio studio]

RADIO ANNOUNCER: I have someone else on the line here we want to talk to. Right now we've got 45 for Carter and 44 for Reagan. Just how do you feel?

CALLER: Well, I wanted to go for Carter, 'cause I didn't want Reagan up that one vote. He was one vote ahead a minute ago. And, Reagan was a hit with me, just a little bit — awhile ago.

ANNOUNCER: Yes, he was, Kerm. He was ahead a moment ago and we're getting some changes in now. Let's see, we're adding three votes for Carter and three votes for Reagan. And Carter is ahead by one vote right now.

CALLER: Well, that's just okay. That's just the way I feel about it. I want him to win by one at least.

[In an office]

MAN: I talked to a lot of people that are Democrats. They may still vote Democratically, and yet, a lot of their thoughts were the same as mine. It's strange, it really is, that you can have somebody that is a fairly conservative Republican, and someone that you think is a fairly liberal Democrat and yet there are so many things that we agree on. And we can't find someone to vote for that'll do these things. And that's, I guess, what's discouraging all of us. Maybe it's the same over the whole country. I don't know.

[High school football field]

GIRL: I get to vote — that makes me feel, you know, kind of important. I wish there was different choices, you know, for our first time that we get to vote. I wish we could think that we voted for the right guy.

FOOTBALL PLAYER: Probably Jimmy Carter, because he's kept us out of war so far, and — I don't know — I don't want to take any chances on a new guy right now.

2nd GIRL: Well, I think we need a change of pace from Carter. I think he's — some of his plans put a couple people out of business that really didn't need it. And I think a change of pace will be good for the country.

2nd FOOTBALL PLAYER: I'm sort of undecided right now, but I've been going toward Reagan's side, because I don't think Carter's really been doing the job that we expected him to be doing.

3rd GIRL: I'll be voting for President Carter, because I think he's a real level-headed guy, and he's kept calm through his four years, you know. He's had a lot of crises come up, and he's handled them well, you know. He's kept us out of war.

4th GIRL: I'm still undecided as yet, because I really don't like any of the candidates. Reagan, I just don't trust him for some reason. And Carter, I don't like he's handled things the past four years.

[Radio studio]

RADIO ANNOUNCER: We now have a tie — Jimmy Carter, 52 votes, Ronald Reagan, 52 votes, and four votes for John Anderson. Right now, what we can say, from our straw poll here is it's going to be a very, very tight race in Palo Alto County when it comes to voting for president. Okay, I guess I'll wrap this up by asking each of you your opinion on this one final question. And that is, do you feel Palo Alto County will continue with their bellwether status? Ed?

NORLIN: I hope so.

[Interior, studio]

MOYERS: Like those people in Palo Alto County, Iowa, a lot of us are still trying to make up our minds how to vote for president. But millions of other have already decided not to vote at all. Voter turnout in presidential elections peaked in 1960 and has been declining ever since. Not voting is— well, it's not simple. For some, particularly the young, the poor and the uneducated, it registers passivity and alienation from the system. For others, it's an action with a message of protest. 'I reject the choice,' they are saying. Or, as one of our guests said here not long ago, 'You do not have my consent to govern.' To vote or not to vote: that is the question I will put to two friends of mine. Lucy Wilson Benson is former Undersecretary of State and former national president of the League of Women Voters. Ted Becker is professor of political science at the University of Hawaii and a co-founder of the Community Mediation Services at the university. In his book titled *Un-Vote for a New America*, Ted Becker advocates not voting. Why?

TED BECKER: Well, actually, Bill, I don't truly advocate non-voting, even though I personally have come to be a non-voter in presidential elections. What I'm doing is really addressing my remarks to people who have decided not to vote, and who feel a sense of guilt or that they've failed in some citizen's obligation. And what I'm trying to do in that book, among other things— Two things: first I'm trying to tell them not to feel this because voting's a right, not a duty, and that it's something to spend in a fashion that they consider to be wise. And if they feel that it is not wise to vote, they shouldn't spend it, and should feel the same way, that there's just not anything worth spending their vote on. It's a perfectly legitimate and valuable action of a person in a republican system, where you're voting for candidates.

MOYERS: Are you voting for president this year?

BECKER: No, I'm not voting this year. I didn't vote the last time, either.

MOYERS: Why?

BECKER: Well, all right. Because I felt that there was no significant difference between the candidates; they would both lead us to pretty much where we are right now. And I feel pretty much the same way about the candidates presently — the major candidates. I feel that they will not make much of a difference.

MOYERS: Are you voting this year, Lucy?

LUCY WILSON BENSON: Yes. I am indeed voting this year.

MOYERS: Do you agree with Ted?

BENSON: No, I don't. But I do agree with one thing. I don't think people should feel guilty. I think we have an irresistible tendency in this country to try to make people feel guilty, to hold a hammer over their head and say, 'It's your duty to do thus and such, and if you don't you're bad, bad, bad.' And I think that's very silly.

MOYERS: But you do feel we should vote—

BENSON: I feel you should vote because—

MOYERS: —even if you don't like the candidates?

BENSON: Even if you don't like the candidates, I think you should vote. You're— you said somebody said a few weeks ago on a previous program that 'You do not have my consent to govern.' Well, my answer is, so what? If our form of government is based on the consent of the governed, and if someone decides they don't want to give their consent, that's fine. But I'd like to know what good they think it does them. And I think that in our form of government — which somebody once said democracy is not a spectator sport, it's a participatory occupation. In our form of government, I think that citizens should make— should try to make up their minds. There is a difference between the two candidates. The— or between the two candidates plus the minor party candidates, or the independent candidates.

MOYERS: But he says there isn't. You say there is a difference.

BENSON: I know, but there is a difference. There is a difference between people no matter— There is nobody in

this world who's exactly the same, or who thinks exactly the same, or who will react in a crisis exactly the same. Or who uses the same criteria by which to make judgments. There are differences between the candidates. And I think that people ought to decide — even though it's unpleasant. Nobody ever said democracy was supposed to be fun. Certainly nobody ever said it was supposed to be easy. And I think you should make your choice and go vote and hope that you turned out to be right. Now, I've done an awful lot of voting in my life, and there have been some candidates I've voted for, and I'm sorry I did, but I'm not running around crying over it. You know.

BECKER: I feel that certainly that's a position that people do take. My own feeling is that, first, actually there's no significant difference — I guess I would say that. There are always differences between people, but when you get to the point of, as some people are saying, tweedle-dee, tweedle-dum; or tweedle-dum, tweedle-dum; or tweedle-dum, tweedle-dumber; then you don't really — you know, there isn't much of choice for you to actually go out and make. And if you're at that point; or, even worse, if you feel that you're voting for the lesser of two evils as a lot of people are doing, or 'I'm voting against Reagan or against Carter,' even though I know that if I vote for those people, they're going to do a lot of things I don't like — bring about more inflation, bring us closer to war — the responsible voter in that particular case would not vote. In other words —

BENSON: That's going to happen anyway.

BECKER: That's right.

MOYERS: What do you mean? What's going to happen?

BENSON: I mean, if you vote for 'x' or 'y' it's going to bring about more inflation. If you don't for 'x' and 'y', the same thing is still going to happen, presuming that it's going to happen.

BECKER: That's correct. I see.

BENSON: But if you don't vote, you give up your right to make a decision. And it's true, it is a right; I agree with you on that. If you want to give up your right, well, go ahead and give up your right. But I don't know what it gains you to give up your right.

BECKER: Okay. What I would suggest is, in terms of the gain, as I was saying to you, there's another aspect to un-vote. I'm not just saying that you should give up a right and not vote, and become the apathetic voter, one who doesn't care any more. I think that most of the people do care, anyway. I mean, they do have an interest, and they have thought about it a lot, you know, and come to the decision not to vote. But just leaving it at that, I think, is a mistake. The other aspect of what I mean by 'un-vote' is to participate in government yourself.

MOYERS: How?

BECKER: Well, there are a lot of ways in which people can participate without voting for candidates and politicians who they don't trust any more. I think there are a number of movements in this country that are community based, frequently issue-oriented kinds of movements. Like, for instance, as you had earlier in the show, talking about the record number of initiatives and referenda that are being voted on in the country today, I think that's a very positive, very direct kind of democracy that this country was founded upon, and is the basis of our —

BENSON: Oh, no. Our country was not founded on — excuse me — on direct democracy. And, although there is a role for the initiative and the referendum, that is not the same as a representative government, which is what this country was founded on — was on a representative form of government, by which you elect people to represent you at the various levels of government: local government, state government, national government. And, you really cannot run a government on initiative and referendum, as if you were the people of Athens in the year whatever-thousand B.C. it was. That is just not satisfactory; it's not even possible for a complicated country like ours or even much smaller countries, to make the decisions —

MOYERS: So you would not accept Ted's position that simply voting in local elections, or taking part at the local level, is a substitute for voting for a president?

BENSON: No, I don't see how it can possibly be, if we're going to *have* a president — unless we have a parliamentary form of government, where your president is a prime minister and arises out of a different kind of election. That's one thing, and that's a perfectly good argument; people have made an argument for a parliamentary form of government, fine. But we don't have that form of government at the present time. We have a presidential form of government. As long as we have this form of government, if you don't vote, you've given up your right to

make a determination, which is your right to do, if you want to. If you do vote, however, you have struck a vote for freedom, I believe, and for liberty, and for a form of government which, though it may not work well, and though you may not like the candidates, nevertheless works *pretty* well. And after all, these are very trying times. There are many large problems to deal with. If people think that, if they're going to vote for 'x' everything is going to be perfect, or we're gonna have peace, or we're not gonna have inflation, then 'x' doesn't manage to bring about peace or even in fact gets us into a war, the point is, did he try as hard as he could to avoid getting us into a war?

BECKER: Certainly democracy is a key theme in our form of government. I feel that even though the people are in the position where they have to spend the vote or not vote— spend the vote on a person that they don't have much faith and trust in, or not vote, that it is better for them not to take the responsibility by voting for someone they really don't care for. As for doing something positive, I feel that it's essential that people who do not vote realize they can make a difference in their local communities in all kinds of areas, including energy, etc., and that this is the way in which they should be spending their time — not paying attention to candidates they don't care for.

BENSON: It doesn't matter whether you care for the candidate or not. It's who do you think will best represent you and make the choices that have to be made. Whose judgment do you put the most stock in, one or the other?

MOYERS: Thank you, Lucy Benson. Thanks, Ted Becker.

[Interior, studio]

MOYERS: It's true that when millions vote it's hard to see how one vote affects the outcome. Yet some elections have been decided by such a narrow margin that a few votes one way or the other could have changed the results and history too.

[Montage of close elections in American history, depicted through still photos, etc.]

MOYERS *[voice-over]:* Look at what happened in 1844 when Henry Clay, the man who would rather have been right than president, almost was both. He wasn't sure if he wanted Texas in the union. His opponent, James Polk, was. The difference between them was just 4,000 votes in four states. Polk won, the union got Texas, and we've never been the same for it. More recently, there was the Kennedy-Nixon cliff-hanger of 1960. Fewer than 10,000 votes the other way in key precincts would have elected Nixon instead of Kennedy. The mind boggles at the thought of what might have been. Four years later, Lyndon Johnson trounced Barry Goldwater by 16 million votes. But LBJ's road to the presidency began in 1948 when he was elected senator from Texas by 87 questionable votes. 'Landslide Lyndon' they called him, but suppose his opponent had trumped Johnson with another 88 votes dug up somewhere. Who would have been Kennedy's running mate in 1960, and president in 1964, and how would he have handled the best and the brightest? Or take that close one in 1968, when the nascent Nixon rose from the ashes to win a plurality of half a million votes. It would have taken only 100,000 votes in four states to keep Henry Kissinger at harbor and spare us Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Liddy and Dean. And what about four years ago when Jimmy Carter topped incumbent Gerald Ford? History says he won by almost four million votes. But had only 7,475 votes in two states changed from Carter to Ford, the electoral college would have gone to Ford. How different our choices might be tomorrow.

[Interior, studio]

MOYERS: We could go on spinning conjecture, but if it didn't make a difference to the outcome of an election, well, have you ever heard a politician ask us not to vote for him?

[Segment break]

MOYERS: There are almost no secrets left about this campaign, except how it will end and what kind of president the winner will be. I'm willing to wager that no matter who wins, before the next year is out, most of his supporters will feel he's anything but the sort of president they deserve. By election day, the candidates have had to promise so many things to so many people that they have mortgaged the White House. To win the endorsement of the maritime union and the teamsters for example, Reagan has had to promise big subsidies to the one, and to the other a retreat from his support of competition in the trucking industry. Carter is in deep hock to the National Education Association, whose teachers expect billions in exchange for their enormous support of the president. Anderson has his own obligations. That's politics, you say, and so it is. But, by the time a president reaches the White House he's hardly an original any more. And there's little he can do except rearrange the deck chairs for a different set of passengers. I was struck this week by what a New York cab driver named Marguerite Cooner said to me in one of

those instant polls we journalists are always taking while the meter ticks. Said Mrs. Cooner. 'I used to be registered member of the Conservative Party in New York and should be for Reagan, but I don't like his extreme opposition to abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment. Jimmy Carter has made good appointments to the courts, but if I vote for him I'm ratifying his terrible record on the economy. As for John Anderson, his 50-cent tax on gasoline strikes right at my livelihood. I'll tell you, Mr. Moyers, sometimes I think we ought to hang a sign on our political system that says, "Not in working order" ' Well, on Bernard Baruch's old park bench across from the White House, I heard something like that from a reformed lawyer, repentant politician and an ex-government official gone straight named Charlie Peters. For ten years, Peters has edited an influential little magazine called *The Washington Monthly*. Now he has written a book called *How Washington Really Works*.

CHARLIE PETERS: I think, Bill, the problem is we have got a government that is now substantially run by the lobbies, by the permanent bureaucracy. Do you remember? Ninety-nine percent civil service — tenured civil servants. So the lobbies, the civil service and the courts are the power, the continuing power. And whoever is elected president, unless he is really a great man, or unless he's an evil man, it really doesn't make that much difference.

MOYERS: Great or evil? Those seem—

PETERS: What I mean is, that would make a difference. A great man would make a difference, and an evil man would make a difference, but men who are neither — like Carter, Reagan, Anderson — I don't think are going to make that much difference, because there is this permanent government.

MOYERS: Permanent government — describe it for me.

PETERS: Well, I think it has these elements, and what you find the common thing of these people is that they are not responsive, they are not accountable people. The bureaucrat can't be fired, the civil servant can't be fired. The judge is on a life appointment. The lobbyist is here independent— he's paid by his company, or by the interest group he's representing.

MOYERS: In other words, they are unaffected by the election returns—

PETERS: They are unaccountable to the people, unaffected by the election returns. Unresponsive to the election returns.

MOYERS: Is it possible, more or less mathematically, to define how much of an influence a president has? I mean, can he affect ten percent of what happens in this town? Twenty percent of what happens? Thirty percent or so on?

PETERS: I think it's in the ten percent area.

MOYERS: That's all.

PETERS: Yeah.

MOYERS: And that's part of the problem.

PETERS: That's part of the problem.

MOYERS: If the proof of the pudding in American politics has to do not with good intentions — which both Carter, Reagan have — but with results, real changes in the lives of people out there, how would you judge the pudding?

PETERS: I don't think they're having a substantial effect on the main problems facing the country. The problems that— of health care, of jobs, of the— one of the really crushing problems that's confronting this country in the coming years is what is called the income maintenance problem, but it's— readily recognizable as Social Security, as we get more and more old people. The other forms are unemployment compensation, veterans pensions. But anyway, sometime in the 1990s these programs just continued at their present rate will bankrupt the country. So somebody has to take the lead and help the public face the problem, examine all the facts, and let the people decide what needs to be done.

MOYERS: By your own definition of the way the system works, Washington cannot or will not cope with those real issues.

PETERS: That's right, that's right. That's right, and that's why we've got to change the system. What I call the

fundamental equation, and the key to understanding the anthropology of Washington is the equation 'make-believes equals survival.'

MOYERS: Make-believe—

PETERS: —equals survival. In other words, people come here because they want some kind of office, not because they really want to do something. They, in order to stay here, they find out the way to stay here is to pretend to do something about the problems. And of course they figure out— it doesn't take them long if you're working at the Department of Energy to figure if you really do something about the energy problem and it disappears, there's no more Department of Energy, and you don't have a job any more.

MOYERS: Well, that's part of the problem with a bureaucracy, as well as its alliance with Congress. I mean, if a bureaucrat realizes that solving a problem means he's no longer justified, and the member of Congress realizes that if cutting the budget is going to reduce spending in his district, they have a vested interest in not solving that problem, and in not cutting that budget.

PETERS: That's right, that's right.

MOYERS: You've been in Washington 20 years now. Do you know many people who have ever been fired?

PETERS: It's something like one-seventh of one percent. It's an incredibly low figure. It translates into a small business into like one firing every ten years. You can't run anything that way. There always are people who don't do well in any form of endeavor, and you have to be able to get rid of them. And you also have to be able — and this is equally if not more important — you have to be able to hire people who believe in what you do.

MOYERS: People come to Washington and are not held accountable because they don't really have an objective other than staying in office.

PETERS: They want a job, they want a job. And in a sense that's happening not just in the civil service, but because of the powerlessness of the elected officials, you have many people running for office because they want a job, a title, not because they have a program. Jimmy Carter's probably the most spectacular example of that. We realized soon after he got elected president that he really didn't have a program. He had to figure out, 'Well, what are we going to do next.' Many, many congressmen— I have interviewed congressmen, newly elected congressman and asked the question, 'Well, what is it you are going to try to do,' and the silence is just crushing. The lame answer will usually be something like, 'Well, I want to restore faith in government' or some answer like that.

MOYERS: But, if you had one idea that you would get across about what to do about the stalemate in Washington, what would it be?

PETERS: In contrast to almost everybody else, I'd give the president more power. I don't think he has enough power, and this is particularly true in the domestic area. Remember, the founding fathers did not want a government that was capable of a lot of action. The founding fathers wanted to sit on their farms and not be bothered by any more people like those British were. They just didn't want that, so they constructed a government that was cleverly designed to frustrate action: the adversary system between the Congress, the president and the courts. If we want action, we've got to think about some redesign of that system that was ideal for the purposes of the founding fathers but is not ideal for us.

MOYERS: You're running counter to the liberal opinion that a strong presidency gave us Vietnam and Watergate.

PETERS: I realize— I think that depends on who you elect president. You've got to care about— you've got to— the electorate has to get the right man elected. You've got to do that. But, you can't base a system on the fact that you're going to continually make the wrong mistakes at the polls. You have to create a system that is going to attract the best people — and elect the best people.

MOYERS: And that's more politics, not less.

PETERS: That's more politics, a lot more politics. Clean politics.

MOYERS: If self-interest is the animating principle of Washington, as you suggested it is in your book, then isn't what's wrong with Washington what's wrong with all of us?

PETERS: I think that is exactly true. Remember, the power of the lobbies is based on the fact that at least some of the people out there watching this program are members of each one of those lobbies. That's where they get their power — the single-issue lobby. And so, you have to begin to be willing to give up your little secret. Like, take me. I get a— if we're going to face this income maintenance problem. I'm going to have to give up that veterans pension I get that I don't have to have. But I take it now. I'm not going to be the one who marches down to the Veterans Administration and says, 'Look, take this back.' I'm not gonna do that alone. I'm not going to get my aunt Alice to come back from Europe and hand over that Social Security she doesn't need. Not alone. But if we all decide together, 'Look, if we're going to solve our problems, we've got to give up something—' we're not going to get those doctors to give up their high fees unless we're all doing part of the same thing, we're all making some gesture together. I think people have a sense that something is badly wrong in Washington, and I think that's why they were attracted to Carter in 1976, because it seemed like he was running against Washington and they liked that. When he got here, unfortunately, he didn't do much about what was wrong with Washington. When Reagan— I think Reagan now is the beneficiary of the anti-Washington sentiment, and he, I think, will turn out to do just as little as Carter.

MOYERS: Because of the way Washington works.

PETERS: Because of the power— even now. Now, you would think that Ronald Reagan would be the man who was going to do something about the— a conservative like Ronald Reagan doing something about the civil service and the power of the civil service. But just the other day, Reagan endorsed the most outrageous scandal which is the twice-a-year cost of living increase that is one of the most inflationary facts of the government, but it is the government employee's lobby, it is their number one cause. And here Reagan, the supposed conservative, has already caved in on that issue. He's not even president yet, and he has already caved in.

MOYERS: Since when do politicians get elected by asking people to sacrifice?

PETERS: Oh, I think they would get elected. I think people cry— hunger for somebody who would tell them the truth. They hunger for somebody who would take that kind of leadership, and I think that kind of leader would sweep this country.

[Interior, studio]

MOYERS: Maybe, maybe. But that isn't our choice tomorrow. The choice is between three more conventional politicians — not one of whom offers the hope of putting together a governing coalition that can act on a broad program of social policies — between them and minority parties which, for all their enthusiasms, have not yet excited the public imagination. In a way, this election is symbolic of the country's predicament. You can be philosophic, and say we're only getting what we deserve, that Americans don't really wish to be led until things collapse and there's no alternative to leadership. Or you can be idealistic and say that we're simply determined to prove the founders correct when they said that men can do better without kings and nobles than with them — although that would suffice only if sufficient numbers of us were actually engaged where we live in the civic duties of our time. Or you can be realistic, and say as it has often been said that great men are not chosen for president because great men are rare in politics, as they are in life. It's a rule almost without exception, said a protestant divine to his congregation years ago, that men and women do not live by our first choices. We live by our second and third choices. So when we enter the voting booth tomorrow, we will find what most of us find at times in love and marriage, in the rearing of children, in work, in the whole journey from cradle to grave. We will find the string from popped balloons. That may not be enough to stay the powers that make the course of this republic now so precarious. And one can only hope Charlie Peters' faith might soon be vindicated. But for the next four years that string is all we've got. And the test is what we make of it. Good luck tomorrow. I'm Bill Moyers.